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

ALL THE YEAR ROUND.

A Weekly Journal.

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CHARLES DICKENS AND EVANS,
GREAT NEW STREET, FETTER LANE, LONDON,
AND CRYSTAL PALACE.

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CHARLES DICKENS

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PRICE TWOPENCE

A DATELESS BARGAIN.

By C. L. PIRKIS,

Author of "Lady Lovelace," etc.

CHAPTER I.

"LOCK the door, Mab, then we can begin to turn things upside down in comfort. Now what room in the house is most unlike a study?"

"Is it a conundrum," laughed Mab; "or do you wish for a straightforward answer? It wants thinking over. A housekeeper's room, perhaps, or a kitchen——"

"Oh, what unrefined notions you have! If you had asked me I should have said a lady's boudoir. You get your inspiration from your brown holland sleeves and apron. Look at yourself in the glass. What a splendid housemaid was lost in you!"

These two young people gossiping so gaily on a bright May morning were Mabel and Joscelyn Shenstone, only children of Irving Shenstone, one of the largest landowners in the county of Gloucestershire. He was expected home on this day from a ten days' visit to London, and his daughters were preparing a welcome for him in his sanctum by turning things generally upside down.

"We want to leave the mark of our presence in the room," Joscelyn had informed her mother over the breakfast-table that morning, "so that when he sits down and kicks off his boots—as he always does in his study—he will say, 'Mab did that I'll swear, and Joyce made that other lovely arrangement.'"

These sisters, in appearance, were like and unlike each other as only sisters can be. They were tall, slender girls, with well-shaped heads, a profusion of dark brown hair, and large hazel-grey eyes.

But here all likeness ended; for the truth must be told, Joyce was one of the handsomest girls the county could boast of, while Mab stood close upon the border of plainness. Joyce's complexion was that of a brilliant brunette, while Mab was unmistakably sallow. Joyce had the straightest and prettiest of Grecian noses, and a small mouth all dimples and curves; Mab's nose was somewhat aquiline, her mouth wide and innocent of dimples and curves. Joyce's general expression was one of buoyant happiness; Mab, as a rule, wore so deep a look of intellectual thought as to amount almost to melancholy, or, to speak exactly, of anxious apprehension.

It was characteristic of these sisters that while Mab was attired in the neatest of black gowns, which she had furthermore essayed to protect from dust by a holland apron and housemaid's sleeves, Joyce's sole preparation for her morning's mimic housewifery had been to pin back her pretty cambric skirt into one graceful fold behind, thereby disclosing in front her dainty slippers and slender ankles.

Mab took a long, steady look at herself in the mirror. "I think I must be a born housemaid; I always feel so thoroughly at home with a dusting brush in my hand," she began musingly.

But Joyce was not at all in a mood for either musing or attitudinising that morning. "Well then, begin and use it, my dear, as if you were 'to the manner born,'" she replied laughingly, giving Mab a little push in the direction of the writing-table, which stood at right angles to the glass. "You set to work on the ink-bottles; empty them everyone—you know I'm going to turn them all into flower-vases—while I attack the book-shelves."

Mab made a little demur. "It doesn't seem the right thing to do with ink-bottles, and where—where shall I throw the ink?"

"Oh, you want so much telling! You a housemaid, indeed! Why, out of the window of course; never mind about the flowers underneath. Now a clever maid would have jumped at that idea before I could have spoken."

Mab made another demur, muttering something to the effect "that it wasn't exactly the sort of work a housemaid would have given to her." It was, however, a very little demur, for although Joyce was nearly two years younger than Mab, she invariably acted the elder sister, and Mab was, so to speak, completely "under her thumb."

So splash, splash, went bottle after bottle of ink from the window on the flower-bed beneath.

"It will dye those pansies a magnificent blue-black," laughed Joyce, hard at work at her bookshelves. "Old Donovan will throw up his hands in admiration when he comes round next with his watering-pot. Look here, Mab, here's a whole row of books on farming, cattle-rearing, and such like nonsense. Shall I turn them all the wrong way—upside down, that is—or with their backs to the wall?"

"I think you might let the books alone, Joyce."

"Good gracious! What for? Why, books are the first thing to be thought of in a study. If I let the books alone, what may I touch? Ah, I've an idea! I'll rummage about for some poetry books; there are sure to be a lot behind somewhere, or on the upper shelves, and I'll push back all the dreadfully useful books and put all the poetry in front. Now won't that be splendid? Oh, good gracious, good gracious!" This in an utterly surprised tone. "Here are heaps upon heaps of poetry books! Why, there's Shelley, Keats, Coleridge, Shakespeare! Oh, no end of Shakespeare; a dozen volumes at least. Who would have thought that father had ever in his whole life been an admirer of the poets? These books have every one of them his name on the fly-leaf in his own writing!"

Mab left her writing-table all in a hurry.

"I thought it! I knew it!" she said excitedly. "I felt certain father had been all but a poet before he went in so much for farming and that sort of thing; and I

know I'm right in never opening a book of poetry——" she stopped herself abruptly.

Joyce turned upon her amazed. "Why—why shouldn't you read poetry if you like?" she cried. "That's it! I know you're acting up to some funny notion you've taken into your head. You've given up music, you've given up painting, you are always doing plain needlework, or poring over housekeeping books. What does it mean? What's the idea, Mab?"

Mab went back to her writing-table. "Look, Joyce," she said quietly, "I've emptied all the ink-bottles. Now don't you think we ought to begin getting the flowers? Shall I go and ask Donovan to cut a basket-full?" Which remark, it will be seen, was in no sort an answer to Joyce's question.

It served, however, to divert her attention.

"Ask Donovan?" she cried. "Are you out of your mind? Why, if we went down on our knees to him he wouldn't give us more than a handful of the commonest garden-flowers and just a few very full-blown azaleas, with very short stalks, out of one of the hot-houses. No, thank you; I'm going out to help myself this time, and I shall come back with armfuls of everything—tulips, hyacinths—everything that's spring-like and delicious. Oh, the dust!" Here a fit of sneezing prevented farther exclamation.

Whereupon Mab volunteered her services.

"Let me finish those bookshelves while you get the flowers. You only want all the poetry in front, and the farming books pushed back, so that father won't be able to lay his hand upon anything that he wants. Isn't that it?" she asked, setting to work briskly on the volumes.

A door opening off this little study led, by a flight of steps, straight into the garden, now, thanks to a singularly sunny month of May, in the full glory of its spring blossoming.

Down these steps went Joyce with the biggest pair of scissors she could find. Back again in something under five minutes she came, with a nosegay so huge she was compelled to hold her dress-skirt in either hand to help carry it into the room.

She deposited the flowers in a heap on the floor—snowy hawthorn boughs, "deep tulips dashed with fiery dew, laburnums, dropping-wells of fire."

"There's a lot more coming," she cried gleefully. "I came upon Kathleen just now, and told her to bring all the hyacinths in pots she could lay her hands upon. Ah, here she is!" This added as a remarkably pretty and, for her station, daintily-attired damsel appeared upon the scene burdened with two full-flowering hyacinths in pots.

This was Kathleen Donovan, the gardener's daughter, who acted as maid to the two young ladies. Hers was a face that in another sphere of life might have won for her a ducal coronet, or at least a dangerous reputation as a successful beauty. Not a faultlessly beautiful face, but a face so full of sparkle, of bewitching brightness, and changeful coquetry that one looked at it, and looked again, without having the remotest notion what shape or size were the features, what colour were eyes and hair. It was a typical Irish face, not the face one is accustomed to associate with orange baskets and green-and-red shawls, but rather with the harps and the Irish melodies, the breeze-blown Norah Creinas, and the sweet vales "where the bright waters meet." Her manner was Irish too—soft, arch, bewitching—though with an English veneer upon it, caught from constant daily contact with her young mistresses.

"Ever so many more, Kathleen," cried Joyce. "I am going to fill the fireplace with hyacinths. I want this room to be as unlike a study and as much like a bower as we can make it. Never mind what your father says, bring everything you can get hold of that has leaves and flowers."

Off went Kathleen; down went the two girls on their knees, breaking branchlets from the boughs of laburnum and hawthorn, arranging the big yellow tulips against a plumed background of lilac, doing, in fact, their very utmost to convert this chosen seat of Minerva into a shrine fit for Flora herself.

"It's like desecration," murmured Mab, looking remorsefully towards the bookshelves, where the topsy-turvy volumes abowed mournfully through a bowery arrangement of bright-tinted posies.

"It's consecration, you mean," cried Joyce. "These dry old walls have never held so much beauty before;" and on went her fingers faster than ever. Her eyes sparkled, her curly hair strayed across her forehead, she sang merry little snatches of old-world ballads which a modern fashion has revived. Assuredly the May sun,

after climbing the Mendips that morning, turning the forgotten battle-fields of old Gloucestershire into fields of "cloth of gold" with buttercups and celandine, could find no daintier work for its midday hours than throwing its light and its shadow on this blithe picture of Joyce Shenstone on the floor amid her bright spring flowers.

Mab lifted up a finger. "Hush! There's a step on the gravel," she said, not inaptly in the middle of Joyce's carol that—

"Every fair has a sweetheart there,
And the fiddler's standing by."

Down went all Joyce's posies in a moment.

"It's Frank!" she cried, jumping to her feet. And before Mab could have counted ten on her fingers she had flown down the garden steps, and might have been seen out there in the sunshine talking and laughing with a tall, dark young man of about six- or eight-and-twenty. Now looking up into his face, now looking down at the pebbles at her feet, with bright, quick, happy glances and smiles that left no doubt as to the footing on which the two stood towards each other.

For of course she had a lover—this gay, beautiful girl—and of course (equally as beseeemed a gay, beautiful girl) he paired well with her. He was tall, dark-haired, dark-eyed, and, if a little thin, yet withal it was not a thinness that implied want of bodily vigour, but rather an extreme of nervous energy, and a sufficiency of muscle.

Joyce dashed at once into a glowing description of her morning's performance.

"We have had such a delightful morning, Mab and I," she began; "no end of fun in father's study."

"Fun in a study? Oh!" This in a voice of comic horror.

"Well, why not? We've only turned everything as nearly upside down as possible. If you'd been there we should have done it in half the time."

"Is it likely I should have aided and abetted? I'm only surprised that Mab should have allowed such iniquity to be perpetrated."

"She couldn't help it. You know I'm the ruling spirit in the house. Come in at once, Frank, and pronounce an opinion on our handiwork. From your first exclamation we shall be able to judge what father's will be when he walks into the room."

But Frank demurred vigorously to this proposal.

"You know it's my last day with you.

I'm off to London by the first train to-morrow morning. I've no end to say to you. Two are company; three, begging Mab's pardon, are not. Come into the orchard, and let us see how the fruit-blossoms are getting on!"

Meantime Mab and Kathleen indoors were bringing their work of decoration to a close, Mab with a sudden diminution of energy, which told either of a decrease of interest in her task now that the ruling spirit had departed, or else of headache and languor, brought on probably by the heavy odour of the masses of sweet-scented flowers they had packed into such a small space. An atmosphere compounded of the scents of hyacinth, hawthorn, narcissus, and lilac, would be assuredly more likely to suit the organs of bee or butterfly than those of a super-sensitive human being.

More than once Mab put her hand to her head. Kathleen fitting in and out of the garden could not possibly have felt overpowered by the fragrance, but, nevertheless, she had suddenly grown silent, and an expression somewhat akin to sullenness had chased away the smiles and sunshine from her pretty face.

At the foot of the garden steps, with a final pair of hyacinth pots in her arms, she stood still, looking after Joyce and her lover on their way towards the orchard gate.

"You're no prettier than I am; you're taller maybe—a trifle, that's all—but that's no reason why—" she began muttering.

"Kathleen, I'm waiting," called Mab from within. "Put those two flower-pots just within the fireplace—so. Now I don't believe we could find room for any more if we tried our hardest. Don't go away, I want to ask you about your brother. Has he really made up his mind to go to London—will nothing make him give up the idea?"

"Nothing, Miss Mab, I'm sure. He has as good as said good-bye to all of us and means, I know, to set off some time to-day," answered Kathleen, evidently with an effort bringing back her thoughts to answer her young mistress's questions.

"But he has not said good-bye to me, Kathleen. He must come in and see me, I've something special to say to him."

"I told him so, miss, only this morning. I told him how good you had been to him, lending him books and all that; but he said he shouldn't dream of coming up to the house unless you sent for him."

"Well, then, I'll send for him. You

must go down to the cottage and tell him I'm waiting in here to see him. I want to know exactly what he is going to do in London, and I want to make him give me a solemn promise that he won't join any of those dreadful secret societies."

Kathleen's face brightened.

"Ah, if you could make him do that, miss, it's a heavy load you'd be lifting from mother's heart," she said, in her excitement unconsciously drifting into her father's brogue—a feat she did not often accomplish, for her mother, being a thorough-bred cockney, had impressed upon her daughter from her earliest years that all such eccentricities of speech were to be avoided as indicative of kinship with an inferior race of people.

Mab began to fear she had been indiscreet.

"Don't tell Ned what I want him here for," she said, "or perhaps he won't come. Only say I want to say good-bye to him."

"Do you think he'd refuse anything to you, Miss Mab?" cried Kathleen, as she departed on her mission, "why, he worships the very ground you walk on."

Kathleen shut the glass door as she went down the steps into the garden. The room seemed to grow more and more stifling. Mab's head went round. She sank into her father's easy chair beside his writing-table, feeling drowsy and stupid. Her eyes closed, she would get up in a minute, she thought, unlock the door leading into the hall, open the opposite window and let a full current of fresh air sweep through the room, and then straightway her head drooped upon her hand, she leaned backwards in her chair, falling into a deep dreamless sleep.

Five, ten, fifteen minutes passed, and there came the sound of a footfall on the garden steps, a face looked in through the glass door, the handle turned, and a man entered the room.

It was Ned Donovan, the gardener's son. His face, like his sister's, proclaimed his nationality. He was the beau-ideal of an Irishman of the heroic, enthusiastic type, the type one cannot bear to think of as priest-ridden or demagogue-driven, and yet which so frequently falls into the trammels of either priest or demagogue. He had the bluest of eyes, the most chestnut of curly hair, a woman's mouth and chin, and a carriage of head and shoulders such as one sees in the soldier-Irishman and in no one else. Under his arm he carried a couple of volumes of Carlyle's "Frederick

the Great," and if one had opened the first volume Mab's name would have been seen on the title-page.

He gave a great start of surprise when he caught sight of the sleeping girl. Then he too became conscious of the oppressive atmosphere. "It's enough to suffocate her," he muttered, doing what Mab had proposed to do, opening both doors and letting a free current of air pass through.

Mab stirred in her sleep as the sweet, fresh breeze swept over her face. Something of colour came into her pale cheeks, her lips half parted, as though about to smile. In sleep Mab always looked an idealised likeness of the Mab who went about the house with cupboard keys, or else knitting-pins, in her fingers. It was so now. The look of anxious, troubled thought had disappeared, in its stead there was an expression of serenity and peace, which brought out a latent beauty never seen in the Mab of waking life.

Ned's expression as he gazed down upon her was first one of admiration, next one of sharp, sudden pain.

"Those cursed walls which rank and wealth set up!" he muttered, breathing hard and clenching his big strong fingers into the palms of his hand, till naught but nerve and muscle showed in them.

He stood for a few moments looking down on her irresolutely. Should he make some slight stir in the room, rouse her from her sleep, and say his good-bye?

"I should like to have heard her sweet voice once again," he said to himself; "Heaven only knows when and how I may hear it next."

But at this very moment there came the sound of another voice, and this not a sweet one, from the other side of the door. "Mab! Joyce! where are you hidden?" It asked once, twice, and again. It was a weak, tinkling little voice, all head-notes, and those out of tune. And it was a voice Ned knew he should never forget, since he had heard it assert one day, all heedless of his presence, "Mab, really you carry things too far. The idea of lending Herbert Spencer to a gardener's boy. You had much better send him a spelling-book."

So with one more look and one more sigh, and a muttered "Heaven bless you, Miss Mab," the handsome Irishman departed, closing behind him the glass door leading into the garden exactly at the moment that Mrs. Shenstone turned the handle and entered the room from the hall.

"Mab, Joyce, are you here?" she queried for the last time as she crossed the threshold. Then she stood still, looking round her incredulously. Was it daughters of hers who had wrought this havoc in the quiet, neat, little study? "Dear me, dear me!" she soliloquised, "where do they get their notions from? Some unheard-of preposterous idea is for ever coming into their heads. One day one thing, another day something else equally far-fetched and ridiculous."

It may be noted in passing, that for the past twenty years of her life two complaints had been perpetually on Mrs. Shenstone's lips. The first had reference to her husband: "He spends the whole of his time in his study; except at meals I never see him," it had run. The second related to her daughters, the number and variety of their ideas.

"Where do they get them from? Certainly not from me," had been her all but daily question and answer, as first Mab and then Joyce would startle her into wonder.

It was certainly not from her that the two girls derived their individuality. Her nature was too superficial, too slightly cut, as it were, to impress itself upon anything, even her own children.

Physically, even, they were at opposite poles. Their one point of resemblance to her was their long, slender figures. Her face might have been moulded in another planet for all likeness it bore to theirs. It was colourless, trifling in feature, devoid of expression. Any child with four pricks of a pencil within a round O might have drawn it on a slate. But trivial and uninteresting though it might be, to its possessor it was a mine of wealth, for it gave her subject for thought, and occupation for every one of her waking hours. Only her looking-glass could have rendered an account of the number of admiring glances Mrs. Shenstone bestowed upon herself between sunrise and sunset. Now, after her first hasty look round the transformed study and exclamation of surprise, she walked as naturally to the mirror above the fire-place as the duck walks to the pond. Midway, however, between the door and the mantel-piece, she came upon Mab asleep in the easy-chair, and stopped with another exclamation upon her lips.

"How extraordinary! Another whim, is it? Are they going to turn this room into a sleeping apartment, or what have they in their heads now?"

She broke off for a moment, then her

thoughts went zigzagging into exclamations of surprise as before. "Dear me, dear me! How remarkably plain and old-looking the child is getting! I declare, she looks years older than I do! Now if she were only a little more like me in the face (here a complacent side-glance towards the mirror) people might think she was my elder sister! Oh dear, what's this on the floor!"

The last sentence was added with a little accession of energy as her foot caught in the volumes which Ned Donovan, in his haste to open door and windows, had deposited on the floor at Mab's feet.

Mab opened her eyes with a start. For an instant she looked about her confusedly, then an expression of amazement went sweeping over her face.

"Why—why," she stammered, looking well over Mrs. Shenstone's head with wide-opened yet unseeing eyes, "when did you come home, papa? Why didn't I hear you come in?"

She jumped up from her chair, then suddenly paused, passing her hand vaguely over her forehead and eyes.

"Oh—h, what is it? Where has he gone?" she asked in a bewildered tone, looking about her uncertainly.

Mrs. Shenstone went to her and took her hand.

"Why, Mab, you must be dreaming!" she cried. "Wake up! you look uncanny and bewildered."

Mab drew the deep breath of an awakening sleeper.

"I suppose I must have been dreaming," she said slowly, "but I could have declared that my father stood there just in front of me looking, oh, so terribly sad."

Mrs. Shenstone pointed to the clock. "Five minutes to twelve," she said, "your father has just a minute ago stepped out of the train on to the platform, and I should imagine was looking anything but sad at the prospect of seeing us all again."

CHRONICLES OF SCOTTISH COUNTIES.

AYRSHIRE.

WITH its eighty miles of coast-line indented and recessed; with its rivers running their whole course within its limits; with its wild hills, its undulating pastures and rich cultivated levels, Ayrshire is rather a principality to itself than a mere political county division. It has its own literature too, rich and characteristic, and its history

connecting it with the brightest names in Scottish annals,

The nurse of Wallace and of Bruce

would still be more interesting if we could recover the lost part of it, and trace to their origin those mingled strains of blood and race which have given such richness of temperament to the sons and daughters of Ayr.

The threefold division of Ayrshire suggests a Celtic character. We have Cunningham, where the Saxon has left his mark, the country of rich and fertile levels; the Kyle, of mingled hill and plain, noted for its fine stalwart sons and lovely lasses; with Carrick, the Ayrshire Highlands, where the waters of bonnie Doon take their rise among lonely lochs and moora. And these divisions may be kept in mind by repeating the old stave which celebrates their respective products:

Kyle for a man,
Carrick for a coo,
Cunninghame for butter and cheese,
And Galloway for woo'.

For Galloway is included in the stave, not only for the sake of the rhyme—which shows the elasticity of the Scottish dialect, for, if cow and wool can be made to ring together, almost anything is possible in that line—but also as the two countries seem to have a natural interest in each other, as if they had formed an alliance in some far-off time—alike against Borderers and Highlanders—an alliance which still subsists in some unacknowledged way.

Carrick, indeed, was probably once part of Galloway, and the father of Robert Bruce acquired the earldom by marriage with the descendant of the ancient lords of the wild Gaels. From the shores of Lochryan, the Vale of Glenapp stretches up with fine wild scenery that seems a fitting accompaniment to the lonely moors of Galloway. And the chief settlement in those parts—the village of Ballantrae—is secluded and isolated enough to suit the most ardent lover of solitude, lying on a lonely seashore, where Stincharwater forms a rugged creek, once haunted much by smugglers and gipsies, and overhung by a rude crag with its appropriate ruined tower.

Still there is a well-frequented highway all along this wild coast that rises sometimes to a bold headland, such as Bennane Head, where grand views may be had of land and sea, the blue hills of Bute and Cantyre lying on the horizon like the islands of the blessed, and the dark mass of Ailsa Craig rising midway in its gloomy, lonely state.

"A much admired piece of the Lord's workmanship is Ellsey," writes an old Puritan traveller, "where there breeds abundance of Solemne geese." Such a breed is not unknown on the mainland; but here our solemn friend refers to the Solan goose, upon which it seems the natives were accustomed to hold gruesome feasts, almost smothered in the unctuous fat which spouted forth at each incision of the carving knife.

Ailsa Craig is part of the county of Ayr, and, besides its geese, feeds a colony of goats and rabbits. No one has had the courage to live there in these modern days, although it is said there are fragments to be found of a ruined fort, which may have been the hold of wandering pirates from the North.

With Ailsa in sight, the road winds in and out among a succession of wild precipices, which bear the name of Games Loup. Tradition has been busy about the place, and, although the particular Games, whose leap into the raging sea below is not satisfactorily identified, yet ballad literature associates the spot with the villainies of a certain Bluebeard, the fause Sir John, who met with his match at last in the person of fair May Collean.

This young woman Sir John enticed from her father's hall, and, on the pretence of taking her to his own castle—generally identified with the ruined tower of Carelton—he led the way to the brink of the precipice, which had already been the scene of his crimes.

"Loup off the steed," says fause Sir John,
 "Your bridal bed you see;
 For it's seven Kings' daughters I have drowned here,
 And the eighth I'll make out with thee."

But penurious even in his ferocity, he bids his bride disrobe.

"Cast off, cast off your silks so fine,
 And lay them by on a stone;
 For they are o'er good and o'er costly
 To rot in the salt sea-foam."

With assumed meekness the fair May submits, but with instinctive modesty she bids her false knight turn his head away as she disrobes. The knight complies, and the maid takes advantage of his weakness by pushing him over the edge of the precipice. And then, bidding farewell to the mangled corpse of her false lover, she rides home with the spoils of the vanquished knight.

Wild and lonely as the way may be, there is little satisfaction in coming to the region of manufactures and railways, for Girvan is but a dingy industrial town, with-

out any redeeming point of interest, although the Water of Girvan in its course towards Maybole affords many picturesque scenes with well-wooded pleasaunces and handsome mansions.

And Maybole, on Girvan Water, is a town with a character of its own, derived from its former importance as the chief town in the baillage of Carrick, the seat of justice and of government, with its ancient houses—or remains of them—incorporated in modern buildings, formerly occupied by the aristocracy of the district, or by the chief functionaries of the courts. Its chief interest now is in the ancient residence of the Kennedys, with quaint outside stair, whose carvings are said to represent the features of a band of gipsies who wrought much scandal in the House of Cassilis.

The hero of the story is Sir John Faa, a gipsy knight; and we know that some among the Scottish gipsies rose to distinction, and even founded families which came to high estate. Thus, this Sir John Faa, of Dunbar, had been admitted to the society of the Countess of Cassilis before her marriage, and had made a strong impression upon her heart. The Earl himself, grim and dour and middle-aged, had little about him to secure the affections of an unwilling bride; and, on one occasion, when the Earl was in England, attending, as one account has it, the assembly of divines at Westminster, Sir John, having notice of his absence, came to see his lady fair at Cassilis Castle, some five miles from Maybole on the banks of the River Doon. He was attended by a body-guard of the men of his tribe, for, knight or no knight, he had not renounced his connection with the wanderers of the bush and brae.

The gypsies cam' to the Yerl o' Cassilis yett,
 And oh! but they sang sweetly;
 They sang sae sweet and sae complete,
 That down cam' our fair ladye.

The poor lady, overcome by the sweetness and strength of her passion, could no more withstand the appeal of her lover than the needle can resist the magnet.

Gae tak' frae me this gay mantil,
 And bring to me a plaidie;
 For if kith and kin and a' had sworn,
 I'll follow my gypsy laddie.

And so the band rode away triumphantly with the fair Countess in the midst of them; but hardly were they out of sight when the Earl arrived unexpectedly at the Castle. The flight of his wife was at once reported to him, and mustering his armed followers the Earl galloped at their head in pursuit of the gipsies, and

overtaking them before they crossed the river, made the whole party prisoners, and brought them back to the Castle. There, on his bare word, the whole of the gipsies, fifteen or more, including Sir John, were hung upon the dule tree, which still stands before the ruined gateway; while the Earl, with inhuman grip, held his wife to the window that she might behold the dying struggles of her lover. Her own fate was to suffer a life-long imprisonment at the family dower-house in Maybole, where, according to tradition, she spent her days in embroidering tapestry, with which the old house was once hung throughout. The famous outside stair, carved with the contorted faces of the dying, was built, it is said, for her behoof.

At an earlier date than that attributed to this story occurred a famous meeting and disputation between John Knox and Quintin Kennedy, the last Abbot of Corregal. This was held in a large upper room in the house of the Provost of Maybole College, a religious community endowed by the Kennedys. Both sides claimed to have had the best of the controversy; and tradition has it that while Knox came to the combat armed only with his Bible, the Abbot brought with him three wain-loads of books and manuscripts to aid him in his argument. It is further said, that in joy at the assumed victory of their champion, John Knox, the populace seized upon this vast and valuable store of literature and made a huge bonfire of it.

Returning to the coast again, some miles beyond Girvan we reach the ruins of Turnberry Castle on a commanding height above the sea—the stronghold this of the ancient Earls of Carrick, among whom is numbered the famous Robert Bruce.

From Turnberry Point glared the mysterious beacon-fire that summoned the Bruce from the opposite coast of Arran when his English foes were in possession of his castle—a signal agreed upon between Bruce and his friends in Carrick, if it should prove that the Castle was weakly guarded and open to attack. The fire was never lighted by Bruce's friends, for Lord Clifford held the Castle in strength, and had just been reinforced; but as the beacon-light led the Bruce to victory and virtually brought independence to Scotland, tradition assigned it to some supernatural source. And Walter Scott writes in his poem, "The Lord of the Isles," anent the same beacon-light, how

Grey-haired eld
A superstitious credence held,
That never did a mortal hand
Wake its broad glare on Carrick strand;
Nay, and that on the selfsame night
When Bruce crossed o'er, still gleams the light—
Yearly it gleams o'er mount and moor,
And glittering wave and crimsoned shore.

Along the rugged, rock-bound coast we come to another famous castle, rebuilt now and modernised, but holding still the same commanding site. This is Culzean, or Colean, Castle, the seat of the Marquis of Ailsa, the representative of the Kennedys, Earls of Cassilis, whose wide-reaching power has been noticed in our account of Galloway.

The Caves below Culzean, in the Cove of fairy fame, have long been celebrated, and were probably a seat of superstitious rites in the mysterious days of old. Strange footmarks of uncanny creatures were long shown upon the sandy floors of the cave, constantly renewed as smoothed away by the incoming tide. The old Puritan traveller already quoted bears a grudging testimony to these mysterious footprints, but evidently considered the sight of such wonders an indifferent substitute for the hospitable entertainment he expected but did not get. Indeed, he gives a very poor account of the housekeeping of a Scotch noble of the period: "The castle hall very sluttishly kept, unawsept, dishes, benches, and wooden cups thrown up and down."

Along the countryside the hills, and dells, and caves hereabouts were famed as the favourite haunts of fairy-folk, a tradition preserved in Robert Burns's charming poem of Hallowe'en:

Upon that night when fairies light
On Cassilis Downans dance,
Or owre the lays in splendid blaze
On sprightly coursers prance;
Or for Colean the route is ta'en,
Beneath the moon's pale beams
There up the Cove, to stray and rove
Among the rocks and streams,
To sport that night.

There is but one more castle on the rugged coast—Dunure—a mere fragment now, perched on a bold headland fretted by the wild sea waves. And then we are within the curving Bay of Ayr; and the pleasant town of Ayr stands before us, with its Auld and New Brigs—ever memorable to the lover of Burns—and with all its modern brightness and its smartness there stands pre-eminent in the scanty display of towers and steeples, the square tower that tradition ascribes to William Wallace. And if there were any excuse for roaming the quiet, respectable streets of Ayr in the

small hours of the morning, we might expect a glimpse of the poet, as he strolls, not very steadily perhaps, from the Auld Brig end :

The drowsy dungeon clock had numbered two,
And Wallace Tow'r had sworn the fact was true,
The tide-swol'n Firth, wi' sullen sounding roar
Through the still night dash'd hoarse along the shore.

All about in a narrow circle are the various stations of the Burns pilgrimage, a track worn by the never-ending succession of pilgrims from the whole world round.

Here is the clay biggin where Burns was born ; not far off is Mauchline, whose lasses are still admired by succeeding generations, and whose kirk was the scene of that old festival which the poet drew to a very hair.

I'm gaun to Mauchline Holy Fair,
To spend an hour in daffia.

Close by Mauchline is the Farm of Moss-giel, where some of the most fruitful years of the poet's life were passed. But Rab was a roving blade, and has left associations connected with him all over Ayr and Galloway. At Kirkoswald he learned to survey and gauge, accomplishments which suggested his future career as an Excise officer.

Searching auld wives' barrels
Och hon ! the day !

At Irvine Burns learnt the art of flax dressing, and he has made the Kilmarnock wabsters famous all over the world.

Between Ayr and Irvine lies Troon, which has recently come into favour as a health resort, but which has not otherwise made its mark in local annals. But Irvine is an old town of repute—a royal burgh and sea-port, and was much admired by our old Puritan tourist, as “daintily situate both upon a navigable arm of the sea, and in a dainty, pleasant, level, champaign country.” Possibly our usually grumbling predecessor was disposed to favourable impressions by the good wine which was plentiful at Irvine, for he reports that “hence they trade much into Bordeaux in France, and are now furnished with good wine.” At Ayr, too, our traveller remarks that “most inhabiting in the town are merchants, and trading into and bred in France.”

Beyond Irvine along the coast lies Salt-coats, formerly noted for its brine-pans, but whose population migrated mostly to Ardrossan, a modern bathing place with the old ruined castle of Portincross in the neighbourhood. This was the seat of the Stewarts, and can still show the remains of an old gun, which is said to have been re-

covered from the wreck of one of the ships of the Spanish Armada. The Castle of Ardrossan, which belonged to the Montgomerys of Eglinton, was razed to the ground by Cromwell, who, it is said, conveyed the materials to Ayr, where he built a strong fort which is still in existence. This destruction was to punish the son of the house, who was an ardent Royalist, while the father had been from the beginning of the civil war a staunch Covenanter. Thus father and son fought on opposite sides at Marston Moor.

Eglinton Castle itself, the chief seat of the family, is two miles to the north of Irvine, and just beyond is the little burgh and sea-port of Kilwinning—noted for its popinjay, and for a curious story which concerns the landing of an emigrant band of Freemasons, as early as the thirteenth century. The Montgomerys, as the name implies, were originally a Norman family, and they acquired Eglinton by the marriage of the famous John Montgomery, who took prisoner the Percy at the battle of Chevy Chase. Down to the end of the sixteenth century the Montgomerys were chiefly employed in a long and embittered feud with their neighbours, the Cunninghams, Lords of Glencairn. The ruined walls of Kerelaw, the ancient residence of the Cunninghams, sacked and burnt by the Eglintons of the period, remain to attest the vindictive nature of these family quarrels.

Passing the projecting Cape of Fairlie Head, we are fairly within the grand river estuary,

Where Cumray's isles with verdant link
Close the fair entrance of the Clyde.

And here the tall masts of sea-going ships, the white sails of innumerable pleasure craft, and the long procession of steamers passing up and down with every tide, betoken the wealth and enterprise of the great commercial capital of Scotland ; while the hills of Bute and Argyle, that bound the horizon, remind us that we are here at the portals of the wild scenes of the Western Highlands.

The last town on the coast of Ayr in this direction is Largs, where there is an ancient ferry to the Island of Bute, on the other side of the firth ; and on the plain by the sea-shore, to the northward, was fought, in the thirteenth century, the battle of Largs, where the invading forces of Norwegian Haco were defeated in a hand-to-hand fight with the hastily raised levies of the adjoining districts. by The Norwegians,

in their chronicles, make light of this affair, which is represented as a sort of chance medley, brought on by the running ashore of some of their galleys through stress of weather. But the consequences of the battle show that it was of importance, as it put an end to the Norwegian schemes of conquest, while the aged King drew off his shattered fleet towards the Orcaades, and soon ended his life in disappointment among those wild islands.

To the north of Largs is the pleasant valley of Brisbane, dominated by the mansion of that ilk; a name which some devoted son of Ayr has planted in the Antipodes, where the flourishing town of Brisbane has far outstripped in importance its Scottish godmother.

Retracing our steps through the inland scenery of Ayr, we may reach once more the water of Irvine, that divides Cunningham from Kyle; and here, on the left bank of the stream, we shall find that the fine modern town of Kilmarnock has far outgrown our notions of the place derived from Robert Burns's familiar allusions to "Auld Killie" and its "wabsters." Connected with Kilmarnock by a long walk or avenue, is Riccarton, the traditional birthplace of the great Scottish hero, Willie Wallace hight. In the neighbourhood, too, we have the ruins of Dean Castle, the once noble mansion of the Boyds family, Earls of Kilmarnock; a fine quadrangular, semi-fortified dwelling, which was accidentally burnt in 1735.

Nearer the coast, too, is the massive ruin of Dundonald Castle, which gives a title to the family of Cochrane—a title familiar in the records of naval heroism and daring, as borne by that brave and adventurous Admiral, Lord Dundonald, whose life reads like a page of romance.

Some miles from Kilmarnock is Fenwick, where Covenanters and Cameronians especially flourished. Its old kirk-yard is full of the monuments of its martyrs, who suffered during the cruel persecutions of James the Second's reign, with inscriptions constantly renewed by volunteer sculptors of the "Old Mortality" type. One of these memorials of an unfortunate Cameronian, who was decapitated on the village green, is noticeable for its quaint Scottish rhyme, the crown, or croon referred to, being evidently not of a terrestrial character.

Thus was the head that was to wear a croon
A football made by a profane dragoon.

But the Cameronians of Ayrshire could

fight as well as suffer. Drumclog is not far distant, where Claverhouse and his dragoons met with an almost fatal discomfiture at the hands of a handful of enthusiasts, who had met to hear the Word, but armed and well prepared to wield the sword of Gideon. The fight has been well described, with a novelist's license as to facts, in "Old Mortality."

One of the band who fought at Drumclog was William Cleland, who subsequently became Lieutenant-Colonel of the famous Cameronian regiment. This regiment was raised soon after the revolution of 1688, an event that was welcomed with enthusiasm by the Cameronians as a national deliverance. And thus in the following year, when there was a question of raising forces to support the new administration, the Cameronians enrolled themselves with ardour in a new regiment, which was to consist entirely of godly men, with ministers of the Cameronian faith, and which should combine exercises with the wielding of pikes and muskets. The regiment numbered eighteen hundred strong, and was raised, according to report, in a single day. With the Earl of Angus, one of the renowned Douglasses, as their Colonel, the regiment soon came into action. It was just after the battle of Killiecrankie and the death of the old enemy Claverhouse. The Cameronians, as a regiment, had not shared in the battle, and were now hurried up to the front to keep the victorious Highlanders in check. The regiment had advanced as far as Dunkeld, when they were attacked in great force by Mackay, who had succeeded Claverhouse in command of the Jacobite levies. The dragoons, who accompanied the Cameronians, at once bolted and left them to their fate. But although surrounded and greatly outnumbered, the Cameronians made such a stout fight against their enemies that these were beaten off and dispersed. The regiment, however, suffered severely, and Cleland, the hero of Drumclog, was slain.

This success raised the reputation of the Cameronians, and they were soon detailed for service in the Netherlands, where the oriflamme of St. Louis flouted over the tent of his magnificent successor who conducted in person the leisurely siege of Namur, while the Dutch-English King watched him at a convenient distance. Namur fell, and Louis retired to celebrate his triumph, his periwig crowned with laurels; and then our William determined

upon a downright blow at the French army under Marshal Luxembourg; an army which felt that it had done its fighting, and was now entitled to enjoy itself. Marshal Luxembourg, however, was not to be caught asleep, and the surprise that William had prepared for him had a disastrous result for the English division of the combined army, under Mackay, which bore the whole brunt of the fight. Among these were the Cameronians, who held their ground with grim determination against the whole force of the French army, the gentlemen of the royal household, in all their gallant attire of silks and plumes, being at last brought up against the decimated ranks of these sturdy sons of ploughmen and herdsmen from the hills and dales of Ayrshire and the Borders. When the regiment fell back it had lost its Colonel, the brave Douglas, most of its officers, and the greater part of the rank and file.

From the date of this disastrous battle of Steinkirk the regiment began to lose its peculiar constitution. Its ranks were replenished with recruits whose religious faith was subjected to no rigorous tests, and the young officers who joined had no relih for sermons and exhortations, so that before long the Cameronians ceased to affect any peculiar sanctity. Afterwards the Cameronians were enrolled as the 26th Regiment of the Line, now the First Battalion of Scottish Rifles; and according to Walter Scott, "in memory of the original principles of the sect out of which it was raised each soldier was, and perhaps is still, obliged to show himself possessed of a Bible when his necessaries are inspected."

If we are interested in the Cameronian sect we may reach another of their battle-fields on Aird's Moss, where Richard Cameron, the leader, who gave his name to the movement, was defeated and slain. And beyond is Muirkirk, on the borders of Lanarkshire, where woods and green fields are succeeded by hillocks of coal-dust; and the smoke of ironworks begins to darken the air.

ST. ANDREASBERG.

ALWAYS the same answer: "St. Andreasberg! Never heard of such a place. Only fifteen miles from the Brocken, you say? Ah! yes, in the Hartz Mountains. Yes, we know them, but as for this St. Andreasberg—"

Now in London we listened to this quite patiently; after all, we cannot expect railway officials to be omniscient, and it was rather pleasant to think that, for once, we were going to escape from the beaten track of English tourists. When, however, we found that the same ignorance prevailed in Düsseldorf, from which town the place we were seeking could not possibly be a hundred miles distant, the affair became more serious. The most obsequious of German station-masters declared we must have made a mistake in the name. He had never heard of St. Andreasberg; consequently no such place existed, at least, not within a hundred miles of Düsseldorf.

Fortunately we had with us a letter bearing the St. Andreasberg post-mark, and this we produced. Now, the German official mind has an instinctive respect for printed matter; what all our persuasions, promises, and threats had failed to achieve, this stamp at once accomplished. With a profound bow, he ushered us out, assuring us that now, as he had something to go upon, we might safely leave the matter in his hands; which we did most joyfully. Nor was our confidence misplaced; before we went to bed that night we were in the possession of all the information we could possibly require for our journey.

Once on the right track, nothing could be easier than our journey. Ottbergen, Northeim, and Schartzfels were our only changes, but we paid the never-failing penalty for our audacity in quitting the ordinary route. At Ottbergen, the man smiled significantly when we asked for first-class tickets. He had none. First-class passengers, he said, did not travel by that line; and we soon discovered why. German trains at the best of times are not rapid, but this one hardly seemed to move at all. It drew up at all sorts of queer unexpected places—barn-doors, windmills, cornfields, anywhere in fact where the engine-driver spied a friend with whom he wished to exchange a word. No matter how much we were delayed there was no danger of accident, the guard took care to inform us, for the train we were in was the only one that ever travelled on the line.

At Schartzfels the locomotive arrangements were still more primitive. Only two carriages ran to St. Andreasberg. The whole of the way lies up a steep incline, the train in some parts running through thick forests. The authorities, not wishing to incur the expense of fencing in the line, have caused a hell to be attached

to the engine, and this the driver is directed from time to time to ring. The effect is most wonderful. It was a lovely moonlight night when we left Schartzfels; and as the little train, with its tinkling bell, made its way slowly winding up the hillside through the dark pine-woods, past the silvery streams, we seemed to be entering an enchanted land. Even the voices of the people, as they spoke in their soft, Hanoverian German, had a ring of music that accorded well with the beauty of the scene.

At the little station of St. Andreasberg, we found a queer old coach waiting to take us to the hotel which, in olden times, had been the Rathshaus. The host—one of the fattest men it has ever been my fate to see—welcomed us warmly, and, what was more to the point, provided us with an excellent dinner.

The next day we began our acquaintance with St. Andreasberg. It consists of one long row of houses winding about in a picturesque fashion that is perfectly inexplicable until you have made your way up to the top house, when, looking down, you discover that the village is built on the side of a hill so nearly perpendicular that to walk straight up it would be almost impossible, at least for anything but a chamois. This hill is the very centre of the Hartz range; the peaks of the higher mountains, dark and threatening with their pine-forest covering, rise up on every side and, by contrast, enhance the peaceful beauty of the valley around, where the foliage is lighter and more varied, and the scarlet berries of the mountain-ash gleam brightly against the gloom above.

A singular charm hangs over the village. It is not beautiful, but it seems to smile up at you in a comfortable, easy fashion; it wears an air of such ineffable peace that you feel, as you look at it, you could not find in your heart to wish one stone different, for it is just as a village should be. No two houses are alike; some are so low that in passing you can touch the roof, whilst by their side a huge, wooden, block-like building may rise. Each man has built where and how the fancy took him, architects evidently being of non-account. Some old, rambling cottages must have stood untouched for centuries (in the records of 1539 St. Andreasberg is spoken of as a town), whilst at every turn you stumble over old stone entrances, odd-looking steps, quaint crosses, and a hundred

tokens of a bygone age. About a mile from the village are some silver mines; one at least is still in working, though I believe with little profit to its owner. It is to these mines that St. Andreasberg owes its existence.

In the fifteenth century the Hohnsteiner Counts being, as usual, in want of money, began to turn an eager ear to the monks, who insisted that more wealth lay buried in the mountains than grew upon their surface. In those days, however, it was no easy task to collect a band of miners. The work was regarded as uncanny; for who knew to what dangers you were exposed if once you quitted the fair light of heaven? But the Counts were determined men; they scoured the country for a hundred miles around, and at length, by threats and bribes (miners in those days enjoyed a personal liberty and immunity from taxation undreamed of by other men), in the year 1487 they succeeded in forming a settlement, and the work was begun. For centuries the mines were most productive; not only silver, but copper, granite, quartz, and hornblend were found there in abundance; but now, if we may judge by the leisurely way the work is conducted, their wealth is exhausted.

In addition to mining the Andreasbergers have another occupation, unique in its way. They are the greatest canary trainers and exporters in the world. In every cottage you find rows of little wooden cages full of canaries. These, when they have been taught to sing, the peasants sell to the manager of the great warehouse, who exports them to all countries. Thousands of birds are sent every year from St. Andreasberg to America. What first incited the inhabitants of this out-of-the-way little place to such an unusual pursuit no one seems to know. All that the villagers can tell you is, that their fathers, grandfathers, great-grandfathers, to the first syllable of recorded time, have trained canaries; but where they found their canaries to train none can say.

Gentle and inoffensive, the Andreasbergers look as if they have been underfed for generations. They are very poor. Two shillings a day is the utmost a man can earn, whilst the average wages are much lower. Still, though there are signs of poverty on every side, you neither see beggars nor hear complaints. The people have never known what it is to be richer, so they take it for granted that perpetual pinching and saving is the natural order

of life. More than once I was struck with the patient endurance with which they submitted to the hardships of their lot. In comparing them with the noisy, happy, importunate Italian poor, their conduct appears almost heroic; nay, there is something awful in their resignation, for it comes from their having no conception of brightness or happiness in life. I never saw an Andreasberger dance, or heard him laugh. Their life is hard, and they take it hardly.

In addition to the native population, there is a small colony of visitors, seemingly of the professional class, with a sprinkling of poor nobles. They are all more or less invalids, and you see them wandering off on a morning, armed with any number of pamphlets, and the never-failing spectacles and umbrella. A few officers, either ill themselves or in attendance upon some relative, make up the little community. Society there is none; those who seek diversion will be driven to Hartzburg, some twenty miles away.

The visitors seem almost as poor as the natives; there is something pitiful in the way they hesitate before ordering a cup of coffee. Yet some of them have grand old names. Last year there were three barons, whose titles dated back to the days of the old German Reich. They have gradually become poorer and poorer; and, as all their energy has been devoted to trying to save their few sterile acres and tumble-down castles, they are only just beginning to perceive, now that it is too late, that they have slipped behind in the race of the world, and that their places have been taken by a harder-headed, richer, plebeian people. Conservative of course they all are, and of a narrower type than we have ever known in England. For them Tartarus itself was not more deep and impassable than the gulf that separates those who have no "von" before their names, from the happy possessors of this precious particle. I once heard a man who had scarcely enough money to keep body and soul together, gravely argue that he could not engage in trade as that would be bringing a disgrace upon his Order. Fancy the spirit of "noblesse oblige" forcing a man to starve upon thirty pounds a year!

Of course the grand attraction of St. Andreasberg for these people is its cheapness. The Tyrol may be more beautiful, the air at Davos as pure, but in this St. Andreasberg reigns supreme; it is the cheapest health resort in Europe. The

terms for full pension at the Wirthshaus—the best hotel—is four shillings and sixpence a day, and this includes a thoroughly good table d'hôte dinner, whilst those who prefer private apartments can have them without difficulty. A comfortable room, with attendance, costs from five to eight shillings a week; these of course are not luxurious, but they are spotlessly clean, and their owners will take any amount of trouble to make their visitors comfortable.

There are two doctors, one of whom having made a special study of the Davos system for chest diseases, throws himself "con amore" into the duties of his profession, and certainly with what seems to be marvellous success. He is most enthusiastic in his belief in the curative qualities of the Hartz climate; but maintains, that in most cases, a full year should be passed there for a permanent result to be obtained—the winter, in his opinion, being even more efficacious than the summer.

There is an establishment for different sorts of baths, but the doctors' only prescription is to live out of doors, climb mountains all day long, and inhale the perfume from the pine-trees. St. Andreasberg lies nearly 3,000 feet above the sea, nothing intervening between it and the North Pole; the consequence is that in summer—I have never tried it in winter—the air is simply delicious. The mere fact of living is a pleasure, when under its influence; it seems to penetrate your whole being and impart to you some of its own buoyancy. When you first arrive you look at the hills with despair. How can you ever climb them? At the end of a few days, such is the power of the air, you find yourself going up and down the mountain-side with as much ease as if you were walking on a level road. Then, as for distances, those who at home would shudder at the thought of a five-mile walk, think nothing in the Hartz of going ten, twelve, or even fifteen miles a day; the air is so rarefied that you seem to have no weight to carry.

The walks in the neighbourhood are lovely. You can wander for hours under the great pine-trees, inhaling their delicious perfume, and at every break in the forest some exquisite bit of scenery reveals itself—sometimes wild and rugged as in the highest Alps, at another smiling with gentle sylvan charms. To stand at the summit of one of those great barren hills and watch the sun as he slowly sinks, and, as he sinks, casts around his rays of mingling hues, which light up the dark forest

with a weird splendour, is a pleasure to be felt, not described.

No one, of course, could go to the Hartz and leave the Brocken unvisited. From St. Andreasberg this mountain is easy of access, though, for all but the exceptionally strong, beyond a walk. Two hours' drive brings you to the foot, and in two hours more, you can easily mount to the top.

The first time I climbed the Brocken was a glorious August morning. As we began the ascent, the whole earth was redolent with a thousand perfumes. Purple and gold, heather and gorse, covered the earth with a royal splendour, which the dark firs and larches threw into yet stronger relief; and all the time the early morning sun, dancing and playing on every leaf, was colouring the scene with a marvellous beauty. But this did not last long; soon flowers were rare, the heather lost its brightness, the firs became stunted, the air chill, and summer a thing of the past. As the scene becomes more and more desolate, involuntarily the Faust Walpurgis Nacht scene rises before you, with all its strange weird compound of tragic and comic, pathos and mirth—the wildest, boldest dream conceived by human brain. Mephistopheles and his motley crew, dance mockingly around, and, struggle as you may, you cannot escape their spell.

Half way up the mountain there is an immense ruin, whether the work of Nature, or the remains of some citadel made by human hands, has never been decided. The stones are so immense, they tower above the rock so threateningly, that, as you look, you feel you are in the presence of one of Nature's own phenomena, and yet, the huge pile is wrought with such scrupulous exactitude, the position is so carefully chosen, that it seems hard to believe that man has had no hand in framing it. Legend relates that a Hartz Squire, fired with the ambition of owning a castle, asked the devil to assist him in building. The evil one, of course, gladly consenting, offered to begin the work the same night; but stipulated that, as a reward for his trouble, if the castle were finished before the cock crew the next morning, the Squire's soul should be his.

During the whole of the night His Satanic Majesty worked with a truly diabolic vigour; and the castle was almost finished when the first red of daybreak began to tinge the eastern sky. A few moments more and the work would be complete; but the devil did not hurry, for to guard

against accident, he had taken the precaution of putting a cork into the throat of the cock. Still, sharp though he was, a woman was sharper. The Squire's wife knew of her husband's compact and of the devil's stratagem, so just as the last stone was going to be fixed, she ungagged the cock, which of course began crowing at once. The devil, in his rage at losing the reward of his labour, with one mighty blow struck down the tower he had raised, and left it in ruins, as we see it to-day.

Better authenticated witness points to this spot as the last refuge of the worshippers of Thor and Woden, who fled there to escape from the persecutions of the Christian bishops. On these stones the last sacrifices of the old heathen worship were offered.

After leaving the ruins the path becomes steep and rough; huge boulders bar the way, and it is a steady pull to the top. There you find three great stones, which form the Teufels Kanzel (the Devil's Pulpit), from which, on Midsummer night, he welcomes his friends, the witches. Not far distant is another curious stone—a large oblong block, which looks as if it had been scooped out in the centre. This is called the Hexenwaschbecken, and in it the witches are supposed to wash their hands before attending the Satanic fête.

A sudden turning in the path, and farewell all legends and fancies—a large new fashionable hotel, "replete with every comfort," stands waiting to welcome us.

MIDSUMMER FIRES.

A STORY IN TWO CHAPTERS. CHAPTER I.

TO-MORROW would be Midsummer Day. The sun was nigh its setting. Out over the level, shining sea he seemed to lie; blood-red and ruddy purple gleamed the throbbing waves of the horizon; rosy and golden came the rippling wavelets from that distant path of the sea to the yellow sands of the Manx coast.

A path, winding up a headland, led from the western shores to a white road. The red gleam of the sunset was upon it, and the sparse heather landwards glowed ruddy, as some girls sauntered loitering along the path.

There were three of them, sisters. One was a child, Nessie; the others, Meta and Kate Qualtrough, were on the happy borderline of girlhood and womanhood.

We have no picturesque national garb of a foreign land wherewith to set them

forth—they were dressed as hundreds of girls in London might be dressed, though they came of so pure a Manx race as to be proud of the days when English people were looked upon as foreigners in Man.

Nessie was full of life; she danced ahead, or she lingered behind, she sprang to right or left over the broken ground of the headland; what her sisters waited for had evidently no strong hold on her thoughts. At last, she struck in with this:

"Ye'll be utterly foolish, you girls, idling here any longer for those lads." Her accent bore the North-country lilt and the soft, sweet tones of the Manx people. "Do you think they'll be leaving their fishing for the——"

"Hist!" commanded Meta.

The girls were all at play in a sense, but it was play with a serious vein in it to Meta.

"Eh?—I'm full of respect!" and wild Nessie threw out her arms, and made a gay, bowing reverence in a circling fashion to the hills and the green mountains. "But the boys are not so, and I'm thinking they'd only be hindering us if they were here."

"Still, we promised——" Kate put in.

"And they promised, too; and if they break their promise, we'll be free from ours, I say. Do come, we'll be awfully late, and there's a lot to do."

Then they walked on a bit faster. Nessie was out of sight, but yet they were closely following on her steps. So many turns and bends and shoulders there are to these Manx headlands that one may be easily out of sight.

A shout burst forth into the still summer air, and the next moment Nessie, with waving arms and with yellow hair flying as the light wind caught her, was seen on the topmost bit of green.

"Boat ahoy!" and her arms gesticulated. There was a boat skimming across the bay—Peel Bay. One unbonneted head was in the stern of the round, deep boat; it belonged to a fisher-lad, who was the working chum of three scarlet-capped youths. One of these last was a Qualtrough, a cousin of the girls, the others were his friends, lads who, a year or two back, had been with him at King William's College at Castletown, but who, being English, were only in Man for a summer jaunt now.

And now it had been for the delectation of these same young Englishmen that the doings of that Midsummer Eve were being made so much of.

"Do they mean to land or not?" asked Kate.

"Undoubtedly," was Meta's decisive word. "Do they not know it is for them we are making this delay?"

In a very short time the boat was out of sight, which means that she was well under the headland and landing her crew in White Strand Cove. Some few moments more and three young men in boating flannels, and each with a rough pea-jacket atop, appeared from clambering up the face of the headland. Then the party went on more swiftly.

First on to and across the white sunlit roadway, then down an opposite lane, rough and stony and untended. This lane finally lost itself on a furzy common, where short sweet mossy grass was patched irregularly by a savagery of gorse, and furze, and strong waving bracken. Meta walking apart, pulled the bracken; Kate and Nessie, with energy of a more talkative and less solitary humour, bade the young men bring out their knives and slash away mossy branches of gorse and furze.

"Where is all this to go now?" asked Doyle Philipson, the elder of the two English brothers. "Is this common the haunt of—of—the enemy?" A twinkle lighted up a would-be grave face.

"Oh, don't!" Meta's exclamation was instinctive.

"There!" cried the Manxman of the party. "Take Meta's horror for your keynote, Philipson, or you'll be setting us all in danger of the evil influences of the hour."

"Eh, Willie!" and Nessie flung her vigorous small self against her cousin, herself armed with a huge bundle of prickly furze, "ye'll be the worst of the three. You ought to know better."

"Blessed are the immunities of ignorance!" the youth exclaimed.

"I do not say that at all," quickly young Philipson replied. "I wish to know—I wish to——"

"Meta will tell you then."

The girl was still in her silent humour—perhaps a dangerous humour for a nature just a degree prone to mysticise over things.

These were men from the outer world, the brave outer world of which she dreamt; the faithless outer world which she knew ridiculed any ancient fantasy of custom. Should she be silent, or should she be brave and show that she was not too weak to acknowledge her weakness? One second she had for hesitation, but no more.

"Will you"—came the question pointedly put to her—"lay your commands upon me, Miss Qualtrough, and tell me while I obey?" How light and yet how true did he look as his clear-browed eyes met hers.

Meta flushed with pleasure. Was there really a sensible man going to listen to her old wives' fables, and listen with respect? The delight of this flashed through her and made the delicate Manx face of the girl radiant. Manx feminine beauty has not had much eulogy, very likely; but, where will you find more delicate features, brighter intelligence, and purer expression, than in the faces of the girls of Man? Meta Qualtrough was a picture, with all the loveliness of those island women.

"You mean it?" was her cry, and her face was full of enthusiasm. Her blue eyes took a fire of brilliancy, and the clear delicate pink of her complexion heightened its colour with one quick flush, gone as soon as it was seen.

"Assuredly I mean it. Ignorance has no charms for me as it has for your cousin there. But I do not promise faith, mind you."

A shadow fell over Meta's radiance.

A very quick-eyed young man was this. He saw it, and read too in his kindly, sympathetic soul the measure of her trouble. So reading, he at once set himself to gladden her again. He was thinking what a lovely study her radiance would make for some girl-saint of middle-age religion.

"Everyone has a chink in his armour, you know; and though I am matter-of-fact personified, you may—just may"—he smiled, "find me vulnerable somewhere."

The rest were ahead; every one of them laden with green or sun-dried stuff for the burning. These two gathered up their burdens and followed, talking all the way.

From the gorsy common the track was homewards for the girls, and they crossed a meadow, stopping at its further side by a brook, where grew clumps of golden marsh marigolds. These were wanted as much as the dry stuff, but not for burning.

"I thought not," said Edgar, the younger of the Philipsons. "They're far too pretty. You have some in a bowl at your house. They come far before the lilies of the London æsthetes, in my opinion." This young man was not like his brother, an artist; but a trader. To put his status quite plainly, he was a clerk in a tea-merchant's office. And here he was trending on to the debateable ground of lily-worship!

"Very well out here," said young Qualtrough, rather testily; "but not the things for girls to wear on their dresses. You don't mean that?"

"I was thinking of that;" and the other marked the word. "Miss Qualtrough"—he turned to Kate—"do not let him talk you out of wearing them."

Kate had worn some only the evening before.

"No, I shall not; certainly I shall not!" she cried, laughing. Nevertheless she wore only roses that night.

"What do you with these? What is their virtue?" Doyle asked of Meta.

"You shall see, if you can be patient. Their virtue?—I cannot say."

"Empty seer!" cried the young man.

"Yes—we've reasoned out the fires, but, here I don't know where to begin. We always do it—the children always do it."

"What?"

"We lay them about on the door-sills and the window-sills, and we strew them by the outhouses. It is for 'good luck.' We all want 'good luck!'"

"So we do, but—I'd like a reason to see why 'good luck' lurks within the mysteries of these marsh marigolds more than in other flowers."

"Can't give it you, but you shall have the 'good luck' if you'll have a flower; or shall I keep it back from you?"

"No—no. Give it me."

"How excited you are! I've found the chink in your armour. I've found out you are superstitious, and I'll just punish your weakness"—Meta parodied some of his own words—"by not giving you the flower."

"Or—the good luck! Oh! you will."

"No."

What was mastering this very proud disciple of matter-of-fact? His sun-tanned face flushed, and something carried him out of his former wise self. He ran back to the brook, where he saw one golden stary blossom left, and plucking it, he brought it like a trophy to Meta.

"This is for you," he cried. "There is 'good luck,' infinite good luck for you, and—if for you, then for me. You have given me your faith—"

A shout from the rest interrupted him. Could he possibly have been going to say that he had faith in those old-wives' fables of Meta's?

"Oh, be quick! they are all waiting for us," and Meta ran before him. She could by no means face any talking in such a

passionate strain as this matter-of-fact youth was developing. She felt hot, and she ran up to the others laughing and talking gaily. Certainly her humour had wondrously changed.

CHAPTER II.

THE sweet Midsummer Eve closed in, and the grey of the night came on. Strangers from the foreign land of England wondered as they drove home from their day's excursioning, at the fancy of the peasants for setting light to the gorse everywhere.

All the young Qualtroughs were out in the grounds with Willie and his friends. Mr. Qualtrough, grey-headed and wise, went out too. Perhaps he laughed over it all, but there had never been a Midsummer Eve he could recollect without the burning of the witch-fires. No, indeed; and if his children had shown themselves very advanced in the common sense of the age and neglectful of the old customs, he, good man, would have been just one degree uncomfortably surprised.

They had all had a merry supper—Manx folk are primitive, and supper is not yet wholly cast into oblivion—and then all went out. Two of the girls threw light shawls over their heads; Nessie stuck on a gray felt hat of her father's; and they went gaily round the house and through the unkempt, luxurious flower-garden; then through the kitchen-garden, where monstrous cabbages sheeted the beds with their crumpled outer leaves; where the strawberries blinked rosy from amidst a tangle of long suckers; where alleys were made by trained apple-trees, whose green young fruit promised joys to lads and maids in the days to come.

"Ah!" suddenly young Philipson exclaimed.

"The Corrin's fire at Ballaseggan!" and Mr. Qualtrough turned round. There had come a golden, springing, flashing light on his glass houses.

"Horrid!" Nessie exclaimed angrily, "and ours not alight yet. Jim is horrid! I specially gave him orders to light up early, because Mona Corrin declared they'd have the finest show. I'll be speaking to him to-morrow morning."

"Do, dear, do," Willie, her cousin, said.

"I will." And she ran on. In a moment she was seen flying up the wooden ladder which led up to what they called their "look-out," a square miniature tower which gave a grand view over miles and

miles of farlands, of distant mountains, of western sea, and—a sight of all for strangers—of one bit of the savage, storm-battered Calf of Man. "Grand!" she cried joyously. "Grand! We're alight now! Eh! I'll not heed Mona having the start, we'll be far the finest."

A pale golden fire began to shimmer on a near-by hill, it spread and spread until verily the whole of the hillaide was a trickay flashing dance of fire.

"Our gorse is not there!" Doyle wondered.

"Eh? No. This is my private business. Jim and I did this in the morning."

"So! That is how Jim does his weeding?" her father began.

"Yes. That'll be his manner of weeding on Midsummer Eve! He couldn't do less than obey his mistress!"

"No, Mr. Philipson," she went on. "The bits of fuel we got this evening are on the other side. Look! I saw Jim run across only two minutes ago; he'll be lighting it up now."

She was right. A hillocky lift of the land was spangled all at once with patches of flame, ruddy flame, golden flame, flame that sputtered and fizzed as it mastered the juices of the green bracken.

"We have an extra grand show to-night, girls," Mr. Qualtrough began. "Who shall say our old customs are dying out? But I expect it is as much in your honour as in that of the fairies and witches," he nodded to the young men.

They, seated like the girls, on the battlements of the miniature tower, were gazing here and there, as one quarter and then another was made alight. Beacons, like stars, blazed out far away. Evidently the whole neighbourhood was of one mind.

"We will not accept that idea to-night, sir," Doyle answered. "No, no; let us not tempt the powers. But can we not go amongst it all? Two minutes will take us where Jim is."

"Oh! if you like."

So they left the gardens and tramped over a field to the hillocky ridge. There was a good deal of talking and laughing, as might be supposed, but, amongst it all, Meta was again silent. She was wearing her one marsh marigold stuck under her chin, as a girl might wear a brooch. She was very careful of it, keeping her light wrap well away from it. What danger of cold could there be on such a sweetly warm summer night?

She lingered behind. But amongst such

a gay string of merry folks who would notice one straggler?

Nessie was by Jim and talking hard and fast. No one paid any heed to her, but we must, for the subject of her talking affects our story.

"There were nine lots, Jim."

"Eh, missee, I'll know that; and nine have I set the light tea," refining his word real Manx-fashion.

"Then where are they? Six—seven—eight," she counted.

"It's beyond me, missee; but nine'll be the number I kindled. Sure, by token I'd only ten matches in my box here, an' one I left for the pipe. Pfah!" he blew on to the pipe-bowl. "It's nigh out she'll be, missee, with me talking an' talking."

He here took a good whiff to ward off the fulfilment of his words.

"The boys must have matches. I'll by no means go without my nine!"

Nessie was always a bit self-willed.

"Eh, missee?—let be. I wouldn't interfere——"

"Interfere!"

"Sure——"

"What stuff!" Nessie's play had no faith—no faith of the timorous sort, at least. "I'm as strong as the fairies. If they put the fire out I'll light it again! That I will!"

She ran back to the young men.

Whereat Jim faced the inevitable, and bestowed all his active care upon his pipe. He shrugged his bent shoulders; perhaps it was at the foolhardiness of young maids.

All at once a new blaze of light sprang into the gray night. It came with a sudden flash just behind where Nessie and the boys stood and talked.

One golden flash there was; dry gorse had caught a smouldering spark, left at the very tail, as one might say, of Jim's ninth match. Then the flash died down; then—another blaze, and a brighter, more golden blaze. A quick, short cry on the top of it: "Ah!"

Meta's foot treading on the unseen dry gorse had pushed it towards the dying match—had kindled the flame, and—her dress, a soft muslin thing, had been caught by it.

There was a rush. All were first and all were last, it seemed. Meta was down upon the ground before the rush and cry were done. Every flame was out, every smouldering spark was hurried out of life.

For one moment Meta lost sight and sound. Then, memory flashed back one sight and one sound—Doyle Philipson she had seen tear off his coat and she had heard him give one cry.

"Meta!—my own!"

How the soft grey night echoed the words! Had she dreamt them? Was she dreaming still? There was now no fire, the flickering lights of the distant hills were paling under the breeze, her father stood over her, bidding her not to "be afraid."

"Your coat has suffered." This she heard Mr. Qualtrough say to a dim, shadowy figure. The voice was low, and such as comes when a man's inner self is trembling.

Doyle made a light answer. Men do answer lightly even when, perhaps, the gravest question of their life is fighting for its answer within them. He pushed his arms into his coat-sleeves; and all at once he found that, in crushing down the rising flame of Meta's dress, he had got his hand burnt.

A week hence the two young men had to go away from Man.

Willie Qualtrough was to drive them to Douglas on the morrow, so as to be in time for the boat. A good hour's drive this was, and they must be up betimes. He and his friends had strolled over the fields from his father's house; they would naturally say good-bye to the girls and the Qualtroughs of Brae Hill.

Again it was a summer night, again the girls were wandering about the old garden. Meta was aloft in the "look-out," Kate was below meeting the young men, Nessie was chasing a white butterfly.

Doyle Philipson had, many days back, come to the solution of one grave question; but, not being a rich man, and being honourable to what some folks might call an extreme degree, he had commanded himself to hide the love he had for Meta Qualtrough. Nay, he it was who had hastened the departure from the island because, seeing Meta day after day, he could not keep eye and tongue in cool obedience.

And the sweet, lazy hours of evening had come, and Meta had chanced to be aloof, and the others had chanced to drift into the company of each other—who talks of chance?

The would-be matter-of-fact young artist was mastered. He told his story, and all his wise commands were scattered to the winds.

What they two said, only the night heard. It was an old story made new, and there is always a golden originality about the telling of these old-new stories.

Meta and Doyle were coming down from the "look-out," the rest were in a group.

"It is arrant nonsense, Kate, for you to drive into Douglas at such an hour." So spoke Willie Qualtrough, the girl's cousin. He and Kate often squabbled, cousins do do so.

"Thanks," she pouted. "But I'll judge best for myself. I have shopping, and the shops are fresh in the morning."

"That are they. And the shopmen are sleepy."

"You shall wake them up for me,"—she was persistent. "Oh! Willie!"

The cry had actually trembling in it.

Kate made a little start and again a second start, or rather droop, backwards to Willie's side.

"Eh! that's done!" Willie was a masterful cousin; he made no ado, but drew Kate's hand within his arm. "He told me he shouldn't do it till next year, when he's coming again——"

"Oh! Willie!" Kate's vocabulary was growing stunted.

"And now that's—all—moonshine. Do you mean you never saw it?"

"Dear—how could I!" She was clinging to Willie in a way that her cousin unmistakably approved.

Before another Midsummer Day came round there were two Miss Qualtroughs the less at Brae Hill.

Doyle Philipson does not, so much as heretofore, parade his matter-in-fact, and he is going to make his Academy fame, so he says, by a picture which shall have fairy-worship for its motive. There is going in next year a marvel of a Saxon maiden, a golden-haired Saxon maiden, by a rocky shore, wearing a golden-hued mari-gold. The critics say it is beautiful.

It is Meta.

VICTIMS.

By THEO GIFT.

Author of "Liz Lorimer," "An Alibi and its Price,"
Etc., Etc.

CHAPTER XXVIII. NEWS FROM ABROAD.

"The good Lord have mercy on us! This can't be true. Father! Leah, child, have you seen it?"

Mrs. Josephs was speaking. It was breakfast-time in the little house in Addison Gardens—a meal which, after seeing her young ones supplied with food, the good lady was in the habit of enjoying in company with the newspaper, dispensing choice morsels of the intellectual treat thus presented to her as she had previously been doing with the grosser ones.

"Don't talk to me about spoiling my digestion," she would say, when remonstrated with on the practice. "One good thing is never the worse for having another with it, and busy women like me can't afford to wait for a leisure time to do their reading in. They'd never get any at all if they did." A theory on the strength of which Mrs. Josephs used to let her coffee get cold and her toast flabby, to forget milk and duplicate sugar in second cups, and—occasionally—to make woeful confusion of her husband's correspondence while keeping one eye on the paper and interjecting all sorts of scraps of information.

The comfortable, chirrupy way in which Mrs. Josephs was wont to impart her scraps of information had nothing, however, in common with the tone of hoarse, incredulous horror in which she uttered the exclamation recorded at the head of the chapter; and, as she let the paper drop from her hands, and gazed in helpless consternation from her husband to her daughter, there was something sufficiently alarming about her to make even the experienced Professor lay down the letter he was reading and ask anxiously:

"Why, mother, what's up now? Nothing to do with Matthias, or——"

"Oh! no, no, thank Heaven! not with any of ours," cried Mrs. Josephs, her eyes filling with tears. "But, oh! it's too dreadful all the same. That poor, hot-headed young Marstrand. It must be he, and what can have led him—— Leah—oh! I see, you've got the paper already. Read it to your father, dear—that paragraph in the third column."

But Leah's colour had faded so utterly at the first glimpse of the paragraph in question that her father took the paper out of her hands and read it himself.

"FROM OUR OWN CORRESPONDENT.

"Paris.

"Great excitement has been created here to-day by a duel fought at an early hour this morning, between the Comte de Maily, a nobleman of well-known social celebrity, and a young Englishman of the name of

Marslan. It took place in a bosquet, on the Neuilly side of the Bois de Boulogne, the seconds being the Vicomte de Birac, and an artist friend of the Englishman, name unknown. It appears that, at the first fire, no harm was done on either side, but at the second a ball entered Marslan's left shoulder, breaking the collar bone, while the Count was pierced through the brain, dying immediately. Additional horror is added to this tragedy by the fact that the Count, for long somewhat notorious as a man of gallantry, was married yesterday morning to a young lady of good family. Jealousy is said to be the cause of the crime."

The Professor glanced on, and a little lower down in the page came to another paragraph headed :

"BY REUTER'S TELEGRAM.

"The Englishman, Marslan, was arrested this morning at the Châlet, a villa at Neuilly belonging to the Count de Maily, and which the deceased nobleman had selected to spend his honeymoon in. Marslan gives his age as twenty-seven, and states that he is a surgeon practising in London, and an M.D. of Edinburgh; also that in fighting the Count he was acting in defence of his wife's honour. Further revelations of a startling domestic character are expected. Marslan is at present lodged in prison. The seconds have escaped."

The Professor laid the paper down in silence. In fact the news seemed too terrible to him for comment. Leah, too, was speechless, her cheeks bleached to a waxen hue, her whole body trembling. Mrs. Josephs began to cry.

"And to think," she sobbed out, "that I was only saying yesterday I wondered Mr. Burt didn't write again. Oh dear, dear, father, I wish we had never let Leah go over there and bring back that poor little girl to wreck George Marstrand's life in the way she has done. But what in the name of goodness need he shoot that Count for, since the man had, after all, given her up and married some one else!"

"Father, I don't understand—that," said Leah through her shaking lips.

The Professor took up the paper again. They had none of them any idea of the truth.

"Unless this de Maily had been speaking damagingly of the poor little girl's reputation," he said slowly, "revengeing himself for his own disappointment by

making capital out of her elopement. I wonder if Mrs. Burt has heard. Leah——"

"Oh! I will go round to Hornton Street at once and ask her," the girl exclaimed, her cheeks kindling with a touch of their usual colour at the first prospect of anything to do.

Leah could never have sat still, like her friend, waiting helplessly through the long hours of that bridal evening for the husband who, as her own common sense and instinct would have told her, could only have been kept from her by some terrible accident to life or limb. She would have gone from the post-office to the police-station, and from there to the druggists' shops, or even the hospital, and never rested until she had found him. Neither would it have afforded her the slightest comfort had the idea come to her, as it did to Vera, that having set her parents at defiance for her sake, he was battling her cause with them, single-handed. She would have wanted to stand by his side, to put her hand frankly in his, and say: "Father, mother, it was my fault. I asked him to take me away." At the present moment it did not take her a minute to fling on her hat and jacket, and she was hurrying downstairs again when startled by a sudden "rat-tat" at the hall door. Her father met her in the hall, holding a telegram in his hand.

"From Mrs. Burt," he said. "Listen: 'News in paper true. Husband still in Paris. Will not forsake his friend. Please come and see me.'"

It was nothing of a walk from Addison Gardens to Hornton Street, where the Burts lived, and father and daughter lost no time on the way; but they found Mrs. Burt in a terrible state of agitation, and almost inclined to quarrel with the Professor for having induced Burt to seek out George Marstrand in Guernsey, and to devote his holiday to dancing attendance on the unfortunate young man.

"As soon as I heard from him that Dr. Marstrand was bent on following and getting back the girl he had run away with, I knew no good would come of John's mixing himself up in the matter," she said, tearfully, "and I wrote to beg him not to do so; but he wouldn't mind me. He said young Marstrand was too weak to be trusted by himself; and you know how foolishly devoted John is to his friends."

"I don't think it is foolish," said Leah.

"At any rate, I am sure that Dr. Marstland would be equally so if your husband were in trouble; and you know when papa heard Mr. Burt was in Guernsey it was natural to ask him to call and see his friend, especially as we knew the latter had just made a very hasty marriage, and might be the better for a friend's advice."

"Advice is not much good when a thing is done, and Dr. Marstland was always hasty," Mrs. Burt said severely. Marstland had once told Vera that he was no favourite with his friend's wife, and it was true. "He is for ever doing eccentric things that no one else would dream of, and getting into trouble accordingly. The mere idea of running away with a girl he had met—how often was it, Leah, half a dozen times at most!—at your house; and then of her running away from him the very next day sounds too wild and romantic for anything, much too wild for a medical man who wants to establish a practice. People will be sure to say too that she was the daughter of a patient, and you know how a story of that kind would injure a doctor."

"Then the doctor's friends should be careful to avoid the risk of spreading an untruth, and to say nothing of the running away at all," said the Professor, briskly. "But Burt told me in his letter that it was the young lady's parents who ran away with her, not she from her husband. We mustn't make her out too black either, poor child! especially as she was evidently persuaded that the marriage was not legal."

Mrs. Burt looked vexed.

"Not legal, when she had just been married according to the rites of her own church, the English Church, in the proper and orthodox manner! Really, Professor, I can't see how any girl, with a shadow of right feeling or principle (though perhaps you and Leah, not being Christians, can't quite enter into our feelings, the feelings of Church people on such a subject), how any right-minded girl could entertain such an idea without at any rate having the very highest advice—clerical advice I mean—to confirm her in it."

"Apparently that's what young Marstland thought," observed the Professor. "He made the mistake of considering the Church more binding than the law, which, notwithstanding our different views, my dear Madam, is a mistake and always will be one, while we live in a country governed, not by priests, but Acts of Parliament and civil codes. But about this duel——"

"Yes, indeed, this dreadful duel! It is

about that that I sent to you," cried Mrs. Burt, getting excited again. "And how Dr. Marstland could be wicked enough to take the life of a fellow-creature just because the poor fellow had been in love before with this immoral young woman, and to drag my husband—my poor, foolish, generous John—into it, and perhaps get him fined and imprisoned for—oh, Professor! what do you think they will do to him? Do you think they can punish him for only being there?" the poor woman exclaimed, her tears beginning to flow.

The Professor tried his best to soothe her. French law, he said, dealt very mildly with duelling, even in the case of the principals, and, though the fact of this one having ended fatally might complicate matters, he doubted if, with regard to the seconds, it would come to more than a fine.

"And Dr. Marstland would pay that himself, I am certain of it," Leah broke in. "You need not be afraid for your husband, Mrs. Burt. It is his friend, in prison now and wounded——" her voice broke a little and she flushed up, adding quickly: "How soon do you think you will have a letter?"

Mrs. Burt said she was almost sure of one by that evening's post; and it was decided then that the Josephses should come back about that time to hear the news, whatever it might be; the Professor adding:

"And, unless it is very satisfactory with regard to both our friends, I'll promise you one thing, Mrs. Burt, I'll take the very next boat and go over and look after them. Marstland may, of course, have already telegraphed for legal help; but as it was at my house that he met the little girl who has been the cause of all this trouble, and as I certainly sent your husband to his assistance, I shan't shirk my share of whatever unpleasantness there may be to come of the affair."

"Did you mean that, father? Will you really go?" Leah asked tremulously, as they left the house. The Professor nodded, patting the girl's hand gently as it rested on his arm.

"Certainly I do. The fact is, Leah, I feel our responsibilities in this matter quite as much as that good lady there could desire; though more with regard to George Marstland than to old Burt, who I daresay, looks on his share of the spree as a not unpleasant bit of excitement after the clerical æstheticism of his home; and

as, thanks to the Easter holidays, I'm free of the college for a few days, I think I should rather like to run over and see if I could be of any help. This Count may be an important personage, in which case Marstland will want all that his friends can do for him; while as for his poor little bride, even if she be with her parents——"

"Oh! father, I hope not!" Leah cried, the tears rushing to her eyes. "It is of her I am thinking most just now, for if George Marstland has really killed the Count de Mailly (the only person her father ever seemed to care for, and before whom the whole family bowed down as if he were a sort of demi-god) there can be no place so terrible for Vera, poor, timid child! as her own home. And yet if he—her husband, I mean—is in prison, she can't be with him. Oh, father! I wonder where she is, if he got her back before the duel? Ah! don't you remember how she clung to us when she was going away, and what a despairing look there was in her poor little face? How frightened and miserable she must be now when her short happiness has come to such a terrible end! I wish—I wish I could go to her and comfort her."

"You can't do that, Leah," her father said quietly. "It's out of the question."

"Not when you are going over, too, father? Think of it, if she has been cast out by her family and is all alone, in a strange hotel perhaps, and longing for a friend——"

"She will have John Burt, who is as steady and sensible as old Time, for one; and, for another, your father, who, whatever you may think of him, isn't at all a bad specimen of paternity in default of a better."

"He is the dearest and kindest old father in the universe, and there isn't a better," cried Leah, pressing a little closer to his side.

"Well, then, if that's so, you ought to be content to trust your young friend to him, supposing her to be in need of either of us. My own belief is, however, that she is still under her parents' protection, since they are scarcely likely to cast her off now, after taking the trouble to follow and reclaim her in the first instance."

"Well, if she is, father, all I can say is I pity her more—yes, a thousand times more—than I do George Marstland in prison."

"And yet you were so terribly angry with her a short time ago, when we first heard from Burt of her having left him."

"I was angry with her; yes," Leah said, blushing deeply; "and I own I don't understand it now. It seems so unwomanly, so faithless, to go away without even waiting to find out whether he was alive or dead. But when one can't understand a thing I don't think one ought to judge it; and you know we have not been told any details yet. We have heard nothing from her; only Mr. Burt's letter telling us how Dr. Marstland came to be in the straits he found him in; and that note from the poor fellow himself thanking you for your letter, and blaming his own folly in not having confided in us beforehand. He did not reproach her."

"No; and considering her youth and that we don't know what pressure her parents may have brought to bear on her, I agree with you that it isn't our place to do so. I also agree most completely with Mr. George," the Professor said this very slowly and distinctly, "that, bearing in mind the relation in which Miss St. Laurent stood to us at the time he made acquaintance, it was scarcely even honourable in him to take the steps he did without at least telling us of his intentions beforehand."

Leah's nerves must have been a good deal shaken that morning. For the second time her eyes filled with sudden, irrepressible tears.

"That is a very harsh saying, father," she said in an extremely low voice. "I thought, of all men, that George Marstland was the last of whom anyone would speak in connection with dishonour, and—and just now too!"

Her father smiled.

"My dear child, truth is truth at all times, and whether harsh or not, and there is no truth truer than this that the most honourable man in the world may find himself guilty of a dishonourable action, or the most kind-hearted man of a cruel and unjust one, from nothing in life but the sin of giving way to impetuosity and want of thought. There's no virtue in all the Law and the Prophets put together that isn't the better for a spice of prudence to savour it, and—I say, your eyes are younger than mine: isn't that handsome stopping at our door?"

It was, and it contained a fresh surprise for them in the person of a fair, fresh-coloured, handsomely attired lady, who no sooner saw the father and daughter approaching her than she began waving

a red silk parasol at them to attract their attention, and scarcely waiting for them to get within hearing, exclaimed in a loud, agitated voice :

"Professor Josephs, I am Lady Hessey. Do you remember me? I came here once to see my brother George when he was a pupil of yours. Do you know anything about him at present, if this—this dreadful news is true?"

The poor lady was looking very angry and half inclined to cry; but the Professor's coolly civil manner was tranquillising, and, as he helped her to alight and led her into the house, he occupied himself in trying to find out how much she already knew of her brother's affairs, before imparting any further information to her. He speedily discovered, however, that until that very morning she had not even been aware of Marstland's engagement, let alone his marriage, and, having come up to town for a day or two, had been greatly surprised to hear, on calling at his house, that he was out of town and ill. On that she had asked to see his partner—an elderly man with whom she was already slightly acquainted, and who informed her that Marstland had been called over to Guernsey quite suddenly on important business about three weeks before, and had requested him to see to his patients during his absence; that four days previously he had telegraphed to say that he had been laid up from the effects of a bad accident, but was better, and on the point of leaving Guernsey for France, whence he hoped to return to London direct in three or four days.

That was the last Dr. Flowers had heard of him, and he intimated that it was fortunate that the season happened to be an exceptionally healthy one, as otherwise he should not have thought his young partner was treating him properly, an opinion in which Lady Hessey, irritated by her brother's absence and her own ignorance of the occasion for it, sympathetically concurred.

That morning, however, as she was rising from breakfast, the doctor's brougham stopped at her hotel, and the old gentleman made his appearance, looking very pale and solemn, and bringing with him a copy of "The Times," containing a report of the duel very similar to that in the paper which the Josephses had seen, with the exception of there being fewer details, and the Englishman's name being spelt as "Marstlan." Dr. Flowers observed that that was just how a Frenchman would spell it; but

when Lady Hessey protested with some indignation that the individual alluded to could not possibly be her brother, seeing that he was neither married nor engaged to be so, her visitor looked at her curiously, and said in a meaning way :

"Are you quite sure of that, Lady Hessey? Of course you ought to know more about your brother's private affairs than I do; and I own that he has placed no confidences in me; but from words that he has dropped here and there on different occasions, I have certainly been under the impression for some time back he had a very tender understanding with some young lady or another, and one which only the opposition of her parents hindered from being announced as a formal engagement."

The doctor then went on to observe that he believed the young lady was a member or guest of a Jewish family called Josephs, with whom his partner was exceedingly intimate; and on this Lady Hessey at once sent for a hansom, and announced her intention of going straight to the Josephses, and hearing what they knew about the matter.

"Of course I am aware that part of it—his intimacy with you, I mean—is true," she said excitedly. "And though he is, of course, more than of age now, and therefore free to please himself, still I do think, Professor Josephs, that as my dear father entrusted him to your care when he was quite a lad, and as you naturally retain a great influence over him, if he has been drawn into a marriage——" She stopped just in time, warned by something in the old botanist's face; but, after a moment's embarrassment, added rather hotly: "I have so very often heard my brother allude to the—the fascinations of one of your daughters that I must be excused for asking——"

"This is my daughter, Lady Hessey," said the Professor gravely, and laying one hand on Leah's shoulder, as the girl stood, with a deep flush on her beautiful face, but holding herself rather haughtily erect, beside him. "You are probably mixing her up with the fascinating young lady really in question, about whom and the understanding, or engagement, between her and your brother I will tell you all I know, and you will then perhaps understand why you have not heard of it sooner."

The Professor told the story very briefly, not to say baldly, mentioning his own unsympathetic treatment of Marstland as a reason for the latter having withdrawn his

confidence from him during the last six months, and winding up by showing Lady Hessey the telegram from Guernsey containing the announcement of the marriage. Considering that the whole affair would probably be in the papers before long he thought it foolish, even for Marstland's sake, to attempt any concealment of the general facts of the case from the young man's sister; and he was scarcely surprised, though a little amused, at the violent indignation she manifested against poor Vera and her parents conjointly. Did they not know, she asked, that an English gentleman was the equal of Kings, and better than half-a-dozen titled Frenchmen; and was the girl an idiot, or did she not care for the man she had eloped with, that she allowed herself to be dragged from him? She kept appealing constantly to Leah to support her in her sisterly wrath and contempt; and once, when the Professor left the room for a moment, she turned impulsively to the girl, and said:

"Do you know I thought—forgive me—when I first came here, that it was you."

"You made a mistake, Lady Hessey," said Leah quietly, and not deigning even to affect a misunderstanding of the lady's meaning. The latter went on, however, in a quick, cordial tone, not unlike her brother's:

"Well, I did. He used to be always talking about you, and your singing and cleverness, you know; and at one time I own I did feel afraid——" she stopped, colouring with a sense of the rudeness of the word, and added: "still, now that I see you——" Then stopped again, and asked abruptly: "have you got a photograph of this other girl?" Leah took one off her own little writing-table, and handed it to her in silence; and Lady Hessey held up both her shapely, well-gloved hands in surprise.

"Why, she is not even pretty! A dull, flat-faced looking little thing, most dowdily dressed," she said scornfully. "And George is so fond of beauty. What can he have been thinking of? Now, if it had been you, indeed," looking with frank admiration at Leah, "I am ready to confess he would have had an excuse."

"He needs none for caring for Vera St. Laurent," said Leah gravely, "and she is not at all plain in reality. Indeed, I

think, if you knew her, you would find her face as sweet as her character. Please do not add to his troubles by setting yourself against her, Lady Hessey," the girl added with sudden and winning earnestness. "You can't guess how he loves her; and she is so innocent, gentle, and yielding that I am sure you cannot help doing so too. Indeed, anyone who is good and kind to her could mould her to whatever they pleased—you, as Dr. Marstland's sister, more especially. And, oh! if this is true, and he is really in prison for killing this other man on her account, think what she must be suffering now!"

"And very justly, when it is through her that he is in prison!" Lady Hessey exclaimed; then seeing Leah's forehead contract, she remembered that the girls were friends, and apologised; but though Leah in the warmth of her loyalty just then would have fought Vera's battles to the death, she was too conscious of her own ignorance of the later chapters of the history, not to feel glad when her visitor, without pausing to be answered, announced her intention of going at once to the family's solicitor and seeing if, by chance, he had heard anything from her brother. She begged Leah to go with her, and the girl gladly agreed; but their visit was fruitless. The lawyer had heard nothing either of or from Dr. Marstland; and Leah, growing more anxious and unhappy every moment, was not sorry when Lady Hessey at last decided to go back to her hotel and wait there for further information, while she herself returned home to do the same thing until the time for the evening post should permit her and her father to pay a second visit to Hornton Street.

They had half hoped that they also might have had a letter to take with them; but the postman did not even call at the house that evening, and it was therefore a relief to find, on arriving at Mrs. Burt's, that she was better off. Indeed, she had only had time to open and glance over the first page of the bulky epistle just handed to her, and none of the party had any idea of how much worse the news contained in it was than they had at all imagined, or into how terrible a tragedy the hasty little love match had grown. Both women were crying unrestrainedly before the Professor had read to the end.

"THE STORY OF OUR LIVES FROM YEAR TO YEAR"

ALL THE YEAR ROUND

A Weekly Journal

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No. 924. NEW SERIES.

SATURDAY, AUGUST 14, 1886.

PRICE TWOPENCE.

A DATELESS BARGAIN.

By C. L. PIRKIS,

Author of "Lady Lovelace," etc.

CHAPTER II.

WE measure time by its loss. Two years out of the very middle of a girl's girlhood, looked forward to with the girl's eyes, seems no doubt to fall but little short of an eternity; looked back upon, which after all must be the only way to gauge its minutes, it seems but a wave-beat on a shore, the flight of a bird from north to south across the sky—nothing more.

So at least it seemed to Mab and Joyce, as exactly two years from the day on which, with blithe hearts, they had decorated and generally turned upside down their father's study, they stood in the same room talking over what had been, what was, what was to be.

Not with such light-tripping tongues as heretofore, for this quiet, unpretending little room has grown to seem—to Mab at any rate—a solemn and holy place; a place, that is, sacred to solemn and holy memories, ever since that terrible day on which, as she stood on the threshold awaiting her father's return, his dead body had been brought past her into the house and laid upon the sofa in this room.

Mr. Shenstone's sudden and awful death had been a great shock to his family. He was in the very prime of his manhood, his health, his wealth; he might have said with the fool of old time, had he been in the habit of indulging in frivolous soliloquies: "soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years, take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry," when lo, on a sudden, alighting from his train at the end of a short, pleasant journey, he took a false step, he fell heavily upon the platform, he

struck his temple against an iron pillar as he fell, and went headlong into eternity.

Mrs. Shenstone's grief was of the vehement, hysteric kind. Its outward form of expression was the insistence upon the constant daily attendance of a local doctor, the constant daily communication with a London or Parisian dressmaker, an increased subscription to Mudie's library, and incessant appeals for sympathy to everyone who went near her.

Mab's grief was of the silent, undemonstrative kind. Its outward expression was nil.

Joyce's grief was of the healthy, vigorous kind common to girls of a healthy, vigorous nature, who know that fate, as it crosses their path, will come to them with both hands full—one of sorrows, one of joys—and are prepared to take heartily whichever hand she offers; to weep with a will if she holds out her left, to laugh with a will if she holds out her right. Joyce knew nothing of half measures; "thorough or nothing" had ever been her motto. Only next to her sunny good temper was her aptitude for deciding momentous questions at a glance. "That is why they are called 'momentous,' they are to be decided in a moment," she had once quaintly informed Frank Ledyard, when he had on one occasion slightly demurred to her rapid decision on a matter of importance.

Somehow this habit of Joyce's inspired people with confidence, not only in her capacity for arranging mundane affairs, but also in the mundane affairs themselves. Things certainly could not be in a very desperate state, so people were apt to reason, when they admitted of such simple and easy solutions.

Even now, as she and Mab stood together in the dead father's study discussing a serious question, Mab's nervous frown

slightly relaxed, and her deep-set eyes looked less cavernous, under the influence of Joyce's cheery decisiveness of voice and manner.

"It can't be helped, Mab, so we'll just make the best of it. Mother's heart is set upon going to London, and getting into the vortex—whatever that means—and go she will. You have tried your hardest to keep her here, so also has Uncle Archie, so also Aunt Bell; very well, you see it can't be prevented. So we must just look the thing well in the face, and make the best of it."

Mab sighed heavily. "If papa were here—" she began, but broke off abruptly.

"If papa were here he would hold the reins and keep things straight," said Joyce, taking up the broken sentence and completing it. "He is not here," here her voice hushed reverently, "so I will hold the reins instead, and keep mother out of mischief."

"Oh, Joyce!"

"I mean it. I know what I'm saying. Someone must do it; you think it beyond your capabilities; I don't feel it beyond mine—"

At this moment the door opened, and Uncle Archie entered. He was elder brother to Joyce's and Mab's father: a small, thin, wiry-looking old gentleman on the down side of sixty. He had a perpetual frown on his forehead and a perpetual grumble in his eye; his voice was grating, irritating.

"If there's one thing in the world I detest more than another," he said raspingly, "it's the overweening confidence of very young people—of very young people." The last sentence repeated with a pointed emphasis.

Joyce looked up at him saucily. "Poor Uncle Archie," she said pityingly, "what has put you out now?"

"What has put me out? Is there anything in this house that doesn't put me out, I should like to know? First one thing, then another. Nothing goes as it ought. I've been talking with your mother for the last half-hour."

"Ah—h—h!"

"Reasoning with her I should have said, if anyone in this house had been capable of such a thing as reasoning; but at any rate talking to her of her folly in breaking up her home here and setting up an establishment in London, where she knows no one with an ounce of common sense in their heads."

"But, Uncle Archie, no one has more than a pinch of that precious quality here. You know you said so only yesterday."

"No one, in fact, who can put two and two together with a certain result," went on Uncle Archie, heedless of the interruption. "But there, I might as well have tried to reason with a skein of silk. Anything more limp, more tangly than a woman's brain I can't imagine."

"Poor old Uncle Archie!" again ejaculated Joyce softly. "What a life Aunt Bell must have of it sometimes!"

"I repeat—"

"Oh, don't!"

"Anything more limp and tangly than a skein of silk—"

"You said a woman's brain just now."

"Than a skein of silk and a woman's brain is beyond my conception. And now, on the top of it all comes this letter still further to worry me." Here the old gentleman put his hand into his pocket and drew out a letter.

"Why, that's from Frank! Give it me, uncle," cried Joyce.

"Don't be in such a hurry; it's addressed to me. But I want to talk it over with you. Come, sit down at this table." Here Uncle Archie drew a chair close to the table and sat down. Mab crept out of her corner, and left the room without a word. Uncle Archie had taken the dead father's chair. To her way of thinking, it should be kept empty and sacred to his memory for evermore.

But Joyce without demur kneeled on the floor beside the old gentleman, looking up in his face.

"What can Frank have to say to you? Really he might have told me beforehand that he was going to write to you."

"Really I see no necessity for his so doing," said Uncle Archie snappishly. "This letter comes in consequence of a remark made by your mother in Mr. Ledyard's presence."

"Addressed to Frank, was it?" This was asked with a little show of nervous apprehension.

"Really I'm not prepared to say to whom the remark was addressed. Your mother is in the habit—you may have noticed it before now—of speaking out whatever comes into her mind, irrespective of the person or persons she may be addressing. No doubt it is a charmingly ingenuous and juvenile habit, and worthy of cultivation; at the same time it is apt

to be slightly embarrassing to those on whose behalf it is exercised."

"Uncle Archie, please tell me word for word what my mother said to Frank about me."

"No, I couldn't undertake to tax my memory so far; I will give you the general idea of her meaning. My own words you must allow me to use."

"Oh, don't take a hundred years over it."

To this remark Uncle Archie only raised his eyebrows. It hurried him on though a little.

"Your mother intended to imply that you two girls were a very great anxiety to her (what she said doesn't in the least matter). She was confident that Mab would some day degrade the family by starting a school for cookery at Shadwell—as though they had anything to cook there beyond red herrings!—or teach domestic economy in one of the Board Schools. And as for you, you were bound to make shipwreck of your life by some undesirable marriage, when, with your fortune and good looks, you might be a reigning beauty for a season and a Duchess at the end of it."

"Did my mother say that? And before Frank? Two nights ago, I suppose; when he was staying here!"

"Do you imagine I'm telling lies, young lady?"

"And did he hear her? Do you think he could have heard her, Uncle Archie?"

"Not a doubt! To make sure that he should hear her she said it twice over, and I dare say would have gone over to his side and said it a third time right in his ear, if he had not shown he had heard it by taking his hat and saying good-bye at once."

"That was why, then, he went off in such a hurry that night to Cheltenham—and that is why he has written such short, unusual letters, I suppose! Uncle Archie, let me have that letter and read it all to myself, will you?" Here Joyce made a desperate effort to get possession of the letter.

"Stop a bit! stop a bit!" said Uncle Archie, laying his hand flat upon the paper. "I don't hand over my correspondence unanswered in that fashion. I'll give you the gist of it. In the letters of a young fellow at his time of life there's always a lot to leave out that won't be missed. Now don't jog my elbow like that."

Uncle Archie adjusted his glasses, spread the letter in front of him, humm'd and ha'd a little bit more, and then proceeded to con-

dense and expound it for Joyce's benefit. It may be remarked in passing that Joyce contrived to secure a bird's-eye view for herself of the said letter between the lapel of the old gentleman's coat and the inside curve of his elbow, scrupulously verifying his condensations sentence by sentence as he read them.

"'Trusts I will pardon,'—h'm, h'm—'with respect to the remark made by Mrs. Shenstone the other evening. Is quite willing to admit she had a perfect right to make it; that in fact it is a remark that nine mothers out of ten might, in the circumstances, feel disposed to make; but nevertheless it is a remark which he cannot with dignity pass over.' H'm, yes, dignity is the word he uses. On his high horse do you see, Joyce."

"Go on, Uncle Archie, I'm taking it all in."

"Don't be in a hurry. I shall get paralysis in my elbow-joint if you lean on me in that way—nine stone on a few inches of muscle is a little too much. Yes, well, 'with dignity,' as I said before, 'he would like to direct my attention to the fact that his engagement to my niece had Mr. Shenstone's entire approval, that there was a distinct understanding between him and Mr. Shenstone that so soon as he (Frank that is) could secure by his profession an income of five hundred pounds per annum, Mr. Shenstone was to add another five hundred to it, and the marriage was to take place.' Is that true, Joyce?"

"Perfectly so. Go on."

"I'm not a locomotive! Well, 'this arrangement he is perfectly willing to consider annulled by Mr. Shenstone's death; he is also willing to admit that you are now through your father's death in a very different position to what you were in when that arrangement was made.' Well, of course, there he's right. I suppose you and Mab will have each of you a steady income of a thousand a-year when some of the leases fall in next year!"

Joyce left off jogging his elbow to utter an exclamation of astonishment.

"You don't mean to say that Frank suggests our waiting till he earns a thousand a-year by his profession?" she asked, jumping to the conclusion, which showed on the unturned side of the paper.

"That is exactly what he does suggest, and he puts it on grounds which make it difficult for us to resist. He says 'he makes this proposal not alone on the score of personal dignitv' (high horse again!) 'but

because he conceives that by deferring the marriage till he can double your income with his own, he best carries out the spirit of the arrangement made with your father at the time he was accepted by him as your future husband."

Joyce drew a long breath, and got up from her knees.

"It's preposterous; it's ridiculous; it's Quixotic!" she cried, her face flushing crimson.

"Humph. I call it sensible, matter-of-fact, judicious. I shall tell the young man when I answer his letter that I thoroughly approve the idea."

"And I shall tell him, when I write, exactly what I think of it! Why, he won't earn a thousand a-year at his profession for another ten years to come at the earliest. And now I'm twenty-one—why that would make me thirty-one! Fancy a bride at thirty-one! Oh, how dreadful!"

"How's this, young lady? I'd no idea you were in such a tremendous hurry to get married!"

"I'm not in the least bit in a hurry to get married, and if I were turned thirty-one I should be still less in a hurry; in fact, I wouldn't marry at all at that ridiculous age. But I'm surprised at you, Uncle Archie, encouraging anyone in such far-fetched, high-flown folly. I should have thought you would have put your foot at once on anything in the shape of romance."

"In my young days young women were not in the habit of throwing themselves at the heads of young men," said Uncle Archie, pursing his lips and looking as sour as possible. Defence with him always took the form of aggression.

"You had post-horses and Gretna Green, notwithstanding."

"I'm not an antediluvian. That was twenty years before my time."

"As if twenty years, more or less, mattered on the other side of sixty! Good-bye for the present, Uncle Archie, I want to save this post. It is not of the least consequence what you say to Frank, I shall tell him right out what I think of the whole thing."

Uncle Archie wheeled round in his chair and faced her. "This is the young lady who felt confident she could hold the reins and keep others out of mischief," he said, taking off his glasses so that she might feel the irony of his eye as well as of his tongue.

Joyce paused with her hand on the door

handle. "Exactly, Uncle Archie; that is what I'm bent on doing now. I won't let you, or Mab, or mother, or Frank, make yourselves ridiculous—any one of you—try as hard as you will."

SOME FAMOUS PLAYS.

VI.

JAMES SHERIDAN KNOWLES'S "VIRGINIUS" AND "THE HUNCHBACK."

IN TWO PARTS. PART I.

JAMES SHERIDAN KNOWLES was born on the 12th of May, 1784, in Cork. His father, James Knowles, was nephew to Thomas Sheridan, and first cousin to the author of *The School for Scandal*. For upwards of twelve years James Knowles was master of a prosperous school in the southern capital of Ireland. Towards the end of that period he quarrelled with his patrons regarding political opinions, when, the number of his pupils gradually diminishing, he was obliged to seek his fortunes elsewhere. At this time the future dramatist, James Sheridan Knowles, was in his ninth year. In youth he gave promise of the talents which distinguished his maturity. Before reaching the age of thirteen he wrote a drama, which he and his companions acted in his mother's drawing-room; and two years later he composed *The Welsh Harper*, a ballad which subsequently became exceedingly popular.

His intellectual gifts received no encouragement from his father, a pedantic pompous little schoolmaster, who sported a gold-rimmed eyeglass and lived to write a dictionary; but were fostered by the appreciation of his mother and the praise of his friends, amongst whom he could reckon William Hazlitt, Charles Lamb, and Samuel Coleridge. These three distinguished men treated him with kindness. Hazlitt, then a struggling artist, painted his portrait; Lamb criticised his efforts; and Coleridge lectured him on poetry. Before he was sixteen a crisis came in his life. His mother, who had been his literary confidant and trusted friend, died, and James Knowles shortly afterwards married again. In consequence of this change the lad soon became aware that his father's house was no longer his home; therefore, leaving it in indignation, he sought independence. In maintaining this resolution he was aided by Richard Brinsley Sheridan, who obtained a place for him in the Stamp Office.

Subsequently Sheridan Knowles served

as ensign in the Wiltshire Militia, from which he was transferred to the Second Tower Hamlets. At this time an incident happened in his life which savoured more of romance than reality. Dr. Willan, a benevolent old gentleman who had realised a considerable fortune, and enjoyed an extensive practice, taking a fancy to the young ensign, conceived the idea of adopting him as his son, and training him for the medical profession, that he might eventually succeed him. For a while Sheridan Knowles hesitated to accept this generous offer, having no vocation for the study of medicine, and fearing that his obligations might hamper his independence. However, conscious of the benefits it promised, and urged by the solicitations of friends, he eventually accepted Dr. Willan's proposal with gratitude.

He therefore read, studied, and visited patients under the guidance of his patron; and vaccination being introduced at this period, he became one of its earliest supporters and most earnest advocates. Presently the Jennerian Society, contemplating the appointment of a resident vaccinator, Knowles obtained the post through the influence of Dr. Willan, who likewise procured him the degree of doctor of medicine from the Aberdeen University.

Before he had reached his twenty-fifth year he was established resident inoculator to the Jennerian Society, at a salary of two hundred pounds a year, with a house in Salisbury Square. Working with ardour in his new pursuit, he was instrumental in abating the scourge of small-pox and rescuing many lives. But the enthusiasm with which he laboured did not blind him to his unsuitability for the profession he had adopted. Instead of possessing the sober disposition becoming a physician, Sheridan Knowles had the temperament of an artist. His jaunty step, careless air, and smiling face lacked the gravity, concentrativeness, and reserve becoming a medical man. Nor was his heart in the work he performed. The drama was seldom absent from his thoughts in leisure hours, and, notwithstanding his busy life, he found time to write, and take part in, a five-act tragedy called *The Spanish Story*. Fired by the commendation bestowed on this composition, he resolved to abandon a profession which had never been congenial to his taste, and to follow a calling which apparently promised renown. He was wise enough to understand that, before writing for the stage, he must obtain practical

knowledge of its requirements; therefore he resolved to become an actor. He immediately communicated his determination and ambition to his generous friend, Dr. Willan. "I wish to be independent," he said. "I will write for the stage, and make a name and fortune for myself. I will go to the provinces and practise, and, when I am fit for a London audience, I will come back to you. Some worthy fellow will be the better for the position which I have held so long, and for which I have no liking, though I have tried to gratify you."

Good Dr. Willan was distressed at this resolve, but believed his pupil's love for the stage to be merely a passing fancy. "Farewell, my boy," he said at parting from him. "I hope you will soon be back with us. Remember this is your home. I begin to wish for rest. House, patients, carriage, all are here ready for you. Take your fancy out, and come back soon."

Leaving London, Sheridan Knowles began his career as a player in Bath, from whence he journeyed to Dublin. Here his uncle by marriage, the Rev. Peter Le Fanu, strove to combat his resolution of adopting the stage, by recommending other pursuits where his talents would find due recognition. But, being unable to dissuade him from his intentions, Mr. Le Fanu threw open his doors to his kinsman, who had frequent opportunities of giving proof of such dramatic powers as he possessed to fashionable gatherings assembled in the clergyman's drawing-rooms. He speedily made many friends in the Irish capital, especially amongst the collegians, who, impressed by his elocution, frequently accompanied him in numbers to Phoenix Park, that they might hear him deliver Shakespearian soliloquies.

He eventually made his débüt as Hamlet, at Crow Street Theatre, but his representation of the melancholy Prince being unsuccessful, no engagement followed. He therefore left Dublin, and joined Smithson's company, then playing in Wexford. Here he acted as a general utility man in the five-act tragedies and romantic dramas, which delighted audiences in the early part of this century. Alternately he was a lover in doublet and hose; a villain in cloak and vizard; and an entr'acte singer, whose vocal powers gained vast applause. His performance of a lover's part was not, however, confined to the creaking boards of Smithson's stage; for amongst the company were two young Scotch lasses, named Maria and

Catherine Charteris, with the elder of whom he became enamoured. The fortunes of each were equally poor, but both were rich in hope, and the world lay all before them. Sheridan Knowles wooed; Maria Charteris was won; and they were married on the 29th of October, 1809.

Soon after their union they left Wexford and joined Cherry's company in Waterford, which numbered amongst its members young Edmund Kean, then in his twenty-first year. The great tragedian was then struggling with fate, and striving for fame. He had frequently played on the same night the parts of King Richard the Third and harlequin; and on other nights Douglas, in Hannah More's tragedy of Percy, and The Monkey in La Perouse. He had moreover counterfeited the pangs of remorse as Macbeth, whilst suffering keen pains of hunger. Sharing his friendship and admiring his abilities, Sheridan Knowles conceived the idea of writing a play for him, and accordingly produced a drama called Leo, or the Gipsy, in which Kean played the hero. The piece being received with great favour, was considered by the chief actor so suitable to his capacities, that years after he was anxious that his first appearance before a London audience should be made in the character of Leo. From Waterford Knowles travelled to Belfast, where, at the request of his new manager, Mr. Montagu Talbot, he wrote another piece, Brian Boroihme. Becoming a favourite with the town, it was continually played during the season. For this successful drama Mr. Montagu Talbot paid him the sum of five pounds.

Feeling somewhat disgusted with his profits as an author and weary of his life as a player, he was anxious to secure some other means by which he might earn an independence for himself, his wife, and his new-born child. A certain clergyman named Groves, who had constantly attended the theatre, hearing of his desire, offered him the post of master to a public seminary. This he accepted with gratitude, and his salary, aided by fees for tuition, soon secured him a comfortable competence. He subsequently opened a school of his own, and here and in Glasgow, to which town he subsequently moved, he continued a teacher for many years. His love for dramatic composition survived the drudgery of his calling. Before leaving Belfast he had written a tragedy, Caius Gracchus, which had been produced in that city, and, according to the News Letter,

received "the rapturous plaudits of a crowded house." He carried the play with him to Scotland, and awaited a proper opportunity for its production. This seemed to present itself when Edmund Kean, making a tour of the provinces, visited Glasgow.

Since Sheridan Knowles had last seen him, Edmund Kean had made his appearance at Drury Lane, and electrified London audiences by the brilliancy of his genius. He who had wanted bread, and consorted with inferiors, now possessed riches and was courted by the great. He who was unknown had become famous. Crowds applauded and critics praised him; he could experience poverty or dwell in obscurity no more. Full of delight and expectation, Sheridan Knowles, taking with him the manuscript of Caius Gracchus, hastened to greet and congratulate his old friend and fellow-player; but Edmund Kean received him with a sense of the difference now marking their positions, and when the poor schoolmaster offered the successful actor his play, the latter loftily replied that he had a dozen tragedies already awaiting his decision. The mortified author replied that none might be found equal to his; when Kean made answer that if Caius Gracchus was left it would receive his attention. Hurt by the manner of his reception, Knowles refused to act on this suggestion, and, putting the manuscript in his pocket, bade the player farewell.

The pain of disappointment was overcome in the drudgery of school life; visions of fame were lost sight of in pursuit of commonplace duties. Another year passed, and once more the great Edmund Kean was announced to appear in Glasgow. Probably conscience had smitten him since his previous visit, for now he called on Sheridan Knowles, behaved with friendliness, and suggested that he should write a play on the subject of Virginius, for the production of which at Drury Lane he promised to use his influence. Delighted at this proposal, the schoolmaster's dreams of success returned to him, and he resolved to produce a great tragedy. Thirteen hours daily were spent in teaching, but such odd moments as he could spare were devoted to dramatic composition. If the Muses deigned to visit him whilst he was in the school, he rushed away to inscribe their inspirations on the first piece of paper which presented itself; and once, indeed, the poetic phrenzy seizing him when he was engaged in explaining a problem in arith-

metic, he wrote some lines on a slate, afterwards promoted to the dignity of a relic, and preserved with conscious pride by the playwright's admiring spouse.

At the end of three months *Virginius*, a tragedy in five acts, was completed, and the author awaited the rewards of fame and fortune due to his efforts. But, alas, fresh disappointment attended him. On communicating with Edmund Kean, the latter informed him that a play on the same subject, in which he was to represent the part of *Virginius*, had already been accepted at Drury Lane. This was a cause of bitter vexation and sore distress to the poor schoolmaster. Fortune apparently frowned on his most earnest endeavours. His keen depression, however, relaxed with time, and was presently vanquished; for, taking heart of grace, the author succeeded in having his tragedy produced in the Glasgow Theatre. Though indifferently played it was received with applause, and was repeated for fourteen consecutive nights before crowded audiences.

Amongst others who witnessed it was a certain Mr. Tait, a friend of Macready's; and Tait, being impressed by the opportunities which the character of *Virginius* afforded, immediately wrote to the great actor concerning the tragedy. He described the author, as Macready records in his "Reminiscences," as a man of original genius, in whose fortunes many of his fellow citizens were interested. "It so happened," writes the actor, "that I had undergone the reading of two or three tragedies when late at Glasgow, and it was with consequent distrust that, to oblige a very good friend, I undertook to read this. Tait was to send the manuscript without delay, and I looked forward to my task with no very good will. It was about three o'clock one day that I was preparing to go out, when a parcel arrived containing the letter from Tait and the manuscript of *Virginius*. After some hesitation I thought it best to get the business over, to do at once what I had engaged to do, and I sat down determinedly to my work. The freshness and simplicity of the dialogue fixed my attention. I read on and on, and was soon absorbed in the interest of the story and the passion of its scenes, till at its close I found myself in such a state of excitement that for a time I was undecided what step to take. Impulse was in the ascendant, and snatching up my pen I hurriedly wrote, as my agitated feelings prompted, a letter to the author, to me

then a perfect stranger. I was closing my letter as the postman's bell was sounded up the street, when the thought occurred to me, what have I written? It may seem wild and extravagant; I had better reconsider it. I tore up the letter, and sallying out hastened directly to my friend Procter's lodgings, wishing to consult him and test by his the correctness of my own judgment. He was from home; and I left a card requesting him to breakfast with me the next day, having something very remarkable to show him. After dinner at a coffee-house I returned home, and in a more collected mood again read over the impassioned scenes, in which Knowles has given heart and life to the characters of the old Roman story. My first impressions were confirmed by a careful re-perusal, and in sober certainty of its justness I wrote my opinion of the work to Knowles, pointing out some little oversights, and assuring him of my best exertions to procure its acceptance from the managers, and to obtain the highest payment for it. I have not preserved a copy of my letter, but its general purport may be guessed from the reply to it, which is here verbatim.

"Glasgow, 20th April, 1820.

"MY DEAR SIR,—For bare sir is out of the question—I thank you from the bottom of my heart for the most kind, I must not say flattering, though most flattering, letter that you have written to me. Really I cannot reply to it in any manner that will satisfy myself, so I shall only once for all repeat, I thank you! and feel as if I should never forget the opening of a correspondence with Mr. Macready. You must have a very warm heart. Do not think, I entreat you, that because I express myself imperfectly—very imperfectly—there is any deficiency where there ought not to be.

"I have but a few minutes, I should say moments, to write. All your suggestions I have attended to; I believe so, and if I have not I fully propose to attend to them, except so far as the word "squeak" is concerned; that word I know not how to lose for want of a fit substitute—the smallest possible sound. Find out a term and make the alteration yourself; or if you cannot and still wish an alteration, do what you like. I don't care about it, I merely submit the matter to you. Oh, I have forgotten the word "cheer." What shall I do also in the way of finding a substitute for that word?

"I cannot stop to write another line. I am very much your debtor, and truly
 "Your grateful, humble Servant,
 "J. S. KNOWLES."

This letter, eminently characteristic of its simple-hearted writer, pleased Macready greatly, and being enlisted in Knowles's interests, he urged the manager to accept the tragedy. In this regard he encountered no difficulty, and accordingly the characters were promptly cast, Macready, Charles Kemble, and Miss Foote sustaining the principal parts. Macready's enthusiasm concerning the tragedy was unbounded; he read it to the company, and arranged the action and grouping of the crowds. "My heart was in the work," he writes, "so much so that it would seem my zeal ran the risk of outstripping discretion, for it was made a complaint by Egerton that 'the youngest man in the theatre should take on him to order and direct his elders.' On Fawcett's report of this to me, I directly made the amende to Egerton, apologising for any want of deference I might have shown to my brother actors."

Day and night the images *Virginius* presented were before him, whilst "every vacant hour was employed in practice to give smoothness to those pathetic touches, and those whirlwinds of passion in the part, which in the full sway of their fury required the actor's self-command to ensure the correctness of every tone, gesture, and look."

Rehearsals had been carefully superintended, and the final preparations made, when the manager was alarmed one morning on a demand being made by George the Fourth for sight of the manuscript, which had already passed the Lord Chamberlain's office. This being complied with, the royal decision was awaited with fear and trembling. However, the tragedy was returned the next day, merely having some passages on tyranny erased, which His Majesty feared would bear too personal a significance.

On the 17th of May, 1820, *Virginius* was produced for the first time. Great expectations concerning its merits were entertained by the town, and a crowded house gathered to witness the performance. And in the pit sat Sheridan Knowles, by turns radiant with hope and dejected by fear. The first act fell flat on an audience filled with high anticipations; even the second act failed to affect the house, principally because Charles Kemble, who suffered from

a cold, could scarce be heard; but, suddenly regaining his voice, in the third act he aroused interest and gained applause. Macready, inspired by enthusiasm, acted with unusual fervour. In the character of *Virginius*, to quote the *Times* of the following morning, "he touched the passions with a more masterly hand, and evinced deeper pathos than on any former occasion." Interest now deepened to enthusiasm; cheers greeted the conclusion of every act; sobs and exclamations attended the great catastrophe where *Virginius* stabs his daughter, and the curtain fell on a house excited by terror and delight.

The tragedy took the town by storm. "Pearly of approbation," says the *European Magazine*, "attended the announcement of this successful tragedy." It was played for fourteen nights, and was received next season with unabated interest. Knowles was advised to have it printed immediately, that he might reap remuneration from its sale. To aid him in this respect Macready called on his friend John Murray, and requested that he would publish *Virginius*. Mr. Murray promised he would give it his consideration, but acting on the advice of his reader, the Rev. H. Milman, afterwards Dean of St. Paul's, he returned the manuscript in a few days with thanks. Knowles then offered it to Ridgway, of Piccadilly, who at once accepted it, and in the course of a couple of months it passed into several editions. It was dedicated to Macready in the form of a letter, which ran as follows:

"MY DEAR SIR,—What can I do less than dedicate this tragedy to you? This is a question which you cannot answer, but I can. I cannot do less; and if I could do more I ought and would.

"I was a perfect stranger to you; you read my play, and at once committed yourself respecting its merits. This perhaps is not saying much for your head, but it says a great deal for your heart; and that is the consideration which above all others makes me feel happy and proud in subscribing myself,

"Your grateful Friend and Servant,
 "JAMES SHERIDAN KNOWLES."

Receiving the first copy of *Virginius* on a certain Saturday in May, the author resolved on personally presenting it to the dedicatee. No opportunity for the accomplishment of his desire presented itself on that or the following day, and as Knowles had arranged to leave town on Monday

morning, he sought Macready on Sunday evening at the house of Sir Robert Kemeys in Park Lane, where the actor was dining. Before dinner ended, Macready was informed by a servant "a person" wanted to see him. "Utterly ignorant," writes the tragedian, "of any business that anyone could have with me I was a good deal embarrassed; but Sir Robert very good-naturedly relieved me by saying, 'You had better see the person, Mr. Macready'; and accordingly I went into the hall, where to my astonishment in the dusk of the evening, I distinguished Knowles. 'How are you?' was his greeting. 'Good Heavens, Knowles, what is the matter! You should not have come here to me,' was my hasty remark. 'Oh, I beg your pardon,' he replied, 'I am going out of town in the morning, and I wished to give you this myself. Good-bye,' thrusting a parcel into my hand and hurrying away. Putting it into my pocket without looking at it, I returned in some confusion to the dinner-table. When I reached home I found the packet to contain the printed copy of *Virginius*, dedicated to myself, and a note sent after to my lodgings, expressive of his regret for intrusion on me, and evidently under wounded feelings, informing me it was the first copy struck off, and bidding me farewell. I wrote immediately to him explaining the awkwardness of my position, and my ignorance of his object in coming to me and wishing to see him. The note reached him in the morning; he came at once, and all was made perfectly smooth between us."

* Many years later Macready presented the acting part of *Virginius* to Mr. John Forster, accompanying the gift with the following letter, preserved in the Dyce and Forster Libraries, South Kensington: "I enclose the part of *Virginius* as delivered to me (after I read the play at Fawcett's request in his Covent Garden green-room, April 20th) from the Covent Garden copyist, poor old Hill. (You will see that even the skill of copying out parts is declined with our declining drama!) It has been in use with me above thirty years. You will smile at the Latin memoranda or suggestions to excite my feelings! These I used to write in Latin, sometimes in Greek, sometimes in Italian, because as at that time I could not command a dressing-room exclusively to myself, I did not choose that anyone who might be 'chummed' with me should look over, or rather should understand my notes. No fear of any of them penetrating beyond English! I send you also the identical parchment I used on my first performance of this character, and which I have kept, with a sort of superstitious partiality till it has become what you see, ever since. It amazes yet pleases me these things have interest in your eyes—they have none in mine. A deep melancholy is on me in thinking and feeling that I shall never again excite the sympathies of those to whom I feel a sort of absolute affection."

HIGH DAIRY-FARMING.

EVERYBODY has sung or heard that famous old catch, "Dame Durden;" and everybody knows that, of all Dame Durden's maids, "Kitty was the comeliest lass that carried the milking-pail." But times are changed since "Hugh kissed Molly," and all the rest followed suit. Not that there is not as much kissing as ever, but that, instead of carrying the pail and working at the old-fashioned pestle-and-mortar churn; or, if she was a West-country girl, scalding her milk and, after "unraming" it, making the butter with her lissom fingers; Kitty may be found standing beside the "Danish Separator," or using one of those weird machines, such as Fjord's, for testing all at once the qualities of milk from her different cows. When one looks into such a work as "British Dairy-Farming," by Mr. J. Long ("Merlin" of the "Field"), one really trembles for Kitty. Why, instead of being a pleasant, unsophisticated damsel, she will develop (unless she can stand a vast lot of spoiling) into something between a Girton girl and a female post-office clerk. Ask her, "Where are you going to, my pretty maid?" and, if she vouchsafes an answer, she'll tell you that she's going to be present at a trial between Greiner's Munich Lactobutyrometer and Professor Storch's Copenhagen Fat Extractor. Perhaps, if you take her fancy (for even female scientists have fancies), and she grows confidential, she'll explain to you that the lactometer is no real test, and will cite the celebrated case in which a sample of milk, condemned by the local analyst, was passed at Somerset House; the purchasers, however, were so sure there was adulteration, that they got a magistrate's order for a second sample, which was declared by the analyst to have been deprived of twenty per cent. of its cream. To make sure, since doctors differed, the inspector went to the farm whence the milk came, had the cow milked before his eyes, and found in what came fresh from her even less fat than in the samples sent to him! "There, you see;" Kitty will oracularly explain, "no doubt, despite all the fuss that's made, the cow with the iron tail is still milked a great deal in London. Out of the two millions paid yearly for the twenty-three million gallons consumed, perhaps seventy-five thousand pounds are paid for water. But, still, you cannot

be sure that poor milk is not pure milk. Old or ill-bred cows and bad food will account for a state of things which looks like twenty per cent. or more of water. The only safe plan is to use a lock-up milk-van, such as they do in Germany; that is," Kitty adds, with a curl of her lip, "if you can trust those who have the locking of it. And for the farmer the true course is to do as we do" (looking as big as if she was one of the firm), "weed out the bad milkers, and never keep a cow after her fifth calf." So might Kitty speak in the last quarter of the nineteenth century; and she might even go on to tell you that "sky-blue" is not always the result of over-creaming and dilution; eating the mouse-ear forget-me-not will cause it; so will the indigestion which often comes in autumn from the aftergrowth of coarse flood meadows. It is provoking, though, that, when you have got your lactometer, with ether and caustic potash (which, moreover, must be of a certain specific gravity), you cannot be sure of catching your milk-seller tripping. For one thing, the moment the caseine begins to coagulate (which it does long before the milk is perceptibly sour), "the conditions are" (as experimenters say) "entirely changed."

But what has changed the whole method of dairy-farming from a routine of Arcadian simplicity to a system as scientific as Chicago pig-killing? Why, that word Chicago goes a long way to explain it. Brother Jonathan has for some time made it impossible for John Bull to grow wheat; and now he is sending butchers' meat, dead and alive, over at such a rate that stock-breeding will soon be as unprofitable as corn-growing. Hence the feverish anxiety to make one's butter pay. Happily, good fresh butter will always bring more money than that which has crossed the Atlantic. And so, if we can beat the Dane and the Frenchman, we need not fear competition from America. And what is true of butter is, of course, truer still of milk. Condensed milk is all very well; they send eight thousand quarts of it every day from the great Milan factory to London, where it is diluted, passes analysis, and is sold as fresh milk; but, till we have still further annihilated space, it will hardly pay to do that from the American factories. Hence our go-ahead farmers are taking to machines. How portentous they look in Mr. Long's pages! There is Sourdats's *Écrèmeuse*, a good deal like an old-fashioned sextant without its arc; Storch's Fat

Extractor, like a shower-bath on the top of a round table from which springs a very forest of pipes; Ahlborn's Churn, very like a chaff-cutter; the Glass Churn, resembling an air-pump; Fouju's Churn, like a Buddhist priest's rotatory praying-drum; and Pourain's, with its padding of felt and the cog-wheels that work its mysterious "beater."

The wise farmer, therefore, whose land will grow the necessary crops is all agog for producing as much milk and butter as he can. He ought to make it pay, for the return is quicker than in any other business. If the figures (I think Professor Amos Sheldon is the authority) are right, the yearly yield of milk is worth more than a third the value of the cows that yield it. They cannot yet do as well as that in America; they more than treble our number of cows, but their value is set down at much the same, their market for milk not being so good. Yet despite the price of milk, say sevenpence a gallon wholesale, we go on trying to grow wheat where it won't grow, but where roots, if not grass, might be produced in perfection. One result of this high price of milk is that we import as much butter as we make, and four-fifths of all the cheese we eat! By-and-by, when we have all got a little poorer even than we are now, we shall realise the fact that skim-milk is for most people far wholesomer than unskimmed. Who in Cornwall ever thinks of drinking anything but "scald" milk, which has been skimmed after scalding?

But there is *skim* and *skim*, just as there is *butter-milk* and *butter-milk*. In the bonnie North, where butter-milk is very popular, they churn the milk instead of creaming it first, thus giving themselves a little more trouble, but securing a most delicious beverage, as many a tourist knows—a beverage which, under the name of "Whig," fixed itself as the appellation of a now almost extinct political party.

In the Midland Counties the plan is to let the milk stand from thirty-six to forty hours, with the certainty that the cream will, in summer, be more or less sour, and the resulting butter-milk a disgusting fluid of which the thirstiest traveller could not stomach a mouthful, while the skim-milk is often so sour that it has to go with the butter-milk into the pigs' trough. Hence the value of the Cooley Creamer and the various cooling apparatuses to enable you to take the cream off at once, and so to

have skim-milk which may be drunk with pleasure.

The Cooley is an American invention, based on the fact that milk set in deep vessels and kept at a low temperature throws up more and heavier cream, though thinner, than that set in the old-fashioned, shallow creaming-pan. Besides, it throws it much quicker, taking only twelve hours when the temperature is kept at 50° in summer and at 45° in winter. Who has not seen some of those leaden pans in our old-world dairies? They are at most six inches deep; the Cooley cans are twenty inches deep and only eight-and-a-half inches across, so that in this, as in so many other matters, America has turned things topsy-turvy. Of course, the great use of the Cooley plan, and of the Swartz or Danish plan, from which it is copied, and of the Aylesbury method, which is adapted from both, is that the skim-milk is sweet. But the cream thus raised is not ripe enough to make the best butter, so the gain in one way is made up by loss in another. The cutest plan of all is that of Mr. Ellsworth, of Massachusetts. The milk is heated to 135° and then cooled to 60° and set for cream, standing thirty-six hours. In churning his cream Mr. Ellsworth adds some skim-milk, and he then mixes the butter-milk with the milk off which the cream was taken, and makes the whole into Cheddar cheese. Heating the milk, he says, renders the caseine as manageable and as easily cured as whole-milk curd; it gives, too, a finer flavour to the butter-milk. His skim Cheddar is often mistaken for whole-milk cheese; so, if the British farmer follows his example, he will get half as much again out of his dairy as he now does.

As it is, the relatively small amount of cheese made in England is startling. It has greatly fallen off, especially in the Midlands, since the railways have carried the milk up to towns at such low rates. It has fallen off, too, because you cannot make cheese so cheaply in a dairy as you can in a factory.

In Derbyshire they have a factory like that at Newport, Harkimer County, New York. There is one in Wigtonshire, near Dunragit; and then there's the Duke of Westminster's at Aldford in Cheshire; and another at Low Row in Cumberland, which goes in chiefly for butter.

On the Continent the factory system has long been in full swing. One great reason why the Prussians determined to

have Holstein was because of the pasture. They wanted to rival the Swiss, and they have done it. The Kiel Company, founded in 1877, is as perfect as German chemistry can make it. Nothing is wasted; much of the skim-milk is made into Limburg cheeses; the butter-milk is turned into sour curds and sold at twenty pfennigs the kilo, of about two pounds. In a factory you don't need so many Hughs and Kitties, who are apt to idle about the farm when their dairy work is over. At Aldford, all the work connected with two hundred cows is done by one man and a maid!

If we import cheese we also make "bosh" and import "oleo." Bosh means butter melted down and stirred with salt and water till it is cold. In this way it may be made to absorb more than thirty-three per cent. of water—a great saving to the salesman at the cost of the customer. Oleomargarine or butterine, Mr. Long maintains, is as wholesome as butter; suet, of which it ought to be made, being the internal fat of the steer, while butter is the fat of the cow's milk. The best imitation may be detected by polarised light: butter presents only one evenly spread colour, green, red, etc., according to the character of the selenite plate that is used; oleo is seen under the microscope to be covered with stellated crystals of fat, each arranged in prismatic colours. Mynheer, as clever at a trick as a Yank or a Jap, mixes a little coarse Kampen butter with his oleo, and then sends it to us as "best Dutch." Dutch cows, by the way, are splendid milkers, but their milk is not rich in cream. The favourites now are, of course, Jerseys, if your climate is not too cold; or (for large yield and a paying business) the Schwytzers, from the canton of that name—such as the famous Einsiedeln Monastery herd, or that owned by Mr. Page, director of the Anglo-Swiss Milk factory at Cham, on the Lake of Zug. One knows that there are cows and cows; but it is very rare to find in England an animal that yields, one month with another, ten quarts per day all the year round. This is the average of the six thousand cows at Cham; and they exceed twenty quarts during their three best months. At Einsiedeln, the yield is larger still. Several of the older cows average fifteen quarts through the year and twenty-one quarts for the three best months, the milk being also so rich that, for three months, every seven pounds of it are said to have made a pound of butter! And in neither place do the cows ever taste artificial food, nothing but grass and hay.

Now the best English shorthorns cannot approach this; our dairy people are very pleased to get a pound of butter out of twenty-five pounds of milk; and Mr. Long says Shorthorns fall short of Schwytzers by some six hundred and fifty pounds of milk per cow per annum; a very sufficient reason for giving up the Shorthorns now that the beef, which they lay on so readily when their milking days are over, comes in cheaper from abroad. Schwytzers are dear, the best of them cost forty pounds on the spot. Dear though the cows are, however, the Swiss farmer can afford the money; he soon makes it up in wages. What would an English labourer say to working as they do at Einsiedeln, from half-past four in the morning to seven in the evening with twenty-two cows under his care, for five shillings a week and his board? He has to groom his cows (a thing seldom heard of in England), and to take them for a daily walk, for they are stall-fed, which means economy in another direction. The Swiss believe that cake and roots, while they force milk, lower the quality; and they have the belief, once so common in Cheshire, that the natural grasses, even those thrown up in damp, marshy land, are better than the artificial ones. Mr. Page has sown English grasses, and of course thinks them superior to the native growths; but the native farmers do not think with him.

What strikes one most of all is the cleanness of the stalls and cow-houses generally, for of straw there is scarcely any, and rushes are dear; rush-land letting at four pounds an acre, while grass-land actually brings from fifty to eighty pounds, nearly four times as much as the early broccoli and potato patches round Penzance and Gulval.

How can the dairyman pay that rent? Why, by constantly treating the land with liquid manure (making something too by growing fruit trees upon it), and by having no expense of trimming hedges and stopping gaps, and no loss from the trampling of the beasts, which moreover, are safe from flies, that are such a plague in these sub-Alpine districts. You think the cattle are all sent up in summer to the very summit of the high pastures round the mountain châteaux. So the young things that have not yet come into the dairy are; and the same with the poorer cows in the small upland farms. But in these big factories, down in the lowlands by the lakes, the cows never get a run after they have

once grown out of heiferhood and taken up their position as regular milkers. I suppose the Einsiedeln Monastery herdmen get part of their pay in "means of grace," for other farmers pay more—from eight to ten shillings a week and diet.

The Swiss butter is not first-class. In Paris, where they are out and out the best judges of quality, it ranks third, that of Isigny in the Calvados standing first, and the Gournais second. The smells from storage are said to affect it, and the churns and other utensils are seldom kept so scrupulously clean as in the Norman dairies. It is not that their churns are old-fashioned, for what can be more old-world than the Brittany Churn—a two-handled earthenware jar, tall and thin, of classical type, up and down which is worked a wooden dolly? Yet Brittany butter, as most of us know, is first class. What a difference between that Breton affair and Pierce's Irish Power Churn, with beam and fly-wheel, just like a Cornish mine engine! What a still greater difference between the simple old churns and that complicated machine, the "Danish Separator," which, standing on its brick basement, with its wheels and connecting gear, and pistons and pipes and iron cylinder, looks like a little steam engine! The German, or Petersen Separator, is more uncanny-looking still; and the Swedish or Laval looks like a big steam-worked toy. In all these, centrifugal force is the separating power, the lighter particles yielding to it sooner than the heavy ones. Moreover they do their work very perfectly, getting cream enough for a pound of butter out of twenty-four pounds of milk, while, with cream raised on the ordinary plan, from twenty-six to thirty-two pounds are required. But, to succeed in these hard times, you must not only get as much as you can out of your land and your cow, and cream your milk in the most advantageous way, and help yourself to the uttermost by those scientific machines which are the farmer's "resources of civilisation." You must also be able, on occasion, to keep the butter that you have made. In summer it is cheap, and moreover your clients are out of town or off to the Continent. Well, there is Glacialine, Aseptine, and the mysterious Omnium of the Aylesbury Company, of which half-ounce will keep fourteen pounds of butter for several weeks, and double the quantity will keep it for as many months.

The moral of it all is that the British farmer must look out for the best milkers,

and must unflinchingly reject all that are below the mark. He must introduce machines gradually, as his workers are able to bear them, and after they have been well proved by the Companies—for some of these machines cost a power of money. He must economise—not in the direction of lowering wages, that “won’t pay” in England—but in the way of getting better and more intelligent work for what wages he gives. He must study temperature, use ice, be in fact something of a chemist, and he must use up the skim and butter milk in the most profitable way. Why not go in for fancy cheesemaking? Those soft cheeses, Camemberts and Gorgonzolas, that are so popular, can be made as well here as abroad, if we will only take the pains.

And skim-milk cheeses will pay, despite Dutch competition; and if they are well made, they are very good. I used when a boy to eat a thin flat Dorset “sage cheese,” and schoolboys never need wish to get anything better.

We have not quite our proper proportion of cows to population; in Cheshire it is one to every seven inhabitants; in Cambridgeshire only one to every fifteen. Hodge just now has been made to believe that he is likely to get three acres and a cow out of the parson and the squire—so that if every Hodge got what is promised, there wouldn’t be many cows left for the rest of us. I wonder, supposing Hodge were to get his plot of land, and small holdings (or ownings) became the order of the day, whether we should make more cheese and butter, and therefore import less.

It isn’t machinery that is wanted; it’s management. Look at France: the dairy utensils are primitive; there are absolutely none of the new-fangled devices; yet French butter always heads the list, because Jacques Bonhomme and his wife and daughter devote themselves to the making of it. They don’t go in for that excessive outside cleanness that we find in some Dutch cow-houses; but whatever their byres may be, the French pots, and pans, and churns, are clean as only a Frenchwoman can clean them; and, by cutting weeds of all kinds and young boughs of trees, they secure that mixed fodder which (as Dr. Voelcker testifies) is so good for the milk; and then they milk three times a day, thereby utilising to the uttermost the yielding powers of their cows. We do not want to copy any one nation in particular; most have their weak points.

Mynheer, for instance, (who sometimes uses a dog, turn-spit fashion, to work his churn, and such a ramshackle churn it is, that it takes an hour at least before the butter comes!) has his wooden dairy utensils painted, which must be wrong; but we want to pick out everybody’s good points—to find out, for instance, why Denmark can send us some forty million pounds of butter a-year, and why her butter is so good as to bring from one hundred and sixty to one hundred and seventy shillings, while the top quotations of Irish are only one hundred and fifty-seven shillings, and of Dutch one hundred and fifty shillings. We must also bring our railways to a better mind; somehow, they all give an advantage to the foreigner. American cheese costs twenty-five shillings a ton by rail from Liverpool to London; from Cheshire (nearer by five-and-twenty or thirty miles), the cost is from forty-two to forty-five shillings! From Ipswich it costs four-and-ninapence to get a hundredweight of butter, eggs, etc., up to town; from most Belgian stations the cost by “grande vitesse,” viâ Harwich, is only three-and-twopence, provided at least four hundredweight are sent at a time.

But the main thing for us is to be what the Kitty of to-day, who was trained at a Board School, calls “eclectic”—to keep our eyes open, see what suits us, and adopt it without the delay which has so often been fatal to the British farmer. We shall go in largely for machinery—no factory can do without it—but we must remember that it is not indispensable for producing even the very best of milk or cheese; Kitty, probably following her master, is growing too fond of it. Her parting sally gives a good insight into the difference between a new and an old-fashioned dairy-farm. You venture to say a word in praise of her hands: “Is it milking that makes them so soft?” “No, I’m sure it isn’t,” she promptly and tartly answers. “It’s ever so long since I did any milking. We used to use Barland’s little instrument, with its four electro tubes; but now we’ve got the American Durand’s power-milker, with fly-wheel, link-gearing, and all. Why, with that, we can milk four cows at a time. No more milking for me, if you please.” Kitty is a phenomenon, a wonderful outcome of these latter days. Let us hope that she and three-acred Hodge between them will manage to make us more independent of the foreigner. There is

room for both of them, for the big scientific, also for the little farmer; and if they do not act soon, America will be sending us butter and milk, as she already does cheese and beef—and then however shall we pay for all this monstrous lot of imports?

MONSIEUR GABRIEL.

A STORY IN FOUR CHAPTERS.

CHAPTER I.

THE old-fashioned little French Protestant town of St. Zite lies among the hills of Gascony. Still undisturbed in this age of railways by the scream of a train, it contentedly carries on its communication with the outer world by means of lumbering diligences, which clatter fussily in and out of the town morning and evening.

On the outskirts of St. Zite, in a square substantial house, surrounded by a shady garden, lived Monsieur le Pasteur Vidal. The pastor's house had a solemn, quiet look among its more jaunty neighbours, for the Vidals were grave and serious people, who had brought from a far-off Norman town manners and customs which contrasted sharply with the careless, lounging life in which his pastoral duties had placed the stern-faced preacher.

All the ten years of his sojourn among his Southern flock he had passed as in the tents of Kedar. He was not an easy man to live with, for he saw in every trivial omission or commission, in each slip of the temper or lapse of the tongue, a depth of immorality which would at last draw down a fearful retribution on the heedless transgressor. He accounted to himself for his every motive, and demanded as stern a self-discipline from each of his fellow-sinners.

Madame Vidal was, in her way, no less imposing than her husband. She tended her house and garden; fed her poultry; visited the poor; mended her household linen; and wore her sad-coloured clothes with the air of a woman in whose eyes to take life lightly was the sum total of all the seven deadly sins.

To this uncompromising couple, late in life, had come the care and education of Marcia Caxton, a high-spirited English girl.

Before her marriage Madame Vidal had been the governess of Marcia's mother; perhaps she was less severe and more lovable in those days. Anyhow, when Mrs. Caxton lay dying in Paris, she sent for her old governess, and with many injunctions

and tears, confided to her and her husband the charge of her only child and of her fortune.

Madame Vidal could not refuse, and from that day Marcia became her daily anxiety and her nightly preoccupation, the one final complication of her arduous life.

Marcia did not mean to be a trouble to Madame Vidal; she was not "méchante," but the restraints of the pastor's household were a little tiresome. She would have liked to enjoy herself as much as the small sphere of St. Zite allowed, to be able to shirk her lessons now and again, to talk without thinking, and to laugh at nothing or everything, according to her fancy.

Madame Vidal had other notions. She guarded her young charge carefully from frivolous amusements; she checked any approach to levity; and, above all, she insisted on a careful study of French grammar, illustrated by La Fontaine's Fables. She had hoped—good woman that she was—that by steady discipline she should at last bring Marcia to her own standard of an earnest-minded member of society.

But Marcia at eighteen was no nearer to Madame Vidal's ideal than she had been when first she came to St. Zite. If change there were, Madame used to say sadly, it was that she was more thoughtless and self-willed—which meant that she had found Marcia's nature wholly at variance with the lines she had shaped for its development.

In the pastor's garden, one soft August morning, sat this troublesome Marcia, professedly preparing a history lesson for Madame Vidal. She had arranged herself with her books under the shade of a trellis beside the low parapet of the garden which overlooked the road. She was not very busy, however, for with her finger between the leaves of her closed book she sat scanning the dusty road and watching the occasional foot passengers, while she repeated mechanically from time to time Henri IV., 1589, Louis XIII., 1613. For which method, or rather want of method of getting over her work, she knew that Madame Vidal would presently take her to task, and she was prepared to listen to a long lecture with a meekness which bordered on indifference; for, let me ask, what is the use of being eighteen years old, of being beautiful, and of having sweet memories and hopes to dream over, if one cannot spend a sunny morning idly and bear the consequences with equanimity?

Presently the town clock made a great clamour to announce the hour of ten, which meant that Madame Vidal had given the final stroke to her household work, and that she was sitting in her room waiting for her pupil. But the clock appealed in vain to Marcia; she did not even hear it; while from the way in which her eyes turned constantly in one direction, it seemed as if her desultory observation must have a definite hope. She would scarcely have confessed this even to herself, which shows how little she was fitted, by the natural bent of her mind, to live in daily contact with Monsieur le Pasteur Vidal. Suddenly a bright blush came over her face, an eager joy flashed into her dark gray eyes and then veiled itself under her drooping lids, while a subtle change passed over her whole attitude in unmistakable manifestation of the delicious consciousness that her day was not going to be a dull blank; that she had been looking forward to something, to someone, and that she was not disappointed.

The personage who played the part of Prince Charming to this impassioned Princess came up the narrow, dusty faubourg with a jaunty and somewhat self-conscious air, as he spied Marcia's white dress gleaming among the greenery above the garden wall. He seemed fully aware that inside that white dress a heart was beating in double-quick time, because his step was coming towards her. He was a very presentable man, with an air of fashion about him which savoured not of St. Zita. His features were good, and were improved by a long moustache, which concealed a hard and rather coarse mouth. His age was uncertain; he might have been anything between a blasé five-and-twenty and a young forty.

When he reached the spot where Marcia sat—oblivious of everything but of his approach, though her eyes were cast down—he took a hasty look up and down the road and then halted beneath the wall.

"I'm afraid I'm horribly bold and impudent to try and see you like this," he said; "but I cannot exist any longer without a look at you. You must not scold me for coming."

"Scold you!" ejaculated Marcia. "Oh, Gustave, I am only too glad to see you."

"Thank you, my darling, for that; for do you know I was beginning to think you didn't care to see me any more? The sight of you and the sound of your voice reassure me, otherwise I have been fancying all sorts of things."

"What sort of things? Why?"

"I fancied I had vexed you, or that you were going to cast me off," returned Gustave. "You see it is ten whole days since you have given me a chance of seeing you. It is ten days since you have been to La Luquette. Everyone of those days I have made an excuse to go and see if you were there. At last, yesterday, Mademoiselle Valérie told me she was expecting you."

"And so she was," said Marcia plaintively, "for I had promised her; only, you see, I am treated like a baby, and made to stay at home like a nun."

"But you used to go to Madame Murat's just when you chose."

"I used to," replied Marcia; "but lately Madame has taken a prejudice against my visits there. She does all she can to keep me away from La Luquette altogether. It is very hard."

"Very hard," he repeated. "Do you think, darling, that an inkling of our secret has reached her ears, and made her watchful?"

"I don't think so," said Marcia. "She would have said something about it I fancy, if she had heard anything; I tremble sometimes at the thoughts that she knows. Oh, Gustave," she went on, after a pause, "I do so envy the girls who don't have to keep their love a secret. It will be so long before I am of age and can do as I like, without troubling myself about Monsieur and Madame Vidal. Two years and a half still!"

"Never mind, darling, it will slip away with patience. I would go and ask for you to-morrow, only I know—we both know—what that would lead to. Do you know," he added with a curious smile, "I sometimes think that Monsieur Vidal would rather like to marry you to that Monsieur Gabriel whom you talk of?"

"My dear Gustave," cried the girl, "how can you say such foolish things! Do you know who Monsieur Gabriel is?"

"Yes, I know perfectly. He is a very good young man; a protégé of the pastor's, who has taught you to play at chess, and who comes every evening of his life to look at you."

"Quite wrong," retorted Marcia; "he comes to study with Monsieur Vidal; and, besides, he is a common person, the son of a weaver; his mother irons my dresses."

"Well, you won't deny the chess?"

"Not altogether," she said laughing, "but very nearly."

"He's a lucky dog," sighed Gustave.

"What wouldn't I give to be Monsieur Gabriel!"

"What you would give? Have you ever seen him?"

"Not that I know of."

"Then let me tell you what you would be like if you were Monsieur Gabriel Chalmont instead of Gustave de Valade. You would be a clerk—a mere drudge—in Monsieur Murat's office. Your great ambition would be to become a pastor. Your chief interest in life would be the study of Hebrew. You would be uninterestingly ugly, with long hair straggling on to your collar. You would wear uncouth clothes and boots, and an impossible hat, and you would live in the narrowest street in the town. Would you like it?"

"Certainly. I should," he replied promptly, "if the disguise would impose on Madame Vidal."

"Ah well," laughed Marcia, "it is quite possible that Monsieur Gabriel would not agree to the exchange."

"More than possible," he returned dryly.

"After all, he is far better off than I am. People don't scout him for an evil-doer as they scout me."

"I didn't mean that," said Marcia gently. "And besides, darling, you must not mind that you have been spoken ill of. I believe in you."

The girl's face emphasised her words, and for an instant there was silence. His face softened as he looked at her.

"Marcia," he said, "you are going to throw yourself away on me. You have your life all before you, you are an innocent child. You are worlds too good for such a man as I am."

"I'm not, indeed I'm not," broke in Marcia, eagerly. "I would——"

But what she would, remained untold, for her assurance was cut short by the harsh voice of Françoise, Madame's factotum, crying in a tone of remonstrance:

"Mademoiselle Marcia, here is already half an hour that Madame waits."

Marcia started; her history book fell from her hand on to the road below.

"I am coming, Françoise. I forgot all about the time," she said.

"And your book, Mademoiselle," grunted Françoise.

As Marcia took it from her lover's outstretched hand, their fingers met for a momentary clasp.

"Come soon, my angel," he murmured, "and try to look now as if I was a stranger."

"Mademoiselle," said Françoise severely, as she followed Marcia into the house. "Mademoiselle surely does not know all that is said about Monsieur le Baron de Valade."

"What do you mean, Françoise?"

"I mean that if Mademoiselle consulted Monsieur and Madame in the choice of her acquaintances they would not allow her to number M. le Baron among them."

"You are very impertinent, Françoise. You don't know what you are talking about."

"It would be more to the purpose," muttered Françoise, as Marcia disappeared, "to know what Monsieur le Baron has been talking about. Madame is quite right; the silly child has picked up some worthless friends at Madame Murat's, and the most worthless of all is Monsieur de Valade—at least, if we may go by what they say of him."

CHAPTER II.

MONSIEUR GABRIEL sat among his books in a room of the bare-looking apartment, which was his home in the Rue des Frères. The sound of his father's loom came, deadened by distance, from the little workshop opening on to the street, while from the adjoining room was heard the thud, thud of his mother's irons over some immaculate linen.

Engrossed with what he was doing, Monsieur Gabriel heard neither the one nor the other; or, rather, these sounds of labour were to him as the monotonous accompaniment which followed the obbligation of his meditations.

Marcia's portrait of him, harsh as it sounded, was by no means overdrawn. As he sat over his writing, with his long, slightly waving hair falling forward, and his pale face resting against one of his large clumsy-looking hands, he fully justified the expression that he was most uninterestingly ugly. But the heavy ugliness of his features was redeemed by an expression of resolution and self-reliance which gave them a certain dignity and force. It was possible that study and thought might some day bestow on him a degree of refinement which would make him almost attractive.

The elder Chalmont had worked as a linen weaver all his life, for in far-away, primitive St. Zite, machine-made linen was looked on as a cheap and nasty innovation. He did not earn very high

wages at his toilsome trade, but, like many another Frenchman of his class, he was careful to provide his son with the best education within his reach, in order to qualify him to make his way in the world.

At sixteen Gabriel left the Ecole Communale to become a clerk in the office of Monsieur Murat, the Mayor of St. Zite. Chalmont hoped that the boy would climb by means of his stool in the notary's office, to a knowledge of the law, and that his earnings, well economised, would pay for a course of study later on at Paris. But Gabriel did not endorse this project. His heart and hopes were centred on a very different object. To study for the pastorate had been the one dream of his boyhood; this ambition had brightened his dull home and lightened his irksome work.

M. Vidal, charmed with the boy's sturdy energy and patient enthusiasm, undertook his gratuitous instruction until such time as he could afford to go to college. Gabriel's gratitude was unbounded, and for four years his life contained nothing so delicious as his occasional lessons in Hebrew, Greek, and theology.

After which there came a day when his pole-star suddenly grew pale. It did not set—he steered by it still; but its light was weakened. His studies, and to make the necessary leisure to follow them, were no longer his first thought and his one desire. It was the advent of Marcia Caxton in the pastor's household which wrought this mischief, for Gabriel Chalmont, poor, plebeian, plain as he was, could not hinder himself from falling deeply and passionately in love with Madame Vidal's beautiful, rich, and headstrong pupil. Alas for his Hebrew and Greek since that misfortune had befallen him! He worked at them still, but under what difficulties; with what pauses for foolish, passionate reverie; with what haunting recollection of a face whose eyes would pursue him till his dying day, and which had never given him one tender glance in return for his unmeasured, speechless devotion!

At this moment Monsieur Gabriel should have been laboriously employed on the Book of Numbers in the original, instead of which, had you looked over his shoulder, you would have seen that the sheet of foolscap before him contained an elaborately written poem, entitled "L'Espoir," and signed "Chalmont Gabriel," with many flourishes. Furthermore, a Latin motto immediately under the title suggested "Ut folium ventis."

They were not very original verses as to matter or metre, but they had a good deal of pathos in the way they set forth in their rhymed triteness how for the love of the fairest of women the poet would be content to give up all hope—all hope but that of being able to love her for ever; all hope but that of his own unreasoning constancy. Poor, sentimental youth! How hard he had worked to polish these lines! and now he would lock them into his most secret hiding-place lest any eye should chance upon his secret. And when he had thus locked them away he pushed back his flowing hair, took his hat—the hat that Marcia had called impossible—and went his way down the steep stairs and through the town, until he reached the faubourg where stood the house of the pastor.

The oftener Monsieur Gabriel went into the region beautified by the presence of Marcia, the more troubled and tremulous he grew on his approach. Should he see her or not? Would she be gracious to him, would she flout him, or would she ignore him utterly? He never knew which to expect, or which made his heart beat the most overwhelmingly.

This evening, at all events, the question was soon settled, for, as he mounted the flight of steps that led from the road to the garden path, he saw his queen of hearts walking up and down among the rose trees. She was bare-headed, and the light of the sunset touched her soft, brown hair and richly tinted cheek with a magic charm. It seemed to Gabriel that she had an aureole round her head and the glow of Heaven in her eyes. It was not the sunset only which glorified thus the girl's face. She was dreaming out her first love-dream in the quiet, sweet-scented garden, and as she clasped her fingers loosely together she seemed to feel the lingering touch of her lover's hand. Monsieur Gabriel walked timidly into her paradise, and, strange to relate, instead of resenting the interruption, her inward happiness made her smile upon him benignly, because she knew that would please him, and she felt inclined to please all the world for the sake of her own joy.

"Ah! Monsieur Gabriel," she cried, "it is you—you have come with your books; but Monsieur Vidal is not at home just now."

"Not at home," repeated Gabriel consolately, "then I had better go back home."

"Oh no, pray don't. Monsieur won't be long—at least, I don't think he will, and he would be sorry if he heard you had been disappointed. Come in and wait for him. Madame is somewhere about."

Gabriel's mild brown eyes filled with ecstasy as Marcia turned and walked with him up to the house.

"Madame!" she called first into one room and then into another. There was no answer. "It is odd," she remarked, "I saw her a minute ago. She would know all about Monsieur's movements."

Monsieur Gabriel looked embarrassed. Duty and decorum, from a French provincial point of view, bade him begone. Inclination tempted him to stay. The bias of a tête-à-tête would be mitigated by the feeling that it was stolen fruit. But Marcia was evidently superior to such misgivings.

"You will wait, won't you?" she said. "I'll play at chess with you if you like until they come in."

She repented the offer as soon as she had made it. These games of chess were so deadly dull. He was always so nervous, and he never seemed to enjoy winning the game.

"Thank you, Mademoiselle," he said humbly; "if you have time."

"Time!" exclaimed Marcia. "It is a mercy to kill some of my time for me; but remember this, please, Monsieur Gabriel, that the last time we played you gave me the game, which spoilt the fun. You must do your best to beat me. I like fighting. If you don't try to win all you can, it is so very dull."

"Very well, Mademoiselle," he replied again very humbly.

However, despite Marcia's injunction, this game went the way of many another one they had played. Gabriel, who was a clever player, moved his pieces about cautiously and aimlessly, so as to do as little harm as possible to his adversary's game.

Marcia, always reckless, and now pre-occupied, alternately did rash things and sank back into her day-dreams.

"It is your turn to play, Mademoiselle," Gabriel said when, after a longer pause than usual, he had looked up to see her eyes fixed on vacancy and totally oblivious of his last move.

"Is it? I beg your pardon. Ah, what have you been doing—am I in check? No, not this time, but on the brink of it. All right, I will put my queen there." So saying, Marcia inconsiderately thrust Her Majesty into the jaws of ruin.

Gabriel looked at her aghast.

"Tenez, Mademoiselle, you have made a mistake."

"Oh, so I have—I have given you my queen. What a goose I am, I have ruined my chance!"

"Put it back," said her opponent magnanimously; "move something else, it is a pity to lose it."

"Move something else! Indeed I won't. It was my own fault, and the move is made. You must take the piece, and I must bear the loss."

"I couldn't, Mademoiselle, I couldn't possibly," cried Monsieur Gabriel. "It was an oversight of yours, you didn't mean to do that."

"Nothing of the kind. It was pure stupidity, take it at once, I shan't move it again. Very well, if you won't take it off the board, I will."

Their hands met over the contested piece. For an instant he shrank as if ashamed of his audacity, then the thrill which her cool, light touch sent bounding through his veins, gave him courage, his hand closed over hers with a clasp which made her start, and, when she looked into his face with wonder, she saw a look there she had never seen before.

Her lip trembled, but she did not speak nor try to set herself free; a sense of awe stilled her at the sight of his soul flaming up in hot passion to his pale, heavy features. The next instant he was on his knees at her feet, pouring out in words she could scarcely follow the whole pent-up story of his love.

"Never, never did I dream of venturing to say these words to you. I know not why I say them now. An hour ago, five minutes ago, they were as if impossible to my tongue. I had vowed to carry my secret unuttered all my life, and now that I hear it as it passes from my lips to your ears, it seems to me that it is not I who am telling you of my love for you, but that my voice has betrayed me—that I am mad. Yet how can I have kept silence so long! You were but a child and I but a lad, when I loved you first. I have given you the best years of my youth. Your name, your face, your voice, are the food of my inmost being. You have taken possession of me. I do not belong to myself. I am poor. I am as nothing, but no man on earth could hold you dearer than I hold you. I call Heaven to witness that my love is greater and stronger than all love that shall ever be given to you in this world."

The force and strangeness of his words

had so overpowered her that she had listened to him passively. She dared not break in on the vehemence of the outburst that rushed from his long subdued passion. Her silence gave him a wild, desperate hope; in the frenzy of the moment he drew her towards him by her hands which he still held, and, clasping her to his breast, pressed his burning lips to hers in a long clinging kiss.

With a violent effort Marcia freed herself. White with rage she rose and stood above him.

"How dare you?" she cried. "How dare you? You—a low-born creature, to offer such an insult to me? If I live a thousand years I will never forgive your atrocious insolence. How dare you presume to love me? I hate you for it."

They were cruel words and they were unjust, but Marcia felt no remorse for them or pity for him as she darted from the room.

A little while afterwards Madame Vidal returning, found Gabriel still on his knees, leaning his head against Marcia's empty chair, while violent sobs shook his frame convulsively.

"Mon Dieu!" she exclaimed, "he is ill—he is in a fit. Françoise, Françoise, come quickly."

"No, no," he sobbed out, "let me alone. I want nothing. It is nothing."

"But something must have happened. What is it?"

"Do not ask me, madame," he replied wearily, "it would be impossible to tell you."

"Impossible! Nonsense! You are talking riddles. Where is Marcia? I see you have been playing chess. Has your trouble anything to do with her?"

"Madame," he replied, "my trouble relates to something too private, too sacred for discussion. I thank you for your sympathy, and I beg a thousand pardons that I have forced my grief upon your notice. I have acted like a fool. I bid you good evening."

And Monsieur Gabriel, despite his ungainly figure and plebeian gait, left the room with an air of dignity which changed the whole look of him.

his wife, and her re-marriage, with which the reader is already familiar, "it became evident to me that the sooner we took ourselves off to a place of safety the better. The surgeon was attending to Marstrand's arm, which, though not broken, had a nasty wound in it, the bullet having passed upward, tearing the muscle in an ugly way; and the Count's second, an honest, amiable-looking young fellow, came up to me, and said that, as matters had turned out so unfortunately, he thought I had better get my principal out of the way as speedily as might be; but that he wished to say first, that, however much he must deplore the fate of his deceased friend, the affair on our side had been conducted according to the strictest laws of honour, and that he should be happy to make a deposition to that effect if required. On that he handed me his card, and went off to bring up the Count's carriage which had been left at some little distance; and if Marstrand would only have taken advice, and come away with me then and there, we might both have been in safety at the present moment. As it was, however, he wouldn't even listen to me, but simply shook my hand, thanked me for all I'd done, and bade me be off as quick as I could, adding:

"My first duty is to my wife—to tell her that she is free—and that I have kept my word to her, and nothing you can say can keep me from that, let what will happen to me afterwards."

"Of course, I told him that he was mad, that he would certainly not be admitted at the Châlet, and, even if he forced an entrance, he would as certainly be arrested there. He only smiled in answer, and told me to button his overcoat over his wounded arm and let him be off; so, seeing that argument was useless, I told him that if he would not go with me, I should not go any farther than Paris, where my student days had made me acquainted with places where a man could be almost as safe from pursuit for a time as in England or Belgium, and gave him the address of the one where I now am—a top back room in a huge building let out to working people, needy journalists, and the like, in one of the dingiest alleys of the Quartier Latin. It was nearly five o'clock then, a dull, wet, foggy morning, and, as we parted, the mist seemed to swallow him up before he had gone a dozen paces from me. I saw no more of him, and made my way here at once, where, as

VICTIMS.

By THEO GIFT.

Author of "*Lil Lorimer*," "*An Alibi and its Price*,"
Etc., Etc.

CHAPTER XXIX. BURT'S STORY.

"WHEN we saw that the Count was really dead," Burt wrote, after giving the previous history of Marstrand's pursuit of

I expected, I have remained unmolested ever since, and where I received the news of his arrest, which, as I also expected, took place within little more than an hour after we parted. This morning I got a long letter from him which he had contrived to get smuggled to me without the knowledge of the authorities, and, as I had already caused private enquiries to be made at the Châlet, I am able to give you a pretty full history of what happened there.

"It seems that, thanks to the early hour and the fog—which grew denser every moment—he reached the Châlet without attracting any observation, and, remembering my warning as to the unlikelihood of his being admitted, determined to make an entry for himself after the same fashion as he had done before, and once in the garden trust to chance for an opportunity of reaching his wife's presence, or at least of making his own known to her.

"He managed it accordingly, though not without difficulty owing to his disabled arm, which obliged him to slip off his cumbering coat and leave it on the one side of the wall while he climbed over to the other; but, once in the garden, Fortune favoured him beyond his wildest hopes, for, while carefully skirting the house under shadow of the thick belt of shrubbery which surrounded it, he was suddenly stopped short and startled by finding himself in front of a room opening on to the lawn with French windows, through which to his unutterable delight and astonishment, he beheld in full view the very person whom he was in search of, Vera St. Laurent (I call her by that name because it is impossible for me to use the only one to which I suppose she has any legal right) herself!

"She was lying on a couch fully dressed, with her face, pale and wasted-looking even in sleep, turned towards him, and her lower limbs covered with a warm furred mantle. There did not seem to be anyone with her; and even in the joy and agitation of finding her so near him, Marstland wondered how she could manage to sleep at all while her husband and the man who, by virtue of the law, called himself such, were fighting for the possession of her, and still more how she came to be doing so in an ordinary sitting-room and without even having taken the precaution of drawing the curtains to shut her out of view of whoever might be passing. There was no time to lose, how-

ever, on such thoughts, as the Count's body might be brought back at any moment and forestall the tidings he had come to break to her; and, having gently approached the window and found that it was only fastened by a simple catch, he decided not to startle her by knocking, but to push it back with his penknife and enter.

"It was not possible, however, to do even this without some slight noise, and though Vera did not move or appear to be disturbed by it, someone else, to his intense dismay, did, for, as the window swung back a loud shriek greeted him, and there started up from a chair in a corner a tall, red-haired woman, whom he recognised as the one who had been sent to fetch his sweetheart home from the Josephses on the occasion of their first parting. . . .

"And here I'd better break off and tell you, what I learnt from my own enquiries at the Châlet, how this woman and her mistress happened to be passing the night in the way in which he found them.

"It seems that the unfortunate bride only recovered from the swoon into which she had fallen during the struggle between Marstland and the Count to go into violent hysterics, which increased every time the latter attempted to approach her, and lasted until sheer exhaustion brought on another fainting fit more prolonged than either of the former ones. Dreadfully alarmed, her mother insisted on a doctor being sent for; and the latter not only pronounced the girl to be in a most critical state, but, on finding out something of the facts of the case, forbade the Count to come within sight or hearing of her, declaring positively that unless his orders were obeyed on this point brain fever or actual insanity might be the result. He even banished Madame St. Laurent from the patient's room, having noticed that, instead of clinging to her mother in her intervals of consciousness, the unhappy girl shrank from and even tried to thrust her away, accusing her of having deceived and ruined her, and piteously entreating those about her to send for Marstland or let her go to him, into the street or anywhere out of that dreadful house. In the state she was in, however, it was obviously impossible for her to be moved, even if the Count would have consented to such a measure; but, as the only means to calm her, the doctor insisted on her being permitted to be dressed in her ordinary walking attire and brought down to a sitting-room on the

ground-floor, so that his repeated assurances that she was not a prisoner, and should go out as soon as she was well enough, might not seem to be without foundation.

"Here, then, she was established under charge of the maid Joanna, who, in default of her mother, had been hastily sent for; and the doctor, having seen her so far soothed, administered a powerful sleeping-draught and left, ordering the house to be kept perfectly tranquil.

"The narcotic took effect at last. On condition of the blinds not being even drawn down, so that at the first gleam of morning she might get up and go out—the one idea predominant in her mind—the poor girl had allowed her maid to coax her into lying down on the couch; and, once asleep, she slept so soundly that, after a time Joanna followed her example, tired out by the excitement and anxieties of the day, and by her patient's piteous, hysterical cry that Marstland was being murdered, that the Count had gone away to murder him, and that when he came back he would do the same by her.

"Under these circumstances a more untoward event than poor Marstland's sudden entrance could hardly be imagined. The servant, as I have said, screamed outright; and Vera, startled thus suddenly out of her narcotised sleep, bounded upright as though she had been shot, and sat, her eyes fixed and full of an awful expression on Marstland, as, taken by surprise at the appearance of his old enemy, he stopped short on the threshold, his tall figure in its white shirt-sleeves smeared and dabbled with crimson stains, which had broken out afresh from the exertion of climbing the wall, his face wan and stern-looking from agitation and loss of blood, presenting a weird and ghastly appearance in the gray and misty light.

"For one second she sat thus; then, as he made a step towards her, a sound more terrible than any cry, a laugh, shrill and horrible beyond all conception, broke from her lips, and she fell to the ground in a fit, after shrieking out:

"'He! His ghost! Oh, they have killed him! They have killed him! It is my turn now.'

"Joanna flew to her assistance, and Marstland himself, filled with horror and remorse at what he had so unwittingly done, knelt beside her, trying to revive her, to make her hear, assuring her that he was alive and safe—that he had come to

protect her and take her away: all that a few hours before would have been most comforting and beneficial to her. It was of no use now, however; and her lover, seeing by the lights of his professional instincts the real state of the case, forced himself to put aside his own feelings for those of the medical man, and was proceeding to take more practical measures for the restoration of the poor girl, and to force Joanna to leave off the reproaches and lamentations she was showering on him, and do what he bade her for the same purpose, when both became aware that a loud knocking which had been going on at the front door for the last minute or so had suddenly ceased, and had been succeeded by the tread of many feet, and a confused sound of voices and some smothered cries in the hall.

"The next moment the handle of the door was softly turned, and Madame St. Laurent, her face ghastly with some recent terror, entered, making a gesture as she did so to silence and keep back those in the hall behind her; but the sight of her daughter's prostrate form, with Marstland supporting and bending over it, seemed to appal her beyond even the power of crying out, and before she could recover herself the open French window was darkened by a fresh intruder—a commissary of police, who advanced into the room and laid his hand on the young Englishman's shoulder with the ominous words:

"'Au nom de la loi! I arrest you for the assassination of M. le Comte de Mailly in the Bois de Boulogne this morning.'

"Marstland took it very coolly. He had guessed the moment he heard the noise outside that it signified that the Count's body was being brought home, and knowing the risk he had run in coming to the house, was prepared for what followed.

"'It is all right,' he said, speaking in French and very distinctly. 'I have killed him certainly, because he tried to rob me of my wife, this poor girl whom you see before you; but it was a duel—not an assassination, and he wounded me in return. Let me be for a few moments, however. I will go with you willingly afterwards; but I am a surgeon as well as a husband, and as such I tell you that this lady is at the present moment in such a critical state, that without the most unremitting medical care it may be impossible even to save her life.'

"'In that case it is fortunate that a doctor who has already been sent for to

certify to M. le Comte's death is now in the house and can attend to her,' the commissary said; and when Marstland found that the gentleman in question was a physician of repute, and the same who had already been in attendance on Vera that day, he made no further resistance, but, laying the girl gently on the couch, pressed one kiss on the unconscious lips which had last kissed him back in the little parlour of the Guernsey lodging-house, and, holding out his hand to the other doctor, said:

"Monsieur, I confide my young wife to your care. Do your best to save her, I entreat you; and remember this, if she dies her blood will be on the head of her parents, that miserable woman there and her husband, who sold her to the man from whom I have delivered her.' They took him away after that, and not too soon, for in the carriage he fainted from the pain of his arm and loss of blood combined; and the prison surgeon who was called in to attend him pronounced him to have so much fever that it was a wonder to me that he was able to write to me the same night, and even to speak of himself as 'all right,' though nearly frantic with anxiety for the poor girl whom he had left in so critical a condition. Unfortunately my information as regards her is of the saddest nature. She is in a high fever, perfectly delirious and raving incessantly, and the gravest fears are entertained for her. Possibly her death might, as things are, be the best thing that could happen to her, poor girl! but I dread to think what the effect of it on poor Marstland would be. His present position is a dangerous enough one at the best, and I do hope his friends will bestir themselves on his behalf and secure him good legal advice, for de Maily was, it seems, a man of considerable influence, even in the Parisian world, and has many powerful friends here."

It is needless to describe the feelings aroused in Marstland's three friends while reading this long account of what had befallen him and the unhappy girl with whom he had linked his fate. They were all good, sincere, thoughtful people in their different ways, and even Mrs. Burt, who had felt some natural irritation at first against the young surgeon on the score of her husband's detention, could not find it in her heart to say anything severe of him now, when whatever faults he might have com-

mitted had met with so severe a punishment.

"Poor fellow! It is indeed a terrible situation," she said gravely, and with a tremble in her voice, while Leah vainly tried to press back with her fingers the tears which would overbrim her eyes. "And even if she does die he will always feel as if he were to blame for it; though really, as John says, it might be for the best——"

"Oh, no, no, no! She won't die. Don't say that. She can't; it would be too cruel," Leah broke in excitedly. "Oh, think of her, so young, and what she must have suffered before her mind could break down in this way!"

"To me it seems as if it must have broken down before," said the Professor. "What could have induced her to enter into this unnatural second marriage? Can either of you understand it?"

"No; I think with you she must have been mad," Mrs. Burt answered. "It seems wholly incomprehensible otherwise, and, indeed, if you don't mind my saying so, I did think her rather—rather deficient in intellect the only time I talked to her."

"Oh, but indeed you were wrong; that was only shyness. She was very shy, very timid and silent; but you've no idea what a pleasant companion she was when you were alone with her; how sympathetic and intelligent——" Leah could not get on. She was nearly breaking down again. "Father," she said eagerly, "may I go to Lady Hesse and see if she has heard the same news? Mrs. Burt will let me take her husband's letter in case—I feel as if I must be doing something," she added, with a sort of sob.

"Go, then, by all means," said the Professor kindly, "and tell her that, as it is too late for me to start for Paris to-night, I shall do so by the eight o'clock express from Charing Cross to-morrow morning, and shall be happy to do her bidding there in any way she may desire. It is a pity, though! I had a lovely specimen of 'chara' sent me to-day which I was wishing beyond all things to examine under the microscope."

"Oh, never mind the 'chara,' father dear!" said Leah, kissing him. "It is so good of you to go. And you will see about poor little Vera too the first thing, won't you? You will think——"

"My dear, I think of her the most of the two; and I shouldn't wonder if I went down to that accursed Châlet before I even

saw Marstrand or settled myself anywhere for the night. Yes; I might even send you a telegram if I thought I could afford it. Go off, now, to Lady Hessey."

"Well, Professor, you certainly are good!" Mrs. Burt exclaimed when Leah was gone. "But, do you know, I had no idea your daughter was so much attached to Miss St. Laurent as she seems. It was quite a recent friendship, wasn't it? And, indeed, when I first heard a rumour of Dr. Marstrand being engaged I fancied——"

"Leah's friendships are very real things to her, whether old or recent," the Professor interrupted rather hastily. "Besides, in this case she cannot help feeling herself in some way answerable for this poor little girl whom she brought over here, and undoubtedly encouraged in liking and being intimate with young Marstrand. It has been an unfortunate affair altogether, and I can quite understand her feelings about it, though I don't think myself that she has any cause to blame herself for her part in it."

Nor did Leah herself in her calmer moments, when she had time to review the matter by the light of her own good sense; but there were other times when she felt almost crushed under a vague sense of guilt—a burden of responsibility which no reasoning could shake off—and when she asked herself, with bitter self-scorn and remorse, whether a foolish fear of betraying any undue jealousy or feeling with regard to Marstrand had not led her to rather thrust Vera into his arms than otherwise, to encourage their mutual admiration for one another; to further tête-à-têtes; and in a thousand ways to assist in bringing about the engagement which had just come to such a disastrous end. Naomi had disapproved of it at the time, had pointed out to her that Vera's ignorance of the world, and of the ways of society in general, was altogether abnormal; that she seemed to have no natural tact or discretion, no "juste milieu" between a stiff, timid reserve and the extreme of childish confidence and trust; and had suggested that Leah ought to teach her a little "savoir-faire," give her hints here and there, and not allow her to follow so unrestrainedly the bent of her own ill-directed impulses and enthusiasms.

"She adores you, so she would be sure to mind anything you tell her," Naomi had said; but it was because Leah knew this; knew how absolute her authority with her friend was, and how implicitly the

latter would obey whatever she said; that she hesitated to say anything. The power for doing, for checking, had belonged to her then; and she had refrained from using it lest, even in her own mind, the motive for such action should appear capable of misconstruction; and now it was taken from her: now she sat in the hansom cab, which was carrying her to Lady Hessey's, crying her very heart out in a tempest of impotent indignation, sorrow, and pity which, but for the slight relief afforded her by the errand she was on, seemed as if it must have suffocated her. There are people whose first instinct in trouble is to rise up and do something either to remove or to work it off; just as there are others who have no other capacity than to sit down under it and weep; and Leah belonged to the former category. Hers was an active, clear-sighted nature, quick to plan, resolute in carrying into action, incapable of thinking of herself where others were concerned; the very girl whom one would have imagined as born to do and endure, to face great difficulties and surmount them; to take a heroine's part, in fact, and play it nobly and triumphantly to the end. And instead, by some perverse contrariety of fate, her rôle in life was to do nothing but the most common-place things, to give singing-lessons, to cut out her own gowns, to make herself pleasant and useful to her friends and family, and do little common-place acts of charity to those outside: a small, contemptibly small, and unromantic part, with no scope or room for anything great or noble in it; while Vera, on the other hand—poor, simple, narrow, childish Vera, feeble to a fault, incapable of choosing for herself in the smallest matter, detesting action of any sort, and asking nothing better of life than to live in a pleasant atmosphere and be ruled by a tender hand—she, of all people, had been dragged by the same ironic fate into the position of a heroine indeed; had been given the choice for good or evil in questions at once the most subtle and the most important; had had her own honour, and the lives and honour of others, hanging upon a word from her lips; and (as might have been expected) had sunk altogether under the weight of such a burden, and had not only been crushed and mangled by it, but had overwhelmed almost all belonging to her in the same ruin.

There was no answer just then to Leah in her dumb revolt against the shipwreck which had laid waste these two lives so

subtly linked with hers; but before the cab had come to its journey's end, she had summoned enough of her wonted self-command to lay it aside for more practical matters, dry her tears, and make herself fit to meet Lady Hessey with the same clear intelligence and cordial, yet delicate, sympathy, which had delighted the baronet's wife with her on her last meeting. Lady Hessey had not heard from her brother himself, but from their family lawyer, who told her he had had a telegram from Dr. Marstland announcing his marriage and arrest for duelling, and asking two things: first, that legal assistance might be sent to him; and, secondly, that his family would not believe anything they saw in the papers until they heard from him direct. The lawyer added that his head-clerk, a very clever young man, was to leave for Paris on the following day; and Lady Hessey, finding that Professor Josephs was going too, gave up her own initiatory desire to do the same thing, and declared that, after all, men were of much more use in such difficulties; and further, that she knew that Sir George would not have allowed her to go, lest the just and proper severity with which she ought to treat her imprudent brother, should be merged in injudicious fondness and indulgence by the sight of his wounds and affliction.

Leah was grievously disappointed. Fondness and indulgence, though not permissible from her, an outsider, seemed right and desirable in an only sister; and besides, she had hoped that in going over to Paris Lady Hessey would have taken on herself the rôle of Vera's sister-in-law, and would have gone to her and insisted on seeing, and (if needful) protecting her. Lady Hessey, however, had no such intention. Her condemnation of the unfortunate girl's conduct, of her weakness, immorality, and faithlessness, was scathing; and she would have frankly expressed, not only it, but a very sincere wish that the culprit's death might cut short an imbroglio which must be to the lasting damage of her brother's life, if she had not been silenced and put to shame by the warmth of Miss Josephs' indignation.

Never, indeed, had Leah felt more keenly the imperious need for an absolutely passionate loyalty to her poor little

friend than at that moment, when no fibre of her soul could either comprehend or condone the line of action of which she had been guilty; but, as she had said herself, what one cannot understand one ought not to judge, and if she could do nothing else for the girl whom George Marstland loved, she could at least be true to her; could stand up for her, and take her side wholly and solely, without even allowing herself a glance at that other of whom she dared not even think while his claims for pity tugged so rebelliously at her heart-strings. So she fought Vera's battles bravely, and with so much fire and eloquence, that at last Lady Hessey came very near to guessing her secret, and exclaimed in an impetuous way:

"Ah, if it was you, Miss Josephs, and somebody else was speaking as you do, I might listen! What do you think—I must tell you—I have always been dreadfully afraid of you with regard to my brother, because of your being a Jewess, you know, not for any other reason; but really, now that I see you, I only wonder at his having escaped heart-whole, unless, indeed"—without a nervous laugh, half questioning, half incredulous—"he didn't escape, and this terrible folly is the result of pique at your having refused him."

"No, Lady Hessey, I never refused your brother, and he never proposed to me," said Leah quite coolly, and without even a rise of colour. "Indeed, I hope that the thought of any need for 'escape' never entered his mind in connection with me. Possibly he remembered as well as you and I do that I am a Jewess."

"But you might become a Christian," said Lady Hessey, "I almost wish you would. Do you know that I belong to a society for the conversion of Jews?"

"Do you?" said Leah, more coldly still; "so does the wife of that Mr. Burt whose letter you have been reading. I also belong to a society which I started myself after I first heard of this one of yours. It is one for the study and preservation of Judaism among Hebrew girls and women; and, though it is very small yet, I hope it will grow and prevent ignorant people from being 'converted,' as you call it, to other religions, for mere want of knowing what they are giving up and what they are embracing."

"THE STORY OF OUR LIVES FROM YEAR TO YEAR"

ALL THE YEAR ROUND

A Weekly Journal

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PRICE TWOPENCE.

A DATELESS BARGAIN.

By C. L. PIRKIS,

Author of "Lady Lovelace," etc.

CHAPTER III.

MRS. SHENSTONE laid down a letter just received from the Countess of Cranbury.

"To think," she said, looking round the breakfast-table appealingly for sympathy, "that the friend in whom I trusted should fail me in this way!"

"Countesses are not to be caught with chaff any more than jackdaws," said Uncle Archie gruffly from behind his newspaper. "You should bait your trap according to your bird."

"What is it Lady Cranbury won't do, mother?" asked Joyce good-naturedly, desirous of putting up an umbrella between her mother and the hail of Uncle Archie's aphorisms.

Mab looked up nervously. "Oh, what a pity to ask favours of an almost stranger——" she began, then checked herself.

"An almost stranger! What are you talking about, child? Why, I met her and sat next her at supper at the county ball ten years ago!" cried Mrs. Shenstone in mild astonishment. "And such a small favour too that I asked of her! I put it so sweetly to her, reminded her of our pleasant meeting—now, alas, so long ago—and asked as a special kindness that she would assist me with her experience as to the choice of a locality for our London house; whether she thought we could be comfortable in a furnished house; whether we had better take up our horses and carriages, or trust to the London livery stables; whether we should require a large staff of servants; whether—but there, I've for-

gotten the half of what I wrote to her. And this is her reply."

Here Mrs. Shenstone held up to view the Countess's letter, and read as follows:

"The Countess of Cranbury presents her compliments to Mrs. Shenstone, and begs to suggest that at any respectable house agent's office she can obtain answers to her queries upon the matter of house-hiring."

"My lady was afraid you meant to float yourself into society on her satin skirts, so she very wisely tucked them up," chuckled Uncle Archie.

"My lady needn't have been so easily frightened," cried Joyce indignantly. "Never mind, mother dear, consult with us; we'll answer all your questions, no matter how many you may ask."

"In future I will have nothing—nothing to do with 'society,'" began Mrs. Shenstone semi-hysterically.

"Don't, except with the society you have a right to command," interjected Uncle Archie.

"There is an aristocracy of intellect, I'll cultivate that. I'll gather about me the élite of the worlds of art and literature. My house in London shall be renowned as the meeting-place of art, science, and letters. I'll choose its locality, irrespective of rank and fashion."

"Oh, the locality must be close to the British Museum; of course that must be the seat of the Muses," said Joyce, with a merry laugh, and throwing a saucy, challenging look at Uncle Archie meant to be interpreted.

He was quick enough to catch its meaning. "Let me see," he cogitated, rubbing his chin, "isn't it in close proximity to the British Museum that a certain young bar-rister has his quarters?"

"Ah, Frank has my letter by this time.

Such a letter!" laughed Joyce, accepting the counter challenge with alacrity.

"Mother," said Mab, abruptly rising from the table, "will you mind going through the housekeeping books with me this morning? There are one or two items I can't quite make out."

Mrs. Shenstone sighed. "I am so tired of housekeeping," she said plaintively. To hear her speak one might think that her days were passed in the supervision of her establishment—her nights made wakeful by plans for the comfort of her family. The fact of the matter was that Mab was the Atlas of the household, and bore its burden on her shoulders.

For once, however, she deemed it necessary to insist that her mother's shoulder should bear an ounce or two of the weight; so the two left the room together to spend a happy half-hour over account books.

Uncle Archie dropped his banter, and turned to Joyce directly he found himself alone with her.

"I want you to explain that sister of yours to me, Joyce," he said. "You, I can understand easily enough—anyone can understand you—but she is always a mystery to me. I can't penetrate her."

Joyce grew serious in a moment. "She is a mystery to me too in some things," she answered gravely. "Here we are always together; we read each other's letters; we haven't a secret from each other; yet sometimes I feel as though slowly but surely a brick wall were being built up between us, and that by-and-by I should only hear her voice far away on the other side of it."

"Is she over-studying, do you think—going in for philosophy or mathematics? Girls often muddle their brains by attempting things they've no real capacity for."

"I'm certain she is not. She never opens a book, unless it is a cookery book, or one of dear papa's old 'Farmers' Guides' or 'Agricultural Gazettes.' She is dropping all her accomplishments too—never touches a pencil nor opens the piano."

"She played decently too, didn't she?"

"Decently! Brilliantly you mean," cried Joyce with enthusiasm. "Yet she hasn't touched a note since one day—about six months ago—I went into the drawing-room to listen to her playing one of Beethoven's sonatas. It was between the lights—too dark to see the keyboard even, much less the music. Yet she was playing deliciously, as though she had everyone of the modulations by heart. I knew she hadn't had the piece long enough to be playing from

memory, and when I went close to her I saw that her eyes, though wide open, seemed looking nowhere, seeing nothing. Of course I spoke to her, and asked if she wouldn't like candles, and she jumped up with such a terrified start and clutched at me. 'I am so thankful you have come in, Joyce,' she said; 'the room seemed full of shadows.' And from that day she has never touched a note."

Uncle Archie frowned heavily, and shook his head. "Your mother ought to have advice for her—something *must* be wrong with her nerves. It's just as well, after all, that you're going up to London; the best of medical advice can only be had in the big cities. I remember your father—" he stopped short, as though his reminiscences were not of the sort or kind for the daughter's ear.

But Joyce caught at his meaning—snapped at it, like a spaniel at flies.

"Uncle Archie," she queried peremptorily, "was my father at any time like Mab in his ways?"

"What do you mean? Afraid to sit alone in a room after dark, or for ever bringing out his words with a jerk, or stopping short in the middle of every other sentence he uttered?"

"No. I mean did he seem to be like Mab, always forcing himself to act up to some preconceived ideas? Of course, I mean as a young man; I know very well what he was later on in life."

"He was very fond of poetry at one time—used to sit reading Shakespeare, Milton, and that other fellow—what's his name? Shelley—all day long. Then he suddenly dropped it all, took to farming as a science, settled down here and married."

"Ah—h!" said Joyce, "I see."

But she did not say what she saw. How could she? when the fact suddenly made intelligible to her understanding was how her father with his strong, clear intellect came to marry a woman whose brains might have been put into a nutshell without the slightest inconvenience to the kernel. "Here am I—I shall drown in the Ideal, only the rock Common-place can keep me high and dry," must have been the cry of his heart when he did the deed.

Uncle Archie possibly followed in the track of her thoughts.

"The truth of it is," he said, with the air of a man accustomed to deal out panaceas to the women of a previous generation, "Mab ought to be married. She is old

enough—three-and-twenty nearly—nothing gets the maggots out of a girl's brain so effectually as marriage."

Joyce begged the question.

"I like that, Uncle Archie! You would like to marry Mab right off at once, but me you would keep single for another ten years if you could!"

"You and Mab are two different beings. If you were an old maid for another twenty years you'd develop no eccentricities. You'd just be comfortable and commonplace, and—and—help to keep other people the same."

But it was not unlovingly said.

"Thank you, Uncle Archie. I'm sure you mean it for a compliment, though it is not a remarkably well-turned one. Well, I promise you, when mother's establishment in London is set up—somewhere in the vicinity of the British Museum it will be, I'm confident—I'll look out for a husband for Mab. I daresay there will be plenty of young men about the house—mother always did like young men about, didn't she?"

"Ay, there's the mischief," groaned Uncle Archie, bringing his hand down on the table with an energy that made Joyce start, "you'll get young fools about the house in swarms—impecunious idiots, incapable of making their way in life, anxious to tack themselves to a woman's skirts and be dragged into competence. There's your mother not past marrying—large income—Mab—you! all with independent fortunes, and no one to look after you."

"You come up and do the jailor, why not? Take it in turns with me; turn and turn about."

"In turns with you! Great Heavens!" ejaculated Uncle Archie, with a keen upward look over his glasses, taking stock of Joyce's exceedingly youthful graces. "Why, Mab would do the chaperon better than you, or might if she chose to exert herself. What's the world coming to?"

"Why, to common-sense, I hope, now that young ladies of one-and-twenty are so well able to take care of themselves and other people also," laughed Joyce. "As if you didn't know I had chaperoned my mother and Mab ever since I was out of the nursery. Why, Uncle Archie, you dear old thing—here she went up to the old gentleman and gave him one, two, three good kisses. 'I'd chaperon you if you were a bachelor, and had no one to look after you!'"

CHAPTER IV.

UNCLE ARCHIE was right when he said that anyone could read and understand Joyce Shenstone's character. Truly there were no hieroglyphics in it, although many contradictions met there. For instance, her sunny good-humour was a thing not often found in company with keen powers of observation and a quick sense of the ludicrous. How, too, it was that her frank plain-speaking ran in couples with her power to make and keep friends was a puzzle to not a few. "If I see a spade I feel bound to say it's a spade and not a teaspoon," she had often said to Mab, when the latter had stood open-eyed at her sister's combined fearlessness and truthfulness.

Joyce had plenty of opportunities for saying spades were spades and teaspoons teaspoons, as likewise had Mab of standing open-eyed and admiring when, in due course, Mrs. Shenstone's London establishment was set up.

It was not until the season was well advanced that Mrs. Shenstone succeeded in finding a house to her liking. Eventually one of the roomy, comfortable houses in Eaton Square fixed her fancy.

Joyce wrote saucily enough to Uncle Archie from the hotel where they were temporarily located. "I allowed mother to decide upon Eaton Square instead of the vicinity of the British Museum because I knew it really didn't matter two straws, for wherever we went Frank would be sure to re-pitch his tent within a stone's throw of us. He has already made preparations for so doing, and next week we may be able to kiss the tips of our fingers to each other across the mews at the back of the house. The thought is an inspiring one for both of us to carry about, and may serve to enliven our ten years' penal servitude."

"Ten years' penal servitude," was the form of expression she frequently adopted to designate her matrimonial engagement, since it had become a received notion in the family that no marriage was to be thought of till Frank's income equalled her own.

The phrase jarred terribly upon Frank's ear at times.

"It is too near the truth to be pleasant hearing," he would occasionally say to her when he called at Eaton Square in the evening, looking white and tired from a heavy day's work in the Law Courts. "Do

you know, Joyce, sometimes I feel I am doing you a positive wrong in keeping you tied down to a poor beggar like me, when not a doubt, from a worldly point of view, you might do so much better?"

But this would be only after a very hard day's work at some insignificant and unprofitable case, when it seemed as though the harder he wooed Fortune the colder her face grew towards him.

At other times, when Fortune showed in a little better temper, it would be, "I don't believe there ever was such a lucky fellow—no one ever had such an incentive to hard work as I have. Everything is going on oiled wheels now. I shall soon be—well, if not on the top step of the ladder, at least half-way up, and then—and then——"

Joyce knew how to be cheery and comforting to the first mood, merry and teasing to the second.

"And then, and then," she finished his sentence for him. "People will say what an intolerably conceited, altogether insufferable young man that Frank Ledyard is! How he plumes himself on his success, and looks down on every one who comes near him! and what a dear, patient girl that Joyce Shenstone must be to put up with him as she does, falling in with his whims and humouring his pride!"

"Joyce, if you had not humoured my pride in this way I don't know what would have become of me."

"It was Uncle Archie who insisted that your pride should be humoured, not I."

"You were 'particeps criminis'——"

"Oh, keep that for the Law Courts!"

"Joyce," Frank went on, speaking as seriously as though he were already seated on that bench towards which his ambition tended, "when your mother spoke those careless words that night, all in a flash I seemed to see myself as I stood before the eyes of the world, and to hear the verdict which the world would pass on me."

"Law Courts again!" murmured Joyce. "But why lay so much stress on mother's words? No one——" she broke off all in a hurry.

If she had finished her sentence it would have been:

"No one ever pays any attention to what mother says. If Mab and I did so, we should be in perpetual hot water."

But there are certain things one cannot in good taste say, even to one's lover, second self though he may be.

Frank seemed to read her unspoken thoughts easily enough.

"There are some words which a man cannot pass over with dignity," he said somewhat doggedly.

"Dignity! I have heard that word before. If I hear it often I shall fall into the habit of adopting it for my own personal use. I wonder how much you thought of my dignity when you wrote so bluntly to Uncle Archie: 'Whatever you say, I'm not going to marry that niece of yours for another ten years.'"

"Did I make use of that expression? But you see, Joyce, a lady with an independent income of a thousand a-year does not need to lay the stress upon her dignity that a poor beggar with less than half that sum does."

"I wish you would forget the thousand a-year."

"I wish I could. But somehow it seems before my eyes and in my thoughts all day long. I say to myself when I get up in the morning——"

Joyce laid her finger on his lips:

"I don't in the least want to hear what you say when you get up in the morning. Spoken thoughts always sound so ridiculous when they're repeated—like dreams which bore other people to listen to. Do you know, Mab has lately taken to speaking her thoughts out loud? It sounds so funny."

She was evidently in a great hurry to lead the talk away from her thousand a-year.

"Mab's soliloquies ought to be worth hearing. She opens her lips so seldom to the outer world, her brain must be packed with ideas," said Frank, following the decoy simply enough.

"If you could hear them! She comes out of her room in the morning counting on her fingers all the things she has to get through before lunch. 'Let me see,' she says, touching finger number one, 'there is Mrs. Gibbs's baby wants new flannel—and Smith, the chimney-sweep, burnt his brush last week and must have a new one'—and so on till she gets to finger number five. I must tell you that Mab, the last few days, has not been quite so keen about her housekeeping duties, but has taken up with 'Practical Beneficence,' as the newspaper biographies say."

"Does that mean she has turned Ritualist, and goes about visiting the slums in company with a fellow in a black night-gown, with a cord round his waist?"

"As if I would let her! No; it simply means that she is working very hard at schools and district visiting, and has given

up the Parish Church to attend a Nonconformist Chapel."

"Good Heavens! I hope she won't be taking up with concertinas and the Salvation Army, or those semi-hysterical things called revivals! The truth of it is, Mab ought to get married."

"There! Exactly what Uncle Archie said! You men seem to think marriage is the cure for all earthly ills. If a girl goes in for high art and dresses like a saint in a church window, you say immediately, 'she ought to get married.' If she takes up with horses and talks like a groom, you repeat the same thing; and here, because poor Mab, as I said just now, has 'embarked upon a career of practical beneficence,' you pull a face like a consulting doctor and say, 'she ought to get married! I've no patience.'"

Frank grew grave — people generally grew grave in talking of Mab—"You don't understand, dear. It's not with Mab's practical beneficence I'm finding fault; I honour her for it. But you see these are self-imposed duties, and can be laid down at any time. Before another month is over our heads she may have found another outlet for herself not quite so desirable."

"Does that mean that before another month is over our heads I am to find an outlet for Mab's eccentricities in the shape of a matrimonial engagement?"

"I did not even hint at such a thing," began Frank indignantly.

But Joyce was bent on teasing, and rattled on inconsequently. "Oh the awful responsibility! Oh the crowds of young men I shall gather about me so soon as I make known the fact that one of the family is wanting a husband!"

"Well, let it be clearly known which of the family is wanting a husband, or I may be called upon to enter a protest."

"Could you, 'with dignity!'" laughed Joyce. "Well, come in next Friday evening when we shall be 'at home' to our friends, and you shall see me set the ball rolling. By-the-by, did I tell you that Friday evenings are to be an institution weekly throughout the season! Such Fridays they will be! Something quite—quite out of the common! They will have to be seen to be appreciated!"

literated more old historic landmarks than in the county of Renfrew. Its shores upon the busy Clyde are lined with the huge sheds of the shipbuilders, where, in prosperous times huge floating monsters are turned out, not singly, but by the dozen; and its pleasant sylvan scenes,

Where Cart rins rowin to the sea
By many a flow'r and spreading tree,

are now occupied by bleachworks, dye-works, mills, and factories; while the rivers themselves—the White Cart, no longer white but puce-coloured; the Black Cart, which once owed its hue to the peat-water from the mosses, but now to the indigo from the dyer's vat; the Levern, to which the old name of the Waters of Grief might be well applied—all those rivers have been turned to useful purposes, to the exclusion of the beautiful or picturesque.

We may search in vain for the lovely British pearls which, according to Crawford, the historian of the county, were to be found "in the river of White Cart, above the town of Paisley, so fine and big that they may compare with many Oriental," and which were produced in a shell larger than that of a mussel. This river pearl fishery had doubtless gone on from the time of the Romans, and helped to furnish forth the jewel cases of Roman matrons; for here was one of the northernmost posts of the Empire, the great line of highways of Roman construction coming to an end at Paisley, where within recent times were to be found the traces of a Roman station.

Paisley, which is now a busy manufacturing town, has sprung into importance with the present century; but there has been, time out of mind, a considerable industrial population in the district round about; skilful weavers at the loom and cunning spinsters with the rock; and with these coexisted generations of hardy packmen who, roaming far and wide throughout the land, distributed the stout and wholesome products of village industry. Not after the pattern of Autolycus was the sober, cannie Scots pedlar; no merry, lightsome knave, but one with a hard, theologic head that was good for an argument or a bargain. Such was the thrifty race who founded the commercial prosperity of Paisley. From the pack to the shop and the warehouse was a frequent and natural transition, and many a wealthy trading firm owed its first origin to the packman's hoard of savings.

But quite apart from trade or manufacture was the first beginning of Paisley as a

CHRONICLES OF SCOTTISH COUNTIES.

RENFREWSHIRE.

NOWHERE has the modern industrial development effected more changes or ob-

settlement. A missionary priest, from the Island of Saints, here built his lowly temple by the side of the stream, in a spot separated from the then lonely estuary of the Clyde by a strip of wild forest. This was Saint Mirin, a cotemporary of Columba, and a pupil of the renowned Congal—renowned, that is, among the Irish of his day. The wattled huts and rude stone sanctuary of the religious community which gathered about the Saint, formed a centre of religious and civilising influence; and although there is nothing to show that the Gaelic monastery occupied the site of the present Abbey, yet it seems probable that advantage was taken of the existing reverence for the sacred site, and that the Abbey church enclosed the foundations of the still more ancient temple.

The raising of Paisley Abbey brings us into contact with the early history of the royal house of Stuart. The royal line, as has been already pointed out in the Chronicle of Shropshire,* sprang from the race of Alan, probably a Norman knight, who followed the Conqueror to England, and became a landowner in Salop. Walter Fitzalan, a younger son of the above, followed King David the First into Scotland. It is conjectured, with much probability, that when King David went to the assistance of his niece, the Empress Maud, in those weary wars for the crown which seem to rest like a nightmare on the memory of the student of English History, and took part in that siege of Winchester, which wrought such havoc in the ancient city, he there met young Walter, whose elder brother was fighting on the same side, and took him into his service.

Nothing is more remarkable in the history of mediæval Scotland than the rapid substitution of a Norman nobility, as lords and owners of the land, for any existing race of local chiefs all through the Lowlands. As in England, where the heavy-armed horseman could ride, there we have feudalism in all its power. But Scotland is still more feudal than England, and yet it suffered no Norman conquest, and its royal house, down to the days of the Bruce, may be considered as pre-eminently a national line. It is a puzzle—where is the Scot? As for the Pict, he is enveloped still more completely in the haze. Happily it is a puzzle which we are not here concerned to unravel.

Anyhow, Walter Fitzalan found high

favour with David and his successor. He was made High Steward of Scotland, endowed with lands and lordships which made him one of the chief nobles of the land, and especially with this whole county or barony of Renfrew. That our Prince of Wales, among his crowd of titles, enjoys that of Baron Renfrew, is due to this ancient transaction, begun in the wars of Stephen and of Maud.

Where the Norman noble went the Norman monk was sure to follow, and Walter, having established himself securely among his castles and lordships, bethought him of founding an Abbey for the good of his soul. The model he chose for the new foundation was the Abbey of Wenlock, in his own native county of Shropshire. At his invitation, Prior Humbold and thirteen monks travelled from Wenlock to Renfrew, where they remained till the new buildings at Paisley were completed. This was in 1169; for the Abbey buildings were some years in progress, and, on their completion, they were dedicated to Our Lady, Saint James, Saint Milburga, and to the original founder of the religious community, Saint Mirinus.

St. James was the patron Saint of the Fitzalans, or Stewarts, as they were now called from the official designation of their chief, and to this circumstance is to be attributed the king-roll of Jameses, who wore the Scottish, and eventually succeeded to the English crown; while St. James's Palace and its adjoining park are evidences of the "footprints in the sands of time," which lead directly to our very doors. But what an unlucky saint he proved to the fateful and unhappy family let the pages of history tell.

Walter, the founder of the Abbey, assumed the garb of a monk at Melrose ere he died; but his body was brought to Paisley, and lies among the undistinguished dust of generations of his descendants in the Abbey church, the chancel of which still serves as the parish kirk of Paisley. An adjoining chapel, now used as a place of burial by the Hamilton family, contains an ancient tomb and an effigy, which is believed to represent the luckless Marjorie, daughter of the Bruce, whose marriage with Walter, sixth in descent from the original Walter the Steward, gave a line of monarchs to Scotland and England. In popular language, this is Queen Blearie's tomb, and the effigy would thus represent the Queen of Robert the Second, who, from his weak sight, was known throughout the

* See ALL THE YEAR ROUND, Vol. xxxiii. p. 510.

land as King Blearie. But more probably it represents the before-mentioned Marjorie, the mother of Blearie, who died but a year after her marriage with the Stewart, and who, though never a Queen, might have well passed as such into popular tradition. According to the legend, which bears every appearance of probable truth, Queen Blearie was killed while hunting by a fall from her horse; and, halfway between Paisley and Renfrew a knoll, called the Knock, is pointed out as the spot where the tragic event took place. On this knoll, till within recent times, stood a stone column known as Queen Blearie's Cross. According to the same tradition, the future King Blearie came into the world, or was dragged into it, even after his mother's death; a sorrowful beginning of a line full of sorrows and misfortunes.

King Blearie himself was buried at Scone, the ancient seat of sovereignty, and was the first of his family to be interred inside the limits of Paisley Abbey.

Robert the Third, his son, lies there among his ancestors—he who had seen his eldest son cruelly murdered by his enemies, his only surviving son a prisoner among the English. "Bury me in a dunghill," said the dying King bitterly, when asked where he would wish to lie, "and write for me this epitaph—'Here lies the worst King and most miserable man in the universe.'" But all neglected and unregarded are the graves of the Stewarts, unmarked by monument and trodden under foot without respect; and yet is this melancholy neglect in itself a monument, and, with that doleful vault in Holyrood Abbey—rather like a prison charnel-house than a royal mausoleum—speaks to us of the miserable outcome of human greatness.

From the date of its foundation to the general break-up in the sixteenth century Paisley Abbey enjoyed four centuries of prosperous existence—a thriving burgh grew up around its walls, which were a mile in circuit, enclosing sunny gardens and verdant paddocks. Neighbouring Renfrew, one of the oldest burghs in the kingdom, objected strongly to the birth and growth of this interloper, and came against it more than once to level it to the ground. But, under the protection of Abbey and King, it grew and flourished nevertheless.

When the heyday of monastic life was past, and Kings and nobles everywhere began to look credibly at the fair lands

and estates protected only by the tombs of the great and a certain traditional reverence, the chapter of the Abbey was deprived of its privilege of electing the Abbot, and the King took upon himself to appoint to the lucrative trust. The first Abbot of Paisley thus appointed was George Shaw, of Sauchie, near Stirling, on whose lands, in the field of Sauchieburn, was fought the battle of that name, which ended in the death of the weak and unlucky James the Third. With the conspiracy which thus triumphed Shaw seems to have been connected, and was in high favour with the new King, an influential man at Court, and concerned in all the political movements of the day. He was a stirring and successful administrator of the Abbey, and he built the great wall about it, some parts of which remain to this day, with an inscription to its founder:

The callit the Abbot Georg of Schaw,
About this abbay gart make this waw.

In George's reign the monastery had a notable inmate—no other than the chief of Ardtornish, John of Ross, Lord of the Isles, who had proclaimed himself King of the Hebrides, and who had thought to divide the kingdom of the Scots with the Douglas. In the lowly habit of the monk died this descendant of mighty chieftains.

To Abbot George succeeded his nephew Robert; and then came the last Abbot of Paisley, John Hamilton, an illegitimate son of that famous house, the great champion of the old faith against John Knox and the Calvinists. Hamilton retained the abbacy when he was created Archbishop of St. Andrews, and thus Paisley shares in the interest of those stirring times, when Darnley was murdered, and when the Regent Murray was shot in the High Street of Linlithgow, in both of which deeds of violence the Abbot of Paisley is said to have been an accomplice. With other zealous partisans of Queen Mary, he was taken prisoner at the capture of Dumbarton Castle, by a party of daring escaladers, rushing out, it is said, at the alarm, clad in a coat of mail with a steel cap on his head, and so was hanged by his captors from the castle wall—a strange death for an Archbishop.

While the Fates were busy with the warp and woof of human life, the weavers of Paisley and district went on weaving, and in time they became noted for a kind of chequered linen used for women's kerchiefs and aprons.

The Abbey fell to ruins, the walls were thrown down, and the sheds of the weavers occupied the pleasaunces and gardens of the old Abbey. Then the burgh became famous for its fine yarns and fine gauzy fabrics, and the originator of this new departure is said to have been a young woman named Christian Shaw, whose name recalls the old Abbot who "built the waw;" and, indeed, she was of the same family, being the daughter of the Laird of Balgarran, about whom we may consult the learned Crawford, who writes:

"A little towards the south from the Castle of Erskine stands the house of Bargaran, whose ancestors have for nigh three hundred years possessed these lands, and derive their descent from the family of Sauchie, and carry the coat-of-arms of that house—viz, Azure, three covered caps, or, and for a difference, add a chevron of cheque, as most of the gentry of this shire wear, of affection to their lord superior, the great Stewart of Scotland."

And thus, though the connection is not very obvious, yet still there is a connection between the Paisley reel of to-day and the old Abbey, its Abbots, and the events that centred round them.

The wonderful spinster who first made Paisley famous for its fine webs did not spin cotton, which was then chiefly used for candlewicks and nightcaps, and for mixing with other fabrics. She span the native flax, and hung the product in its hanks outside her bed-room window. She had spun other kinds of yarns when she was a silly, wild girl, of being bewitched and put under a spell, and half-a-dozen poor creatures had suffered a cruel death on the town moor for having bewitched the child. For thus are the ages linked together with a mingled web of good and ill.

But the great boom, as the Americans would say, of the little burgh was the manufacture of silk gauze, introduced about 1760, when Paisley quite distanced Spitalfields, and became for a time a centre of wealth and prosperity. Many of the old Huguenot manufacturers of Spitalfields transferred themselves and their belongings to Paisley. By the year 1812 the once flourishing trade was dead, and cotton-spinning and weaving had taken its place. Shawls, too, came up about the same date; imitations of the Indian designs, whose warm soft fabric soon won them a reputation of their own; so that for a bride of the middle class her Paisley was as indis-

pensable an article of outfit as the richly embroidered Cashmere to one of fashion, and lasted her summer and winter through long years. Now that fashion spreads her vagaries from Land's End to John O'Groats, and women of every rank obey her behests as far as they can follow them, the shawl manufacture has shrunk and dwindled; but the Paisley folk are quick and adaptable, and if anything is to be made at a profit they are pretty sure to be at the making of it.

A cotton-weaver was Robert Tannahill in the days when a weaver was often a man of substance and consideration. His father had woven the silk gauze of other days; but when Robert was of an age to drive the shuttle—he was born in 1774—cotton was coming to the front. Robert made verses to the accompaniment of the clack of his loom—pretty sentimental verses and songs, some of which are still remembered. There is "Jessie, the Flower o' Dunblane," and others, which girls in low-necked, high-waisted frocks, used to sing sweetly enough in days long gone by.

Ye sunny braes that skirt the Clyde
Wi summer flow'rs sae braw,
There's ae sweet flow'r on Leven side
That's fairer than them a'.

But they all sang and rhymed in that summer noon of Scotch poesy—the ploughman at his furrow, the weaver at his loom, the shepherd on the hill-side. Even the lawyer procurator fiscal, or whatever he might be, wrote amorous ditties on the backs of writs and warrants. Earlier poets, too, may be found of the Ayrshire school, and we may trace its first models in the immediate neighbourhood of Paisley.

Five miles to the west of our town lies the village of Kilbarchan, whose piper, Habbie Simpson, seems to have blown his pipes some three hundred years ago, and is celebrated in an elegy that sounds like a prelude to some of Robert Burns's achievements in that line.

Now who shall play the "Day it Daws,"
Or "Hunt's Up," when the "Cock he Craws,"
Or who can for our kirk-town cause
Stand us in stead?
On bag-pipes now naebod' blaws
Sen Habbie's dead.

The writer of Habbie's elegy was one of a family of poets, whose lineage is of some little interest in this connection. The first of these local bards was Sir James Sempill, of Beltrees, by Kilbarchan, who was the son of a pair rather contemptuously noticed by John Knox as "John Sempill, callit the

Danser, and Marie Levingstoune, surnameit the Lustie," the latter being one of the four Maries known in song and story. This John, the dancer, was the son of Robert, third Lord Sempill, like Alexander, and at a later date Napoleon, generally styled the Great. The original home of the Lords Sempill was at Lochwinnoch, on the borders of Ayrshire, where Crawford describes "a little rock on which Robert, the great Lord Semple, did raise a small tower called the Peel of Semple, which, as it was of use for security against the insults of rambling parties in time of our ancient feuds, so it was for pleasure when the family of Semple did recreate themselves by diversion in their boats of pleasure on that lake."

Sir James, the son and successor of the dancer, was educated, it is said, with Queen Mary's son, the young Prince James, and thus would have been a pupil of George Buchanan; and he was long a trusted friend of his old playfellow, and spent some years in England, as resident for King James, at the Court of Elizabeth, when his literary tastes may have brought him to the knowledge of the great poets and writers of that glorious age. His only known work, indeed, is the "Packman's Paternoster," a clever polemic poem of much popularity in its day. Robert, the son of Sir James, edited and enlarged his father's "Paternoster," and wrote the elegy on Habbie Simpson, already quoted.

Then came Francis, the son of Robert, and the author of the "Banishment of Poverty," a poem describing the writer's Bohemian life in Edinburgh, and celebrating the generosity of his patron, the Duke of York and Albany, afterwards James the Second. Francis did not live to witness his patron's fall, and left behind him songs which remind us, in warmth and melody, of Burns, and many unpublished lyrics, among which is a perhaps original version of "Auld Lang Syne," in the form of a love song, prettier, if less pathetic, than Burns's version, and without the whisky-toddy flavour of that production.

Should old acquaintance be forgot
And never thought upon,
The flames of love extinguished,
And freely past and gone.

Like most of the literary temperament, the Sempills had not been gatherers of grist and gear; their lands were sold, their goods were "roopit," and the family disappeared from Beltrees.

In the same neighbourhood, on the banks

of the White Cart, upon a bare and solitary knoll—

Thro' Cruikston Castle's lonely wa's
The wintry wind howls wild and dreary.

The castle was one of the many strongholds of the Stuarts, and fell to the share of the Earls of Lennox; and here it was that Queen Mary and her future husband, Darnley, spent days of honeyed courtship. The Queen's yew has disappeared, but traces of gardens and pleasure grounds may be guessed at from the different hues and luxuriance of surrounding vegetation. Queen Mary visited Crocktown once more, when in the very crisis of her fate.

The Queen had recently escaped from her captivity in Lochleven Castle, and her friends and adherents had gathered about her at Hamilton. Here it was thought the Queen's person was not altogether secure, and she was advised to place herself in the strong castle of Dumbarton, which had long held out in her cause. And thus a useless and dangerous march was commenced, the Queen being escorted by her whole available force—a parade in front of a vigilant and skilful enemy, which met with the fate it courted.

The Regent Morton lay at Glasgow, where he had collected his adherents among the feudatories of the Crown. His forces, however, were less than the Queen's—some four thousand against six. On a knoll about two miles south of Glasgow lies the village of Langside, a scattered collection of houses and enclosures on either side of the highway, which rises steeply to their level. Here it was that Morton, hearing of the Queen's rash march, determined to bar her passage. It was a race for the key of the position, and, mounting a musqueteer behind each trooper, the Regent's men rushed forth from Glasgow. When the Queen's forces began to mount the hill they were received with a destructive fire from the marksmen of the enemy posted behind every wall and building. There was much confusion in the Queen's army, but finally it was resolved to carry the position at the spear-point. Then followed a sturdy fight between the spearmen on either side; but fresh combatants attacking the Queen's disordered host on the flank, her army broke and fled.

Queen Mary watched the fight from a neighbouring eminence, where there is still perhaps a Queen's Thorn to mark the spot, and when she saw the result she turned her horse, and rode in wild and womanly terror to the South, and pre-

sently crossed the Solway to her long captivity in England.

Near to the Castle of Crocstoun upon the opposite side of the river, stands the place of Cardonald.

Loud o'er Cardonald's rocky steep
Rude Cartha pours in boundless measure.

And here was long a seat of the Stewarts—an offshoot of the royal line—of whom was the well-known Lady Frances Stewart, one of the beauties of Charles the Second's Court, almost the only one among them who succeeded in preserving a decent character. Her fine and graceful figure was so much admired by the King that he chose her as the model for Britannia on the new halfpennies, where she still sits with her shield and trident. But she preferred the honest estate of a Duchess to the brilliant but doubtful future of the King's favour, and bestowed herself upon the plain and insignificant Duke of Richmond and Lennox, whom she survived for thirty years. Her attachment to her own family and its surroundings was manifested in Her Grace's will, when she left nearly the whole of her large fortune to her cousin Walter, the Master of Blantyre, on trust to purchase lands in Scotland, the said lands to be distinguished by the name of "Lennox-lova."

There still remains to notice Elderslie, on the banks of Clyde, the paternal seat of William Wallace, and one of the claimants to the honour of his birthplace. And another champion of a different kind owes, if not his birth, his family origin to the county, as to which we may quote from Crawford: "The Castle and barony of Ranfurly are the seat and designation of an ancient family of the name of Knox Of this family several eminent persons in this church descended—as the famous Mr. John Knox, who was a grand-nephew of this family whom God was pleased signally to honour as one of the most eminent instruments in our happy reformation from popery, who well deserved the epithet given him by the great Beza of being 'the Scotch Apostle.'"

SOME FAMOUS PLAYS.

VII.

JAMES SHERIDAN KNOWLES'S "VIRGINIUS"
AND "THE HUNCHBACK."

IN TWO PARTS. PART II.

AFTER many struggles James Sheridan Knowles was at last a famous dramatist. Critics lauded him; his old friend Charles

Lamb congratulated him in verse; the manager of Covent Garden Theatre paid him £400. Elated with hope and encouraged by success he resolved to labour afresh, and set about re-writing his tragedy, *Caius Gracchus*, which was accepted and acted at Drury Lane for seven nights, a meed of success which was all it deserved. Two years later and the school-master, still toiling at Glasgow, had produced a five-act play called *William Tell*, in which Macready played the hero. It was received with applause, and was acted eleven consecutive nights. The author's next venture was a comedy called *The Blind Beggar of Bethnal Green*; the plot of which was taken from a ballad of that name. The selection was not happy, and the treatment but indifferent. The play was first tendered to the manager of Covent Garden, and "after long discussions and delays on the subject of value and price, rejected." It was then offered to and accepted by the Drury Lane management, and produced on the 28th of November, 1828. Deficient in interest, false in construction, and incoherent in plot, its fate was soon determined. The first act was dull, and the second promising no amendment, the audience, resenting its production, hissed, hooted, and sought to hinder its further progress. Therefore the stage manager came forward, and entreated "they would give the comedy a fair hearing, and not hastily and inconsiderately condemn it." He pledged his word that the piece would not be repeated if, at its termination, their opinions continued unfavourable. It was then suffered to continue, but not without frequent interruptions of hisses, cat-calls, and cries. The *Morning Chronicle* of the following day felt assured that the author had enemies in the house, "who very early commenced their operations of condemnation." Of course, remarks that organ, "all the friends of Covent Garden would be desirous of opposing the comedy at Drury Lane, and that without the smallest interference on the part of the management of the rival theatre. We entirely acquit them of such practices—they are above it; but we cannot forget that at this moment Covent Garden is closed, and not a few of the underlings and retainers of that establishment, who would otherwise be occupied, are disengaged. This circumstance might, we only say might, contribute to procure Mr. Knowles a less equal tribunal."

The author, not being in town, was spared

the pain of witnessing the reception of his comedy; when news of its fate reached it was powerless to depress him. "I remember as a child," writes his son, Richard Brinsley, "being with him in the Tringate on the day when the London papers came with intelligence that *The Beggar's Daughter* had come to grief, and Glasgow never saw him with a cheerier face, more hopeful, more assured. Friends tried to console him with the possibility that the comedy would be performed again and might rally. He knew better, and he kept the worst steadily before him, with unshaken confidence that success would come one day. Heaven had gifted him with the inestimable faculty of looking at the bright side of things, and in the midst of all his troubles, those ignoble pecuniary ones which seem to be the plague and the nurse of genius, he took up his pen, determined not to be beaten."

To prove that he could write a successful comedy now became the object of his life, and he immediately commenced the play by which his name is best remembered, *The Hunchback*. To follow the bent of his inclinations he neglected a suggestion made by Macready, that he should write a drama having Alfred the Great for its hero. The new work was continued under disturbing circumstances. His pupils having diminished in number, possibly because failing to receive the attention formerly given them, the master became a public lecturer; and, that he might exercise this calling with greater advantage, he moved with his wife and family to Newhaven, close by Edinburgh. Here he laboured incessantly, teaching, writing, and lecturing. Macready, whilst fulfilling an engagement in the capital, called on him for the purpose of expostulating on his again attempting a form of dramatic composition in which he had previously failed. By way of meeting his objections Knowles read him the first act of *The Hunchback*, when the great player, ceasing all remonstrance, bade him continue his comedy. "This," says the author, "I thought the happiest of omens, for many a proof had he given me of his admirable judgment in such things."

He therefore worked with renewed spirit not only at *The Hunchback* but at Alfred, and in 1832 brought both plays to town. Alfred was produced on the 28th of that month, Macready playing the hero, and was pronounced a success. *The Hunchback* was also accepted: but before the

date fixed for its rehearsal, Knowles showed it to Morton the dramatist and to Macready, both of whom, with blended kindness and discrimination, pointed out that the principal and secondary plots were independent of each other. Becoming convinced of this blemish he carried the comedy back to Newhaven and reconstructed the plot. In the course of some months it was again accepted at Drury Lane, and the author was given to understand that its rehearsal would commence immediately. In a few days, however, he received a letter from the management stating that it was found necessary to give another play prior representation, and that his comedy must therefore be postponed until next season.

Indignant at this treatment, Sheridan Knowles went to the theatre and demanded his manuscript. The manager expostulated, apologised, and finally offered to begin rehearsal at once; but the enraged playwright insisted that his comedy should be returned. When it was placed in his hands he took it to Covent Garden. This theatre, managed by Charles Kemble, had long been in difficulties, and was now on the verge of bankruptcy. Though acquainted with this fact, Sheridan Knowles offered Charles Kemble *The Hunchback*, which was immediately accepted. "And from that moment," says the author, "I found myself at home indeed, and among friends."

Fanny Kemble, then in her twentieth year, records her first impressions of the comedy. "After my riding lesson," she writes, "I went and sat in the library to hear Sheridan Knowles's play of *The Hunchback*. Mr. Bartley and my father and mother were his only audience, and he read it himself to us. A real play, with real characters, individuals, human beings; it is a good deal after the fashion of our old playwrights, and does not disgrace its models. I was delighted with it; it is full of life and originality; a little long, but that's a trifle. I like the woman's part exceedingly, but am afraid I shall find it very difficult to act."

Again she mentions reading the comedy, and liking it better than before. At this period an historical play—Francis I.—written by her, was about to be produced, and she compares it to *The Hunchback* in favour of the latter. She was cast for the heroine, her representation of which the author subsequently acknowledged far outstripped his most sanguine hopes. Helen was played by Miss Taylor, and Sir

Thomas Clifford by Charles Kemble. Harassed by anxiety and worn by exertions, it had been the manager's original intention not to take part in the comedy, as we learn from his daughter's words, which afford a touching picture of his distress at the time. "Tried on my dresses for *The Hunchback*, they will be beautiful," she writes. "The rehearsal was over long before the carriage came for me; so I went into my father's room, and read the newspaper, while he and Mr. Bartley discussed the cast of Knowles's play. It seems my father will not act in it. I am sorry for that; it is hardly fair to Knowles, for no one else can do it. My poor father seemed too bewildered to give any answer, or even heed, to anything, and Mr. Bartley went away. My father continued to walk up and down the room for nearly an hour, without uttering a syllable, and at last flung himself into a chair and leaned his head and arms on the table. I was horribly frightened, and turned as cold as stone, and for some minutes could not muster up courage enough to speak to him. At last I got up and went to him, and, on my touching his arm, he started up, and exclaimed: 'Good God, what will become of us all?' I tried to comfort him, and spoke for a long time, but much, I fear, as a blind man speaks of colours. I don't know, and I don't believe anyone knows, the real state of terrible involvement in which this miserable concern is wrapped. What I dread most of all is that my father's health will break down. To-day, while he was talking to me, I saw him suddenly put his hand to his side in a way that sent a pang through my heart. He feels utterly prostrated in spirit, and I fear he will work himself ill. God help us all. I came home with a heavy heart, and got ready my things for the theatre, and went over my part."

Charles Kemble eventually appeared in the comedy, as did likewise the author, who came to this resolution believing that his appearance would create additional attraction. He therefore essayed the character of Master Walter. On the 5th of April, 1832, *The Hunchback* was produced for the first time. The crowded audience which assembled to witness the performance was unanimous in its appreciation. From the first scene to the last hearty approbation was most liberally bestowed, and during the latter scenes between Julia, Clifford, and Master Walter, "the audience was overwhelmed with tears." When the

curtain fell, the *Morning Chronicle* states: "The applause was tumultuous, and a general call being made for Knowles, Charles Kemble led him forward, obviously with no very good will, and as certainly with no very good grace. He was confused by the novelty of his situation, and, whispering Kemble, he said that, 'conscious as he was of his own unworthiness, he presumed that the audience were applauding their own kindness.' This Irishism was well received, and, after again whispering Kemble, Knowles continued: 'Mr. Kemble has desired me to say that the play will be repeated on Saturday, and that Miss Kemble's tragedy will be acted on Monday.' Kemble audibly intimated his dissent from this statement, and Knowles, shaking him heartily by the hand, and in considerable agitation advancing to the footlights, added with emphasis, 'Ladies and gentlemen, allow my feelings of gratitude on this occasion to triumph, and do not listen to my friend Mr. Kemble. His daughter's tragedy ought to be acted on Monday.' Much applause and confusion followed, in the midst of which Mr. Knowles retired, leaving Mr. Kemble in possession of the house (as they say elsewhere), which he bespoke in these terms: 'It is but common justice to Mr. Knowles to give out that his play will be repeated every evening until further notice.' The cheers, waving of hats, handkerchiefs, and other demonstrations of satisfaction were as enthusiastic as they were general."

Meanwhile the successful author, escaping from the glare and tumult which dazzled and confused him, ran panting to his dressing-room, and bolting the door, as he afterwards told a friend, "I sank down on my knees and from the bottom of my soul thanked God for His wondrous kindness to me. I was thinking on the bairns at home, and if ever I uttered the prayer of a grateful heart it was in that little chamber." The comedy ran to the close of the season, being only interrupted by three performances of *Francis I.*, some benefit nights, and the final appearances of Charles Young. It was played for the last time this season on the 22nd of June, an evening rendered eventful by the last performance of Charles Kemble and his daughter, who had made arrangements to visit America. When the curtain fell, Bartley, coming forward, announced the farewell departure of the Kembles, and bespoke favour on behalf of the new management, the audi-

ence called for Knowles and then clamoured for the Kembles, whom they rose to greet, waving hats and handkerchiefs enthusiastically. "It made my heart ache," writes Fanny Kemble, in whose simple words the scene is best described, "to leave my good, kind, indulgent audience—my friends, as I feel them to be; my countrymen, my English folk; my very worthy and approved good masters. And as I thought of the strangers for whom I am now to work in that distant, strange country to which we are going, the tears rushed into my eyes, and I hardly knew what I was doing. I scarcely think I even made my conventional curtsy of leave-taking to them, but I snatched my little nosegay of flowers from my sash and threw it into the pit with handfuls of kisses, as a farewell token of my affection and gratitude. And so my father, who was very much affected, led me off, while the house rang with the cheering of the audience. When we came off my courage gave way utterly, and I cried most bitterly. I saw numbers of people whom I knew standing behind the scenes to take leave of us." In this manner ended the last performance of *The Hunchback* during its first season.

Sheridan Knowles, having made his reappearance on the stage in this comedy, continued an actor for many years. His efforts in this line of art were never marked by success. Nature had not gifted him with the attributes necessary to a successful player. His stature was below the middle height, his person, now that he had reached the age of eight-and-forty, was inclined to corpulency, and "his face, of rather fat intelligence," was inexpressive. The press pronounced him unsuited for the calling he had adopted, but he, taking a different view, "was ravished with his own acting," as Macready records. However, in order to earn an independence for himself and his family, he was obliged either to play or teach, and he chose the former and less harassing labour. That his productions brought an inadequate income was due to the fact that before the Copyright Act passed managers were free to perform an author's plays without asking his permission or awarding him remuneration. The tragedies and comedies Sheridan Knowles had written—*Virginius*, *Caius Gracchus*, *William Tell*, *Alfred the Great*, and *The Hunchback*—whose production occupied about twelve years, brought him but eleven hundred pounds, or not quite a hundred a year.

Accordingly he became an actor, and played in the provinces and in America; not only representing the heroes of his own tragedies, but attempting such characters as *Hamlet* and *Macbeth*. He was apparently satisfied with his efforts. "To my brief success as an actor," he writes, "I owe what I should in vain have looked for as an author—emancipation from debt, a decently furnished house, the means of giving my children ample education, relief from the doubt whether to-morrow might not bring short commons, or none at all."

It is worth mentioning that James Sheridan Knowles in his last years became a Baptist minister. For in his day this man played many parts.

A LOVE LETTER.

"AND do you think of me
When you and I are far apart,
All day, and every day, my heart,
Wherever you may be?
And do you, with impatient pain,
Count all the days, and all the hours,
Until that time of sun and flowers,
When we shall meet again?"

I lay the letter down—
Ah me! my little childish love,
Life's April skies are blue above
Thy path, and spring-flowers crown
The unbound beauties of thine hair;
Life's April daisies kiss thy feet,
Life's April song-birds clear and sweet
Sing round thee everywhere.

All life is new to thee;
Thy childish tasks are scarce set by,
Thy childish tears are hardly dry,
Thy merry laugh rings free;
Love met thee suddenly one day
Among thy toys, he kissed thine eyes,
And in a rush of sweet surprise
The child soul slipped away.

Now love fills all thine heart,
It glorifies life's simple round,
It sets thee, robed, anointed, crowned,
And like a Queen, apart,
Above all common blame and praise;
Ah love! God giveth, giving thee,
The grace of vanished years to me,
The joy of by-gone days.

Yet change the years have wrought;
I cannot count the days and hours,
Nor play, like thee, with daisy flowers
At "loves me, loves me not;"
My heart and I are past our spring,
Youth's morning-prime, all rose and gold,
With pains and pleasures manifold,
Life once, but once, doth bring.

I love thee, little one,
With all the passion of my soul,
Firm as the fixed, unchanging pole,
And fervent as the sun;
But, child, my life is not as thine,
The world must have her share of me,
I cannot sit at ease like thee
Beneath love's spreading vine.

I must be up, and hold
My own in that unceasing strife
Whereby man wins his bread of life,
His share of needful gold:

I have my share to win and keep,
My share and thine, to make a home
For thee and me in years to come,
Ah love! true love lies deep!

I cannot count like thee
The hours and minutes as they fleet,
Nor loiter in the busy street,
As thou beside the sea,
To picture meetings far away;
But I can love a lifetime long,
With love that will be leal and strong,
And green when life is grey.

I do not pause to tell
The minute-beatings of my heart,
In crowded street and busy mart,
Yet know I all is well:
So like the heart within my breast
Thine image lies, and broods above
Its faithful pulses. Oh! my love,
So sheltered, be at rest!

MONSIEUR GABRIEL.

A STORY IN FOUR CHAPTERS.

CHAPTER III.

A FEW days after, as the old weaver sat at his loom, Gabriel came through the low doorway and stood before him with a troubled face.

"Mon père," he said with a tremor in his voice, "I would speak with you for a moment on an important matter."

Monsieur Chalmont raised his head, and rested his feet on the treadles:

"Speak on, my son. What is it?"

"I have come to ask your sanction for—for a very great change in my plans."

The old man looked puzzled; he did not break the pause which his son made; his eyes asked for an explanation.

"It would be better," began Gabriel,—"that is, I wish, or rather I should say I have decided to leave Monsieur Murat, and to go away from St. Zite."

"Gabriel! is it that you have made your arrangements for going to college without consulting your mother and me?"

"No, father. I have found a clerkship in Paris, which will suit me better than remaining in my present position. Do not let the suddenness of the announcement vex you. I am not acting without due consideration."

"You hear him," cried Madame Chalmont, who had followed her son into the workshop, and who stood behind him with uplifted hands and pale cheeks. "Our boy is going to forsake us—to go far away among strangers, to give up all who love him. He is demented. Bid him put such a foolish idea out of his mind. Forbid him to nurse such a crazy whim."

"Nay, my mother, it is no whim," replied Gabriel. "It is a clear leading of

duty. Do not oppose my resolution, you will not alter it; but you will render the keeping of it infinitely more difficult. Father, you will not forbid me to go!"

The weaver only looked hopelessly from one to the other, and began to move his feet mechanically to their accustomed labour. It was Madame Chalmont who took up the burden of reproach:

"Ah, Gabriel," she cried, "for four-and-twenty years I have tended you and cared for you; for all those years I have been a willing slave—toiling day and night, summer and winter. I have hoped for you, prayed for you, wept for you, and I have asked no return. It was my reward to think that you were growing up cleverer and better than we have been. And now you turn from us, you leave us in our lonely old age. Ah, husband, we should have foreseen this!"

"Gabriel," said Mr. Chalmont, speaking slowly. "Does Monsieur Vidal advise this?"

"He knows nothing of it."

"And if you go away, what about your studies? How can you afford to keep yourself at Paris and to pay for instruction? How will you complete the sum necessary for your college expenses?"

"I shall not need instruction," returned Gabriel, "nor shall I need any longer the money for my college expenses."

"Not need it!" exclaimed his parents in a breath. "And your ordination?"

"I am not going to be ordained. I have changed my mind."

The tears were in his eyes as he spoke. His mother broke into plaintive sobs.

"Ah," said the weaver bitterly, "I see what it is. You have put your hand to the plough and you are turning back. Have a care, my son, the work of a moment may be the wreck of a lifetime."

"I know that," replied the young man sadly; "it cannot be otherwise now for me. And, now that you know all I can tell you, I am sure you will not urge me to stay here."

His parents exchanged glances.

"You have made your resolutions and plans independently of us, my son," said the father sternly. "There is nothing left for me to say but this—that, if it be nothing to you to leave us in our old age, if nothing to deceive the hopes you have raised, if nothing to forget your past good purposes—if this, I say, be possible

to you, then take your own counsel and go."

Gabriel's face grew paler, his eyes dilated piteously; he put out his hand and steadied himself against the frame of the loom, then, with a last imploring glance at the sternness of his father's disappointment, he turned away and left them.

"Thomas," said Madame Chalmort through her tears, "he is not going for nothing; that English girl has broken his heart—he is going away to forget her."

CHAPTER IV.

FRANÇOISE'S assertion respecting Monsieur le Baron de Valade was, in spite of Marcia's indignant rejoinder, an acknowledged fact. There had been, and was still, a good deal of gossip about him. There was a general charge of a wild, extravagant, and reckless life, and beyond this there was a story currently believed which had blackened his name once and for all.

It was a story of a quarrel in a café, with a man far below him in position, respecting the favours of a "chanteuse." High words had led to a challenge. The next morning the Baron's rival was found dead, stabbed to the heart, close to his home. Suspicion naturally fastened on de Valade who, though he cleared himself in the eye of the law by proving an alibi, could not wipe out the impression of his guilt from the public opinion of his native town. Consequently he lived very little in his Château beside the smooth-flowing Dordogne. What had brought him there that summer he hardly knew; but he would have had no difficulty in saying why, once being there, he had stayed week after week, month after month. Business had taken him to Monsieur Murat's villa, La Luquette; chance had brought him into contact with Valérie Murat's friend, Marcia Caxton, after which he devoted all his ingenuity and energy to make opportunities for seeing her again.

Madame Murat was perfectly acquainted with all the stories about Monsieur le Baron; but how could she, the wife of a country notary, give the cold shoulder to a wealthy man with a title, who made persistent advances to her? Why should she throw obstacles in the way of his seeing Marcia, who evidently was flattered by his attentions, and who deserved some compensation for the dreary life she led in the pastor's house? So, whenever Monsieur de

Valade chose to come to La Luquette he found smiles and civility from the Murats, and, in addition, the sweetest homage a jaded man of the world could ask—the trustful, candid devotion of an innocent, yet passionate, girl.

Little as Marcia's guardians mixed with general society, it was impossible that the rumour of the Baron's admiration of her should not at last reach their ears. They were long in suspecting the true state of affairs, and longer still in obtaining proof, but when the proof came it was overwhelming. It burst upon them like a thunderclap, that Marcia had secretly and solemnly pledged herself to a man who, M. Vidal considered, ought to be expiating a deadly crime by a life-long punishment, and who, on the gentlest valuation, was an unprincipled profligate.

The Vidals were too reserved to make a great explosion of wrath, but they resolved that the engagement should be cancelled openly and at once; that Marcia should be severely punished; and that, to prevent further mischief, all intercourse with the Murats should be forbidden.

It was altogether a time of trouble and dismay in the pastor's house, which followed close on the evening when poor Monsieur Gabriel forgot himself so terribly. The pastor had scarcely noticed his pupil's continued absence, until the day when Gabriel came to announce his intended flight. He had left his parents in their consternation, and walked straight to Monsieur Vidal's, determined to face all that lay before him as quickly as possible.

It was not a fortunate moment. The storm had just broken over Marcia's head. As Monsieur Gabriel entered the pastor's sanctum she was standing opposite to him with flushed, tear-stained cheeks, and the sound of indignant words on her lips. Her grave, stern judge was eyeing her with disapproving compassion.

"Enough!" he said. "It is useless to speak more of the matter. We understand one another, and you will obey me. This letter, which I shall despatch at once, will explain everything to——"

He saw Gabriel, and ceased. Marcia turned round to go. As she passed Gabriel she gave him no recognition, but a look of contempt shone in her tearful eyes like fire flashing out in the darkness. Almost unconsciously, as he greeted Monsieur Vidal, Gabriel read the address of the letter which lay on the table; it was for "Monsieur le Baron de Valade."

If Gabriel had found it difficult to inform his parents of the revolution that had taken place in his plans, it had been a mere trifle compared to the moral effort necessary to break his news to the man who had done so much for him, and who had trusted in his steadfastness.

"It is not a sudden resolve, sir," he said, when he had faltered out his errand; "for months I have felt daily more deeply how unworthy I was of the great calling I was qualifying for. I have long known that the time must come when I should have to tell you this, though I have not yielded without a hard struggle."

"Gabriel Chalmont," said the pastor sternly, "it is by a curious coincidence of untoward things that I learn this to-day—things of which I had no suspicion—which you have so carefully concealed from me, while I might yet have combated the growth of the evil. I am already smarting under a disclosure of treachery and dissimulation. You—I have no wish to reproach you beyond your deserts—you can, perhaps, form an idea of the grief with which I hear of your——" he paused—"of your fall—of your apostacy. I bid you good-bye. Even if dissuasion were not useless and remonstrance unheeded, I am too heavy-hearted to say more. You have bitterly disappointed me. I will pray that you may reap in this world the fruit of your sin, that you may learn to repent of it."

His solemn words fell on Gabriel like a pall. Life—dim and sad enough already—seemed positively unendurable under so heavy a condemnation. Dejectedly he held out his hand to his accuser, then turned and left the room and the house with the unspoken bitterness of a life-long farewell in his heart.

Late that afternoon a messenger from Monsieur le Baron de Valade brought a letter to the pastor's. It was not in answer to the one which Gabriel had seen lying on Monsieur Vidal's study table. It was directed to Marcia, and was delivered into her hands with all secrecy. A long, closely written letter, which she read locked in her room, and read again with burning cheeks and troubled eyes, pacing her room the while as if she were debating in her mind some question which agitated her past endurance.

The night after that eventful day, when Monsieur Gabriel laid himself down to try to sleep, many distracting thoughts came and played hide-and-seek round his pillow.

He thought over his long nursed doubt of himself and the dismay he had caused by his disclosure. From his interview with Monsieur Vidal, his mind reverted to the conversation he had interrupted, and the letter he had seen directed to Monsieur de Valade. That Marcia should love another man was no blow to him; it sickened, but did not surprise him. Still the circumstances of her love, which naturally he easily divined, had given him a great shock. The light of Heaven seemed tarnished by the thought that Marcia had forgotten her womanly dignity and girlish candour. He could not blame her harshly though. It was the scoundrel who had wooed her clandestinely who ought to bear all the blame and shame.

Then, again, he found himself face to face with his future in the dim, unknown world of Paris. He felt already home-sick of the lonely exile which he had chosen. Through all these changing meditations ran the thought of his own love and his folly, of Marcia's beauty and her anger against him. How long he lay and tossed he did not know; he heard the town clock chime time after time, but he did not count the strokes.

One by one all his preoccupations slipped away. The over-mastering thought of Marcia alone remained. His whole being concentrated itself into a yearning prayer for her, to which he gave no utterance; which was more like a vast heart-throb than a definite idea. He lay with his eyes fixed on the narrow strip of moonlight which streamed in between his curtains. Gradually his surroundings seemed to change. He was no longer in his attic of the Rue des Frères, but in the faubourg outside the gate of the pastor's garden. He saw a carriage drive to the end of the road, a man jump out, and come towards him without being aware of his presence. Gabriel saw his features distinctly in the clear moonlight. It was Monsieur de Valade. In a few seconds the garden-gate opened very softly. Wrapped in a heavy cloak, and prepared for a journey, came Marcia. The Baron took her in his arms and kissed her tenderly.

"My brave darling," he murmured softly—yet Gabriel heard him. "I knew you would not forsake me."

"Oh Gustave," Marcia answered trembling, "I seem so bold, and yet I am so frightened. You will never blame me, will you? for what I am now doing that I may be yours alone and for always."

Then Gabriel—himself unseen still—saw them hurry into the carriage and drive off quickly. In his effort to pursue the carriage he shook off his dream, and he saw once more his tiny window opposite and the moonlight streaming on to the floor.

Trembling with excitement he turned round towards the wall, and, wrapping his head in the bedclothes, tried to shake off the feeling his dream had given him. Once more unconsciousness stole over him imperceptibly. Again he was witness of the same scene, and awoke with the same start. It was intolerable. He got up and began pacing his little room with eager but weary steps.

The room was so small that the exertion irritated, rather than soothed him. He sank into the chair before his desk, and, resting his arms on his abandoned lexicons and grammars, he laid his head down on them. Scarcely had he closed his eyes, when he was again outside the pastor's garden, and again the silent witness of Marcia's flight. This time, however, he did not wake so quickly. His dream, or whatever it was, continued, and he seemed to be following the carriage along miles and miles of weary road. He wanted to overtake them before they reached Cahors, where he knew they were going to catch the early morning mail for Paris. It was a hopeless pursuit; it exhausted him, and he fell into a heavy, dreamless torpor. When he woke, he sprang up and drew his curtains; a faint, gray light was stealing across the sky and hiding the glimmer of the stars. Then, scarcely knowing what he did, or why he did it, or whether it was only another phase of his haunting dream, he dressed himself in haste, and ran towards the pastor's house as if life and death depended on his steps. There was no one to be seen. At the spot where he had seen the carriage, he stooped down and saw in the dewy dust the mark of wheels. He did not wait to think. Quicker than thought he sped along the narrow shady faubourg into the broad high road that led to Cahors. In the far distance he saw something which might be a carriage. He saw it as he ran, for he did not stop to observe or to reflect how small were his chances of coming up with it—how improbable was the chance that it contained Marcia, or what his course would be if he did intercept her flight. None of this crossed his mind. His one absorbing idea was to run.

Along the dusty road the grass was

white with dew. Down the course of the river the mist hung white and heavy. The air was chill with the shudder that comes from departing night. The cattle were lying peacefully in the meadows, or giving themselves their first lazy stretch. These things might have helped Gabriel to realise whether he was going through a repetition of his dream, or whether he was verily hunting a shadow. He saw none of them. All he saw was a far-off speck on the white road which he was determined to reach, even if he died in the effort.

It was a broad road, rising for some distance beyond St. Zite, up a slight incline, and then winding backwards and forwards with abrupt curves along the side of the hills which lie between St. Zite and Cahors.

"Cahors, seven kilomètres," said the first milestone that Gabriel sped past. The carriage was not going faster than he was, for he had not yet lost sight of it; but when the long, uphill strain was over it would gain upon him, while he would be getting exhausted. What if he had to sink down by the way and leave Marcia to her ruin (for not for an instant did he doubt his vision)? The thought spurred him on. He seemed scarcely to feel the ground he trod, or the labouring breath that parched his tongue.

Now a bend at the top of the rise hides the carriage from him; again he sights it where the road makes one of the great elbows by which it clings to the hillsides instead of taking breakneck leaps in and out of the hollows. Gabriel can gain a little here by cutting across the stony little ravine round which the highway makes a great sweep. He crashes along through brambles and fallen stones, climbs the opposite side, and finds himself at least a hundred yards nearer the object of his pursuit.*

It is downhill now. They will distance him again. He looks anxiously ahead, and sees—was it a good omen?—the first glow of sunrise coming up in the clear east. Another milestone flashes past.—Cahors, five kilomètres. He must have missed one in the "raccourci." Surely, if he perseveres, he must come up with them. On—on. Here is another long bend to the right; he rushes straight across the valley; there is a brook at the bottom this time. The water cools and

* These winding roads and the footpath shortcuts across their great curves are a peculiarity of that part of France, or at least a notable feature.

refreshes his feet as he splashes through it. Then he loses a few seconds at the stone wall which skirts the highway, where he regains the road. He is so near the carriage now that he can hear the rumble of the wheels, the regular rhythm of the horses' feet—or is it the rush of blood through his starting veins and the laboured beating of his own heart?

A little more, a little more.

There is another hill to mount. He is glad, because the driver spares his horse, and he does not spare himself. It is awful work. His arms seem to overweight him; his jaws are so heavy that he can scarcely carry them. Of all the nightmares of this horrible night, this chase is the most horrible. He begins to think that he must be dreaming. This cannot be real life—cannot be an actual hour to be counted with other hours into the sum total of a day. He cannot pause a second. He cannot brush away the film that is gathering over his sight, a film that changes from white to crimson with sudden throbs. He cannot moisten the aching roof of his mouth; his tongue is swollen and inert; his teeth close over it unconsciously. He knows as far as he can know anything, that Marcia, who never thought an evil thought, is lying calm and quiet on her pillow, behind him at St. Zite, and that he is fated to hunt this flying shadow of her through a dream that may last for ever.

Oh! this hill, they are nearly at the top, and there is a milestone—two kilomètres. Now for one last effort. He raises his head, and sees that he has only twenty yards or so to gain. The carriage stops—a head is put out of the window to speak to the coachman—they are off again. Gabriel is almost beside them. He tries to shout. Horror of horrors! He might have known that, in a dream like this, no sound ever comes to break the ghastly silence. The summit of the ascent is reached. There lies Cahors in the merry morning light, with one more bend of the road between us and it. There is a path under some chestnut trees where an old woman is feeding her goats. She looks amazed at the dusty, limping, panting object that hurries past her.

He regains the road, and . . . the carriage is behind him. Scarcely realising that the race is won, that he will know whom he has pursued in a moment, he awaits its approach. A loud, hoarse voice, which he does not recognise, though it comes from his own lips, bids the coachman stop, and

he is at the carriage window. He hears a cry—it is his own name. He sees through the waving mist which veils everything from him, a white face looking at him with terrified wonder. He hears, too, a bitter, angry oath—there is a quick, outstretched arm, a gleam of metal, and a cruel, sharp click! Gabriel closed his eyes—he heard the loud report, and there was a cry of pain. It was not he who cried, it was Marcia.

"Fool of a girl!" shouted the Baron, "why couldn't you let me shoot him? Don't scream, you are scarcely hurt; but we shan't get to our journey's end this time."

So Monsieur Gabriel won his race and saved the lady of his worship from shame and sorrow, though in so doing he brought the unavoidable bitterness of repentance suddenly upon her transgression.

The cost, however, was not so great to Marcia as it was to him, for when, after a long illness, he at last crept back as if from the brink of the grave, he was prematurely bent and grey, and all remembrance even of Marcia herself had faded from his vacant mind. Of all his passionate love and shattered hopes there was no trace, and his life had no higher satisfaction than to bask in the sunshine outside his father's workshop in the Rue des Frères; while Marcia long since married, not to Monsieur de Valade, sometimes remembers him, and says, "Poor Monsieur Gabriel!"

VICTIMS.

By THEO. GIFT.

Author of "*Lili Lorianer*," "*An Alibi and its Price*,"
Etc., Etc.

CHAPTER XXX.

"OHÉ! SECOUREZ PAUVRE TRYPHINE!"

"BEEN to Châlet. No change. Delirium still high."

Such were the contents of the Professor's promised telegram; and his letter, which came on the following day, was little more cheering in its nature. He had not been able to gain admittance to the Châlet where Madame St. Laurent held rule, her husband being obliged to remain in Paris to attend to the mass of business which had devolved upon him; but he had seen both the doctor and the trained nurse who were in attendance on the unfortunate girl, and from each he heard the same account. Brain and body had utterly broken

down, and the fever must now run its course, which would probably be from two to three weeks before there would be any change. What that change then would be no one of course could predict. The patient had health and previous immunity from disease on her side; but that was all. On the other hand she had sustained a violent shock, and had been for some time back in a low state of health and nerves extremely prejudicial to her chances of recovery.

The Professor added that the shock alluded to was assumed by everyone about Vera, and even by the Parisian journals, to have been occasioned by the violent death of her bridegroom-husband and the intrusion of his murderer into her apartment on the very day of their nuptials; as also that she was invariably spoken of and treated in all respects as the widowed Countess de Maily, and that popular feeling (especially in polite circles), ran very strongly against Marstland in consequence.

In the midst of all the excitement which was thus produced by this paper war, and of the preliminary enquiries, investigations and delays, for this or that cause, which go to postpone French trials so indefinitely, the Professor came home to resume his course of lectures, accompanied by Burt, who, however only stayed a couple of days for the sake of pacifying his wife, and then returned to the assistance of his friend, whom both gentlemen described as appearing perfectly cool and indifferent as to the whole subject in its connection with himself personally and his chances of acquittal or punishment; not even affecting to regret his share in the fatal affray or the Count's death, of which he spoke quite coolly as of an unpleasant but absolute necessity; and wholly absorbed in anxiety for Vera, and in the daily bulletin which he contrived to get sent to him of the progress of her malady.

Burt said he had never seen such a case of infatuation: the infatuation not of a mere lover for his mistress, but of a devoted and adoring husband for the faithful partner of his manhood; and he instanced, as one proof of it, a fact which, could poor Vera have known of it, would have touched her simple soul more deeply than any other.

It seemed that the Count's death was at the present moment proving a source of very serious pecuniary embarrassment to M. St. Laurent; not only by re-awakening the clamours of various minor creditors,

who had been looking to his daughter's marriage with the deceased nobleman for the facilitating a payment in full of their claims; but by an utterly unexpected pressure from another quarter, that namely of the lawyers engaged over the settlement of the de Maily property and estates, and who, having found among their late client's papers a precise and uncanceled memorandum of M. St. Laurent's heavy debts to him, were politely urgent that these should be discharged with the least possible delay, if only to make easier thereby the speedy settlement of his daughter's future income.

On this coming to Marstland's ears, however, he at once commissioned his lawyer to inform M. St. Laurent that in marrying Vera, he had from the first intended, and promised to take upon himself the obligation of discharging all those debts to the Count for which his wife's hand was to have been the equivalent; and that his solicitors had instructions accordingly to raise sufficient money on his behalf to pay off all such claims, and set M. St. Laurent free as speedily as might be; and either to hand it over to that gentleman, or, if his pride would not permit him to accept it, to lodge it in a certain bank in Vera's name, with instructions that she should be informed of it and of her power to dispose of it for her father's benefit, as soon as she should be capable of attending to such matters.

Lady Hessey asked what the sum was likely to amount to, and on being told, declared that her brother must be out of his mind, as it would swallow up his whole income for over a year and a half; but Leah thought it only honest, and "like George Marstland," and felt a little glow at her heart in the thought that he had never yet failed to correspond with her ideal of him.

She needed some little cheering, for in proportion as the others' spirits began to rise and take comfort from the assurances of the eminent "avocat" who had been engaged on Marstland's behalf, that notwithstanding the bitterness among a certain section of society against him, he might be sure of a perfectly fair and unprejudiced trial, Leah herself seemed to become more anxious and depressed, and to wonder with a secret irritation, of which she felt ashamed, how Lady Hessey, Burt, and even her own father, could have the heart to think about their dentists, their wives, or their lectures, when Marstland

and Marstland's wife were in such grievous pain and peril.

What must have been the mental pain alone, she thought, which had streaked the young surgeon's bronzed bright locks with grey, and filled that ill-omened villa at Neuilly with the frenzied shrieks of Vera's delirious ravings? And what would be the end, even if the law passed by the man and death let off the woman? Were they married, or were they not? And if not, if the hapless girl were indeed the wife, widowed by her lover's hand, of the Count de Mailly, would it be easy, would it be even possible for her, while under the influence of her parents, and of the timid scruples in which she had been brought up, to re-marry the slayer of her husband?

Leah herself thought that it should be possible—that indeed there ought to be no momentary thought or question of anything else—but Lady Hessey, Naomi, and even Burt, seemed to look on the matter differently, and to consider that the scandal of such a marriage might not only be of permanent injury to Marstland's professional career, but that a union with a girl already proved to be as weak, faithless, and untrustworthy as Vera must inevitably wreck all hopes of domestic happiness for him, and prove a perpetual torture to a man of his disposition.

"And she herself then?" Leah asked, all the more indignantly because her own sense echoed so much of what was said. "What is to become of her if she recovers, and you are not to let them come together again? He claims her as his wife now that he is a prisoner. It is on that claim that he rests his whole defence. Is he to reject her as his wife when he is free?"

"It is not a question of rejecting, but of not forcing a claim disavowed at present," said Burt calmly. "Of course, should she recover, and should her parents withdraw their opposition to the legalising of the first marriage—which is possible, since it is an open secret in Paris that the Count left no will in which Vera St. Laurent or her parents were so much as mentioned—in that case Marstland would be obliged, as a man of honour, to offer to go through the legal ceremony again, but——"

"He would be miserable for the whole of the rest of his life!" broke in Lady Hessey. "My dear Miss Josephs, I am George's sister, and therefore you mustn't be surprised if I think of him and his interests more than of a girl who has de-

ceived every one about her at one time or another, himself included, and does not even know the meaning of the word fidelity."

"And would Dr. Marstland teach it to her by breaking faith with her in the hour when she most needs it?" Leah asked sadly. "I do not believe he would think so; he who chose her out of all other women, and loves her better. Surely, if he can forgive——"

But she felt her voice was failing her, in the treacherous way in which it sometimes did now, and that Burt was eyeing her in a curious, quiet way, which brought the blood into her cheeks. She was glad to get away then, and more glad still to think that she should not see him again, for he was to cross the Channel that night, the trial being expected to begin on the day but one following.

And on that day she received a letter which effectually drove every other thought, even of that dreaded trial, out of her head. It lay on her breakfast plate when she came down, a thin, foreign letter addressed to "miss Joseph" in an atrocious hand, and bearing the Neuilly postmark; and this was what it said:

"MISS JOSEPH, MA'AM,—This is to inform You that your friend, Miss Sinlorren as was, is lying at the present moment between life and Death with Fever on the brane, which it is now a Fortnite she have been compleatly delirysus and raving from morning to night. She have the very beat of Doctors, and her pore Ma and Me and the nurse do all that can be for her, And are near wore out in consekwence. She being that voilent it takes Two at times to hold her down in bed, but all the time she keeps calling on Your name, and shrieking for You to come to her in a way as is Heartbraking to hear. To-day the Doctor asked what wurd it was she kep crying out, 'for,' says he, 'I have listened and It is alays the same,' and when we Told im you was a Lady friend as Vera kind of worshipped, he said he would like You to be sent for. I told him as that wasn't Possable seein as you was in England, and not on Terms so to say with Vera's Ma, but he just poo-pooed me, and said if the Distunce or your own Sircumstances didn't make It impossable, you ought to be askt to make the Effort to come, as if yr Friend could be brought to Recognise you, it might peraps be the Saving of er. Wich at present she is

getting weaker momentarily and the fever higher. Miss Joseph, I do owe you will excuse the liberty of this letter and make it possible to come to our poor child's help. Madam she had a delicacy about writing to assist you herself, so I do it with her knowledge and wish, and hoping that no ill-feeling be remembered on either side; but most grateful on the contrary. And even if too late will be pleased to pay your passage both ways.

"Adding my humble respects, I am, dear miss, your ever obedient,

"JOANNA HIGGS.

"P.S.—where Miss DO come. the Doctor says it is her only chance which you wouldn't hesitate if you could hear her calling on you."

It must have been about seven o'clock on the following evening, for the sun had but lately set, and the sky was still all aglow with purple and ruby flame, when a young lady alighted from a hired cabriolet before the gate of the late Count de Maily's villa at Neuilly, and asked admittance in the name of Miss Joseph. She was evidently expected, however, for she had no difficulty in getting it. The tall iron gates, closed against everyone else except the doctor, were thrown open almost before the vehicle stopped, and she was led with deferential haste along the smoothly-gravelled path to the house; the "concierge" explaining apologetically that, in consequence of the sad condition of "the Countess," no carriages could be allowed nearer than the gate, outside which, as she had noticed, the street was covered with straw for several yards.

Leah could not answer him. even to ask how the "Countess" was. The novel name, the novel place—with its velvet lawns overshadowed by limes and chestnuts in all the fresh verdure of their spring foliage, and its flower-beds gay with tulips and anemones, the little glittering fountains at each corner of the terrace, and the pretty Swiss cottage beyond with its quaintly carved eaves and balconies, all flushed with crimson in the rosy evening light—gave her a sense of unreality, of things not actually before her, but seen in a dream by the reflection of Marstrand's description; and she almost dreaded to turn her head lest she should see him with his handsome, haggard face, and the bloodstains dabbling his bandaged arm, making his way through the shrubbery towards her. Even

the hushed voice in which the "concierge" spoke, and the absence of any other sound or sight of humanity about the place, added to this feeling of unreality; and it was with a sudden sense of awakening, of being pulled back as it were into actual life, that she greeted the appearance of Joanna at the hall-door, looking, in her straight black gown, her plain, angular features, and the reddish tip to her nose, so exactly like her old self at Les Châtaigniers, that Leah could almost have believed that she had been really dreaming, and had woken up in that remote corner of Brittany, instead of in a nobleman's villa in a fashionable Parisian suburb. The familiar face gave back her voice, however, and she asked, in an eager whisper, after Vera. Joanna shook her head.

"Worse," she said in her old abrupt way, though the grim tones had a suspicious tremble in them. "She's been getting worse every hour these last two days. You see, she'd no strength to speak of when she was took, and now the fever's just burning it away inch by inch, so that though she never ceases raving night nor day, except when she's under one o' them stupefying draughts, her voice is that feeble and sunk away that you don't hear her any more over the house as you used to, and her poor little face and hands——" she stopped abruptly, and added in an odd, harsh voice: "the doctor said this morning that if nothing could be found to soothe her or give her natural sleep she couldn't last another forty-eight hours; and I'm glad of it, for I can't bear to see it, that I can't; and I wish that Dr. Marstrand and the Count had both been hung or ever they set eyes on my poor child."

Leah could not speak, she was crying too uncontrollably, and the sight of her tears recalled Joanna to the more present duties of hospitality.

"Don't you fret, Miss Josephs," she said in a softer tone. "I can't help hoping, as the sight of you, or maybe the sound of your voice, considering the way she have clung to you from the first, may do somethink for her. It's downright good of you to have come such a distance any way, and you must just come straight in here," opening the door of a dining-room where refreshments were already laid out on the table, "and take some food and rest afore you do anything else. Mrs. Sinlorren she's upstairs with the child now, and you're not to think that she don't feel your kindness in coming as much as I do.

or yet affronted if she seems a bit stand-off when she meets you. She don't mean it, pore soul! and she can't help it; though, of course, it's a sore thing for a mother, and a woman as jealous as Jane Sinlorren has always been from a child, to see her own child shudder away from her, and cry out to a stranger for help and protection from that dead man and the parents as forced her to marry him."

"But how could they do so?" Leah asked, turning away from the food which the old servant was heaping on her plate, and which it seemed to her impossible to touch. "Why did she submit? Joanna, I wish you would tell me about it, for I can't understand it at all. Madame St. Laurent is an Englishwoman. She has brought Vera up to be English in her ideas, and particularly those about religion. Surely she—surely they both must have known that after the marriage Vera had gone through in the English church, and the solemn vows she had taken on herself, that in the eyes of God she was married, that she could no more perjure herself and——"

"That's just word for word what I said myself when I refused to have anythink to do with it," Joanna interrupted. "I said to Jane, as I've a right to call her, being my own cousin, which I'm not agoin' to deny any longer, being sick and tired of all this shamming and hiding up things, and putting Christianity and kindness and everythink else aside for the sake o' being genteel. 'Jane, I says to her, 'you and me was brought up Dissenters, it's true; but, so long as you're not a Papist, one Protestant's as good as another, and I ain't been going to church with you and Vera all these years—not to speak of holding her at the font for the very purpose of making her a member of it—to allow, now that a girl as has been married in church with a reg'lar license, and by the reg'lar parson all respectable, isn't as much a wife as you are; an' no more free to go off with another man, not if he was the Emperor of Rooshia, than your own mother would ha' been. Where's your religion, woman?' says I; but Jane, she cried, and begged me not to talk so, for it wasn't a matter of religion; that the law didn't allow it to be a marriage; and her own father wouldn't acknowledge it, but threatened to turn the girl out into the street if the word was so much as spoken before him; and that the man as had run off with her didn't look on it as anythink binding himself as was proved by his deserting her——"

"But he had not deserted her, Joanna. You must know that now. It was in his haste to get back to her that he fell, and he was actually lying insensible at that factory when——"

Joanna nodded.

"More fool he to 'be in sich haste!" she interrupted angrily, "it's those impetchnous people as are alwys hurting themselves or others. Yes, I've heard about it since, for he wrote to Vera after his arrest, saying as how now he knew she had been deceived, and hadn't been allowed to see his other letters, he must tell her the whole story over again; but lor! she never heard it, for the fever had come on by then, and she was raving and unconscious as she is now."

"But how—if she loved him—could she even fancy he would deceive her? How could she suspect him, Joanna, when he had never been anything but true to her from the moment of their engagement? That is what I can't understand," Leah said sorrowfully.

"That's because you're an independent young woman as thinks for yourself, Miss Josephs, which Vera wasn't allowed to be. She didn't suspect him. She wasn't given to suspecting anyone, but rather to believing too easily whatever she was told; and at first she wouldn't believe that she wasn't married to young Marstland; but when her mother, as was always gospel with her, convinced her that it was so, and that instead of being a wife she was only a pore disgraced girl, as her own father would be ashamed to own, and anybody might point their finger at once her story got about, she was so knocked down that she'd have submitted to anythink, more particularly when she'd the proof for herself that he'd left her, and had been deceivin' her all the while, which it was your telegram showed her that. She had held out against everythink until she saw it."

"My telegram? What telegram, Joanna?" Leah asked, her cheeks whitening suddenly.

"Why, the one remonstrating with that Marstland for his vicious conduct towards Vera, and threatening, if he didn't give it up, to go to her father and expose him."

Leah looked, as well she might, utterly amazed and horrified.

"But, Joanna, I never sent any such telegram. I never heard of it. This must have been some cruel forgery. I should have thought poor Vera happy in being married to so good and honourable a man,

so true a gentleman as everyone who knows Dr. Marstrand knows him to be; but I didn't even know that they were planning a marriage until the day before it was to take place, and then, fearing that he might not be aware of the French laws about such things, my father told me to telegraph to him to take advice about it first, and wrote himself. Someone must have changed that telegram of mine for a forged one. Oh, who can have been so cruel, so wicked!"

Joanna shook her head. She was as puzzled as Leah.

"I don't know," she said. "I never saw it myself. I wasn't there; but I know Mrs. Sinlorren hadn't any hand in it, for she told me of it herself, and of how it was found on the floor, seemingly dropped out of the young man's pocket as he went out of the house. Anyhow, it was that did for Vera, because he had told her he hadn't had any communication with you or your family about the marriage; and when she found by that telegram that he'd lied to her, and that you had actually been trying to save her from him, her heart seemed to break then and there, and you might have done anything you liked with her afterwards. I believe she hated the Count; but when they told her that it was very generous of him to marry her, and that his doing so was the only thing by which she could retrieve her character, and save her father from ruin, and her mother from dying of shame and sorrow, she didn't attempt to resist. I did. I said I'd have neither art nor part in it; that the girl was too crushed to know what she was doing; and that, as to generosity, I believed the Count was just marrying her to punish her, and to show that whatever he'd set his mind on he'd have; which I saw it in his eye the only time I saw 'em together afterwards. But, lor! what was the good of me saying anything? They only took care to keep me away from her on account of it, and, indeed, she didn't seem to care to talk even to me. She kep' almost entirely in her mother's room, and scarcely eat or spoke all the time—but, gracious! here's the doctor, and you've scarcely swallowed a mouthful all this while!"

The doctor came to say that if Mdlle. Josepha, of whose arrival he had been informed, was rested and refreshed, he would like to take her to the sick-room at once; but a glance at her face, and at the untouched plate before her, made him insist

on seeing her drink a glass of wine and eat a piece of bread first; and even when they were at the bed-room door he stopped to ask hesitatingly:

"Mademoiselle has strong nerves?"

"Very strong," Leah answered.

"That is well, for I know she is fond of her friend. Her taking this long journey proves it, and she must be prepared for seeing a great change, a very great change, in Madame la Comtesse."

"I am prepared for it, doctor."

"That is right. Follow me, then, and do not speak till I bid you. When you have seen the state of things as they are, we may be better able to form a plan for amending them."

He opened the door as he spoke, and Leah followed him into a darkened room, the air faint with the odour of drugs and other sick-room appliances, and with a low, white bed in the centre of it, on which, watched over by two people, lay something that looked like the wraith of Vera—a shrunk, wasted creature, with all her soft, red hair cropped close to the head, and covered with bandages dipped in ice-water, with sunken temples and glaring eyes, and lips so baked by the fever-consuming her as to look almost black against the livid, discoloured skin. A nurse, in white cap and apron, was bending over her changing the bandages, while someone else, whom Leah supposed to be Madame St. Laurent, sat at the head of the bed, but out of sight of the patient, who kept tossing from side to side, clutching and moaning, and sometimes breaking into cries which her weakness rendered scarcely louder than a shrill whisper, but in which the same words were constantly repeated.

"Leah! Leah! Leah!" she kept moaning. "Help! Come to me. He said he would bring you. He . . . Hush! what's that? It's he. He's come. Leah! Leah, has he brought you? . . . No, no, it's not he. It's the Count. He's going to murder. . . . Oh! no, no, no! don't murder him! Leah, Leah, save me! Mamma is dragging me. . . . Oh! have pity. Let me go. . . . Blood! It is all blood—his blood. They have killed him . . . Leah!"

She made a sort of bound with the last words, as if to fling herself out of bed, but the nurse laid her back, and the doctor drew Leah, sick and shuddering, from the room.

"You see!" he said gravely. "This cannot last long. Now listen to my plan. Mademoiselle Jeanne here says you gain

your influence over your friend by your voice—that you sing very beautiful—no ?”

“I sing ; yes, Monsieur, and it used to make Vera happy to hear me. Music has a great effect on her.”

“Justement ! We will try that effect now. Sing, Mademoiselle. Sing anything you will that your friend knows and loves. And sing where you are, and not too loud at first. It must not be that we startle her too sudden. You will watch my finger.”

He passed back into the room as he spoke, and for a minute—more perhaps—there was silence.

How could Leah sing then, and what ! There was one little song—a silly, airified little French thing, to which she knew Vera was specially partial ; but how in such a ghastly scene could she give voice to that gay refrain—those glad, defiant words ! She struggled fiercely with herself for a moment, and then, low and rather tremulously the rich, sweet voice Vera had so loved rose out of the silence, singing :

“Que tout le monde soit gai, chérie !
Que tout le monde soit gai.”

The effect was almost instantaneous. Softly as she had commenced, the sound of such a voice carolling in that mournful stillness had something electric in it, and Vera’s muttered ravings ceased before the end of the first line. She half raised her head, and stretched out her thin fingers with a curious grasping movement. The doctor raised his hand, and once again that unseen voice, fuller and nearer than before, rang out upon the hushed suspense of the listeners.

“Que tout le monde soit gai, chérie !
Que tout le monde soit gai.
Car si tu m’aimes, et si je t’aime . . .”

The groping movement of Vera’s hands went on, but there was a change of colour in her face, and her restless, wandering gaze had become fixed. Leah’s foot was on the threshold now. Her voice floated in like a blithe, sweet message, before her.

“ et si je t’aime,
On peut faire ce qu’on plaint, chérie,
On peut faire ce qu’on—”

“Leah !” broke in a shrill, weak cry from Vera’s parched lips, as the hands suddenly ceased their groping, and were stretched out in piteous appeal. “Leah—oh, God—come to me at last !” and then Leah was just in time to catch her in her

arms and lay her down, before a swift, pale change came over the girl’s altered features, and her head fell forward upon the breast of the friend so long and vainly desired.

Twenty-four hours later they were still together and Vera was asleep, her brow pillowed on Leah’s arm, her two hands feebly clasped on one of Leah’s. For nearly twenty of those hours she had been sleeping thus, and, except to lift her head to take the wine or soup with which Joanna fed her at intervals as if she had been a baby, Leah had not moved.

The doctor came and went, felt Vera’s pulse, and examined her narrowly, and each time he said that the fever was less, the temperature lower, and all the signs improving.

“But she may sink yet,” he said ; “the pulse is frightfully low at present, and unless there is rallying power—well, it all depends on how she wakens.”

And just as the sun was setting for the second time since Leah’s arrival, and sending a long golden ray through a rift in the Venetians upon the bed-room floor, Vera woke. She did so quite suddenly, so that those about her did not even see that she had opened her eyes, and Madame St. Laurent was in the act of crossing the room to shut out that intrusive sunbeam when a weak voice stopped her.

“Don’t—please,” it whispered ; “it is quite early yet, and—I want—to see him coming.”

The mother turned round with a gasp. Vera was looking at her quite calmly with clear, untroubled eyes, from which all the fever glare had gone, and the poor woman almost sank on her knees in thankfulness for the change.

“You are better, Vera, my—my darling,” she said huskily, and bending over the girl, who no longer shrank from her as before. “You know me, don’t you ? You know—”

Leah looked at her entreatingly in fear of any agitation, but Vera only smiled very placidly.

“Know you ? Yes,” she said in the same feeble voice, but with a gentle, pleasant expression. “You are Mrs. Nicholls, the landlady. Good evening, Mrs. Nicholls. Has—has he come back yet ?”

The fever was gone, but the anguish which induced it had been too much for the feeble brain to bear. She was mad !

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A DATELESS BARGAIN.

By C. L. PIRKIS,

Author of "Lady Lovelace," etc.

CHAPTER V.

FRANK was too quick-witted not to know what Joyce meant when she said, with that look of fun in her eyes, that her mother's receptions "must be seen to be appreciated." To him, with his knowledge of Mrs. Shenstone's weakness of character, and its inherent silliness, but one inference was possible, viz. that she had thrown open her doors to all sorts and conditions of men, without criticising their passports to respectable society, probably without so much as enquiring whether they had passports to criticise.

It filled him with apprehension, most of all on Mab's account. Joyce, he naturally felt, was safe enough. He had a right to say a word as to her comings and goings, her sayings and doings, the friendships she accepted or refused. But Mab, with her odd, reserved ways, her sudden, unaccountable impulses, seemed to him beset with pitfalls right and left.

In his apprehension, he wrote a long letter to Uncle Archie, outlining the "situation" as delicately as possible, but stating most emphatically his own opinion that if the old gentleman could make his annual visit to London tally with Mrs. Shenstone's stay in the metropolis, it would be an amazingly good thing for all persons concerned.

Uncle Archie, though at one with the young man in spirit on the matter, was yet disposed to resent his out-spoken frankness as something of an impertinence. Accordingly he wrote curtly enough in reply :

"I rely upon the common-sense and discretion of my younger niece to keep me

informed of any matters that may require my presence in town. My investments do not need looking after just now (a likelihood you so kindly suggest), and—I have the gout."

Frank groaned over this letter. "Talk about the emancipation of women," he said; "nine-tenths of them want protection, not emancipation."

By a coincidence, the word he used so disparagingly was just then more frequently on Mrs. Shenstone's lips than any other. She said it to herself very often in those days. Every time, in fact, she took out her cheque-book, and enjoyed the privilege she had never tasted in her husband's lifetime, of drawing large sums of money for foolish or unnecessary purposes; whenever she selected her youthful and ultra-fashionable costumes from her Parisian dressmaker; and lastly, but not least emphatically, when she gave carte blanche to her acquaintances in London to bring to her house anyone upon whom was set a seal of distinction, no matter of what sort or kind.

"For I am determined to gather about me the notabilities of my time," she confidentially informed Joyce, as she planned her first evening reception. "My houses shall be a representative house, so far as I can make it one; the meeting-place of the leading spirits of art, literature, and science."

Ever since the one snub Mrs. Shenstone had received from the aristocratic hand of the Countess of Cranbury, this had been her ambition.

"Ah," murmured Joyce, in response, "I hope it won't be a case of Glendower calling 'spirits from the vasty deep.'"

Mrs. Shenstone wisely passed over the allusion.

"These Friday evenings will be a momentous undertaking. Do I expect to sink or

swim by them. I am told that anyone can give afternoons in London, and make them 'go' passably; but to fill your rooms one evening every week requires talent of a high order."

Joyce pursed her lips and said nothing.

"I rely upon you and Mab to act as my coadjutors. You are handsome, and will make the house attractive; Mab, though plain, might be picturesque if she chose——"

Like flame to tinder was this slighting allusion to Mab's appearance.

"Mab plain?" Joyce cried. "Why, she has a beauty all her own if people had only eyes to see it."

"Yes; so your father used to say, but I never had eyes to see it. Don't look at me like that, Joyce; there is nothing to get red and excited over. The one thing I want to do is to make my rooms picturesque and attractive, and I rely upon you two girls to help me."

"Oh, I'll help you, mother!" answered Joyce, catching scent of the fun of the thing, and ready to run it down. "We must do the thing well, or not at all. We must give thought, time, energy to the work."

"Exactly, Joyce," exclaimed Mrs. Shenstone, delighted at the prospect of sympathetic help. "Thought, as you say, must be given to the undertaking. Very well, I have given endless thought to the manner in which people entertain in London, and it seems to me that the first thing to do is to make the house distinguished. In every house, if you notice it, there is a feature——"

"Two, three, more I should say."

"Well no, not as a rule. In some houses religion is a feature; in some, politics; in some, science; in some, art; in some, beauty——"

"Oh, mother, let's go in for beauty here! You, I, Mab! Let's make our features a feature, and the thing's done."

Mrs. Shenstone shook her head.

"You and I would do, Joyce," she said complacently, "but Mab would spoil it all. No; I have thought it well over, and have come to the conclusion that picturesqueness is the thing we can best accomplish. As I said before Mab can be made to look picturesque; though beautiful, never. As for you and me, it is quite unimportant which rôle we adopt."

The bland manner in which she, a woman on the other side of forty, with colourless face and expressionless features, bracketed herself with the youthful and handsome

Joyce, was proof of vanity swollen almost to the verge of fatuity.

Joyce, ruffled by the second allusion to Mab's unloveliness, made no reply.

"Now I was reading the other day in one of the Society journals—I forget which—the description of some celebrated literary family—I forget the name—at home to their friends. Great stress was laid upon the picturesqueness of the rooms and the people."

"Were they got up in war paint and feathers like Choctaw Indians, and were the rooms stuffed with pampas-grass and emu eggs?"

"Ah, now I've forgotten that too. Pampas-grass would of course be most effective introduced in sufficient quantities. But if I remember rightly these people got their effects by tasteful arrangements of chair-backs, antimacassars that is, of brilliant colours, red here, olive-green there, or old gold."

"Chair-backs, antimacassars, how deliciously simple!" cried Joyce; "a walk down Regent Street and the thing is done."

"Ah, then there's the arrangement of them in their right places, and the people—you, me, Mab—to be set off to the best advantage against them. The dark corners of the room must be lighted up with scarlet or old gold satin——"

"Mother, I've a splendid idea; there's nothing so scarlet as tomatoes nor so golden as oranges. Wouldn't big, piled-up baskets of tomatoes and oranges do better than anything in the dark corners, and be so delightfully original and distinctive into the bargain?"

"We'll try the effect. Yes, we must be original, whatever else we are not. Mrs. Farran—you know she is artistic, and literary, and musical, and theatrical, and has her rooms always full—said to me only yesterday, when I was calling and talking these things over with her, 'Mrs. Shenstone, be original at any cost, and don't allow yourself to be swamped by the multitude.'"

"Oh, we'll be original enough, never fear," cried Joyce, with a comical little twist of one corner of her mouth, "and as for the multitude we'll swamp them altogether, deluge and drown them with our originality. I'll set off for Covent Garden this very minute, mother, and buy tomatoes and oranges by the hundredweight, and rosy-cheeked apples, a lemon or two, pine-apples, and a carrot, and if we can't light up

our dark corners with originality I should amazingly like to see the person who can."

Joyce's purchases, however, successful as they might be from a culinary point of view, were, so far as decoration was concerned, a profitless investment.

Only two days before her first reception took place, Mrs. Shenstone came driving home from her morning calls at a tremendous pace, breathless in her eagerness to consult with Joyce over another form of display for the originality that was in her, and which was destined shortly to dazzle the eyes of the world.

"I have just been calling on Mrs. O'Halloran," she began, going hurriedly into the room where Joyce, at the piano, was getting through some storms and whirlwinds of preludes and scales. "She is the wife of the Irish member, you know, whom we met at Bournemouth last year, and she said to me with that lovely rolling accent of hers, 'and it's in the fashion you ought to be, Mrs. Shenstone; whatever else you're out of, be in that. You ought to catch what's in the air, ride on the top of the times if you'd like to be one of the women of the day.' Well, Joyce, I stayed with her nearly two hours, and all that time people came in and out, and they talked of nothing—absolutely nothing but Irish politics, and the dreadful manner in which Ireland had been ground to the dust by the Saxons."

"Oh, my poor tomatoes!" sighed Joyce, feeling they would be doomed to the saucepan now, and the dark corners of the drawing-room be begrudged to them.

"And, by-the-way, Joyce, there were among others two such charming people calling, a brother and sister. He was such a splendid-looking man, tall, with fine features and a grand defiant air, between forty and fifty years of age I should think; and the sister—oh, so sweet and gentle and soft speaking, all smiles and curls."

"Irish both?"

"No, American. His name is George Ritchie Buckingham. Captain Buckingham, I think they called him. He writes for the press, and does ever so many things besides. I asked them both a great many questions about themselves; they answered them everyone."

Joyce could fancy her mother asking a great many questions.

"And you should have heard him talk about poor Ireland's wrongs. It was grand beyond anything. He was defiant, furious. I never heard finer declamation."

Joyce shrugged her shoulders. "I suppose he forgot he was addressing an English lady?"

"No; that was the point of it all. He kept repeating over and over again, 'I don't forget, madam, that you are a daughter of the conquering race, of the race that delights to quench nationalities, to uproot trees of liberty.' No, I think it was standards he said."

"It doesn't matter which. Trees often are standards—rose trees, that is. Have a cup of tea, mother?"

Mrs. Shenstone was thankful for a cup of tea. Her lips were dry, and there was yet a good deal remaining for them to do.

She nibbled a biscuit, and went on with her talk at intervals.

"So I was thinking, Joyce, as the topic of Ireland's wrongs is on everyone's lips just now, we might as well take up with the Irish question hotly, and——"

"Combining originality with fashion," suggested Joyce.

"Exactly—gather about us distinguished politicians and men of letters of all nationalities."

"In rooms appropriately decorated with shamrocks, infernal machines, floating banners with stars and stripes upon them," continued Joyce.

"Become at once envied and popular among our friends——"

"And end with seeing our names mentioned with due honour in the police reports of the daily papers." And here Joyce, with a right-down merry laugh, sank back in her chair, hiding her face in her hands.

The laugh disconcerted Mrs. Shenstone a little.

"I thought you were going to help me, Joyce. I relied upon you. You know I always do," she began complainingly.

The real plaintiveness in her voice recalled Joyce to seriousness. "So I will help you, mother. Choose your dress for you, if you like. Of course you'll be all in green, with Limerick lace!"

"Yes; green is becoming to delicate complexions. But the lace! I can't endure Limerick lace. We'll think over that. And the shamrocks! they'll be the difficulty. Now, where can we get shamrocks in London—in large quantities I mean, of course, for I should want big bunches all over the house?"

"Wouldn't clover do; it's wonderfully like shamrock?"

"Ah, it might! That's a good idea.

Now there's something else. That little maid of yours, Kathleen, will come in most usefully. She has a thoroughly Irish face and manner, and, if we dress her up and impress upon her that she must try and pick up her father's way of speaking and drop her mother's Cockney twang, we can make a feature of her in the entertainment. She can hand refreshments, or wait on the ladies."

"Oh, we can easily get features of that sort, mother, if you want them. In Covent Garden, the other day, every other woman I met with a basket was Irish to the backbone."

"And there's Ned too! I wonder what has become of him? He is a fine Irish-looking fellow. He might slip into livery for the evening and open the door."

"Green, with silver harps on the collar. The theatrical costumers in the Strand might supply it for the evening."

"Ring the bell, Joyce, and send for Kathleen, and we'll see if we can get Ned here as footman. It was ridiculous of him to be in such a hurry to quit our service. My own belief is that Mab half turned his brain with the books she would persist in lending him, and quite unfitted him for his station in life."

Kathleen, summoned and interrogated by Mrs. Shenstone, stated rather doggedly that she felt certain Ned would never consent to act as footman, even for an evening—"No, not even if Miss Mab were to ask him to."

The easy familiar way in which the girl spoke her last sentence made Joyce turn round and look at her.

Mrs. Shenstone, not quick in detecting shades of expression, went on calmly putting her questions. "Where was Ned now? What was he doing? Earning so much money, she supposed that he could afford to scorn the idea of service?"

Mab, coming into the room at this moment, stood an interested listener waiting for the answer.

"He is at Woolwich, ma'am, working at the Arsenal. He gets a pound a week; I don't suppose he saves on that."

"How long has he been there?" asked Mab in surprise. "When he wrote to me last, about three months ago, he was just starting for America. He said he had an offer of steady work over there in some factory at New York."

"He altered his mind, miss, and took other work that offered."

"Kathleen," interrupted Mrs. Shenstone,

"how is it you've dropped your pretty brogue? you talked just now exactly like an English girl."

"You should roll your 'rs' along for a yard-and-a-half before you let them go, Kathleen," interposed Joyce.

"Tell Ned to write to me," said Mab, "and tell me what he does with himself on Sundays."

Then Mrs. Shenstone took possession of the girl.

"Come up into my dressing-room at once, Kathleen," she said; "I want to try on your head a little arrangement in lace and velvet I bought for you coming home."

"Mab," asked Joyce, when the two girls found themselves tête-à-tête over the afternoon tea-tray, "will you mind telling me why you take such a deep interest in Ned Donovan, and insist on keeping up a correspondence with him?"

Mab's fingers trifled nervously with her teaspoon.

"I suppose it is from pure sympathy and fellow feeling," she answered in a low voice. "I am trying to save him from himself."

Joyce looked at her, for the moment puzzled and silenced.

"You see," Mab went on in an apologetic and explanatory voice, "most of us are dual—half good, half bad, and it is hard work at times to keep our bad half in chains."

Joyce's reply, given with an almost defiant energy, was full of a mystic meaning for Mab.

It was: "Better rouse your bad half, fight it out, and be done with it. A foe in chains is a living, not a slain foe."

CHAPTER VI.

"That's me twenty years hence," whispered Joyce to Frank Ledyard, regardless of grammar, intent only on fun; her quick sense of humour catching glimpse of and exaggerating a subtle likeness which existed between her mother and herself.

It was the last of Mrs. Shenstone's receptions, which had been continued with more or less success throughout the season.

The above remark had been drawn forth by a question put by the hostess to a spinster lady in the fifties, and severely marked with small-pox, as to why she had not adopted the latest Parisian fashion in hair-dressing. "It threw the features into such bold relief."

Frank winced under the allusion to a possible kinship between Joyce's frank speaking and her mother's affectation of ingenuousness.

He bit his lip to keep back a reply which must have been one of two.

Either "a caricature is as much like a portrait as you are like your mother."

Or, "If I thought even in fifty years' time you would grow into your mother's counterpart, I should put a bullet through my brain at once."

Mrs. Shenstone had not succeeded in filling her rooms to overflowing, as she had purposed when she first started her weekly gatherings. So far, her evenings were to be pronounced failures. But she had certainly succeeded in collecting in that small sprinkling of people who surrounded her enough of eccentricity, if not of originality, to have kept the comic journals supplied with models for their character sketches for a whole year.

Everyone in the room, it was evident, was someone, and did something, or had been someone and had done something. Here, in a corner near the window, sat a fair, moderately young woman, dressed in cerulean blue, with a silver crescent worn above her left ear, and a *châtelaine* of silver stars hanging from her right side. Under the nom de guerre of "Incuba" she had published a bulky volume of poems addressed to "earth's green fields and heaven's radiant blue." In converse with her sat an ancient demoiselle, powder-puffed, rouged, bewigged, befrilled, who had once been a prima donna, but who had been compelled, after a short season, now some forty years past, to subside into obscurity on account of the sudden failure of her voice. She delighted to expatiate on that one season, the bouquets, the bracelets, the eager eyes that used to follow her up the steps of the orchestra, the distinguished arms that had assisted her down.

Replicas of this type, with deviations, abounded in the room. The men, also speaking generally, were of much the same calibre. The drama was represented by some half-dozen inferior actors; politics by about as many youthful scribblers for the lower-class press. There was no mistaking them. A trifle *débonnaire*, a trifle jaunty they were, and thoroughly good-natured everyone, with any amount of "rattling good stories" oozing from their finger-tips.

Thoroughly at home among these, yet

standing out distinctly from them, like a cray-fish among prawns, was the Captain Buckingham whom Mrs. Shenstone had painted in such glowing colours to Joyce. He stood half a head taller than most men there, his self-assertiveness and generally lofty bearing possibly giving him credit for three-quarters of an inch beyond what Nature had endowed him with. Fancy a dark, handsome, lawless bandit, with a square jaw, piercing eyes, a thick wave of grey hair pushed back from his brow, compelled, from stress of circumstances, to lay aside his lawlessness for a time and act the gentleman in a lady's drawing-room. A more vivid picture than this of George Ritchie Buckingham could not be given.

Irish politics were rampant in the room. Buckingham's deep-chested tones rang to the door, and outside it, where Frank was having a farewell five minutes with Joyce.

"I'm not forgetting the least of Ireland's wrongs when I say let your reformation, though sweeping, be judicious. A high-handed thoroughness, combined with a fine judgment, is what is needed at this crisis."

"Which way will you read that wise sentence?" said Frank irritably. "Joyce, take my word for it, that man is one of the biggest windbags that ever breathed. I've had a little to do, off and on, with unmasking scoundrels; I should amazingly enjoy unmasking this one. I wonder how much of all that grand talk about a 'fine judgment' is let off, like smoke, to hide the fire——"

"Hush!" whispered Joyce, looking nervously over her shoulder towards a lady who at that moment came out of an ante-room, adjusting her opera cloak as she went along. She was a tall, fair woman of about eight-and-twenty, with a great deal of fluffy light hair disposed à l'Americaine over her forehead, a very pale complexion, a minute mouth, and large, steely blue eyes.

"George wasn't willing to stir, so I leave him behind. I'm overdone with gaiety," she said to Joyce as she swept past.

"That was Sylvia Buckingham," said Joyce, after bowing a good-night. "You put my heart in my mouth. I'm sure she heard you."

"No fear! Good-bye, Joyce. I've my leader to write for the 'St. George's Gazette.' I shall have the imp round for copy before I'm ready for him. Be moderate! Yes, of course I shall. I've got a good start to begin with to-night: 'Reformation sweeping, combined with a

fine judgment, etc. etc.' Good-night, darling, good-night."

In order to help him more quickly up that ladder, for whose top-step his feet were tingling, Frank had of late taken to writing articles for the press; among others, for the "St. George's Gazette," a weekly high-class Conservative paper, of "the candle, the bell, and the book" order. It presented to its readers on the following morning, a biting article on the Irish question, in which the fingers of American agitators, who dipped them unasked into this far from savoury squab pie, were freely rapped.

BEAUTY'S HANDMAIDS.

TRADITION, badinage, and the advertisement columns of ladies' newspapers have enveloped the toilet table with an air of mystery that renders it almost an object of horror to the sterner sex. In their minds it is associated with pernicious confections and instruments of torture dear to the enterprising hairdresser and perfumer, and at its shrine, they love to darkly hint, the fair votaries of the tyrant Fashion indulge for hours in those curious arts which bring about a temporary command of more or less beauty. The aesthetic revival has, among much other good work, glorified the rustling, befrilled arrangement of our youth into a thing of beauty at which a daughter of Eve may be pardoned for lingering awhile.

The crackling, uncomfortable muslin has been entirely swept away; the humble deal table has given place to a cabinet of walnut, birch, or ash, quaintly fashioned, resplendent with tiny brackets and bevelled glass, and adorned with bric-à-brac and dainty trifles. At least it is a pretty object to gaze upon; as for its contents, we shall presently show that it is no more decorated with a modern belle's batterie-de-toilette than was the dressing-stool of the Roman lady, or the table at which our remote ancestresses donned the veneer that too often served for ablutionary as well as beautifying purposes.

A glance at a "washing tally," or laundress's list, of the Elizabethan era reveals some curious truths concerning the personal habits of the great ladies of the period, and, judging from the corresponding evidence of the use of rouge and face washes, the hare's foot, and "dear bought liquors," as Stubbs calls them, were

far more in requisition than honest soap and water.

Faulty as the women of the present day may be with regard to the use of the whole tribe of cosmetics, curtly designated in theatrical parlance as "make-up," they are certainly less guilty than their predecessors of all ages—alone excepting the Commonwealth period, when no respectable woman would have ventured to make herself another face than Nature had given her. The Eastern women of all times have freely indulged in "painting and decorating"; and probably from the Egyptians the Jewish women learned the habit which, being used by Jezebel on a memorable occasion, has made her name for ever proverbial in connection with the subject. Throughout the whole of sacred history subsequent to the Egyptian bondage, the custom is denounced; yet, so common has it been ever since to all countries and to all ages, that it is almost strange that it has not come to be regarded as a necessary evil. In Rome, we know, they were always adepts at the art; but until the fourteenth century there seems no evidence of English women using such means to add to their attractions.

When Shakespeare began his career as a playwright the practice was common enough, and thence onward to the present day, with the aforementioned exception of the Commonwealth, it seems to have been always prevalent. However, custom, which leads us into many errors, justifies none; and, describing the toilet table of a Roman lady, a writer of the early part of this century says, "It looked nearly like that of one of our modern belles, all loaded with jewels, bodkins, false hair, fillets, ribbands, washes, and patchboxes."

In the year 1631, we find that the collection of toilet table accessories had considerably swollen, and that, in consequence, the attiring of a lady of fashion was no light matter. From the list it would seem that the tables must have been in a perpetual state of disorder, unless they were of Brobdingnagian proportions. Tiring maids, too, apparently had a wearisome time of it then, since one reads in "Rhodon and Iris" that among the ornaments and toilet articles were:

Chains, coronets, pendants, bracelets, earrings; Pins, girdles, spangles, embroideries and rings; Shadows, rebatoes, ribbands, ruffs, cuffs, falls, Scarfs, feathers, fans, masks, muffs, laces, cauls; Sweet falls, veils, wimples, glasses, crimping pins, Pots of ointment, combs, with poking sticks and bodkins.

And that the ladies furthermore had a choice assortment of waters to make their faces shine, confections to clarify their skins, lip salves and scarlet cloths for the cheeks, and ointments for various purposes of lustrifying and beautifying the complexion. Judging from the pictures of the period there is reason to suppose that the end justified the means much less than now; or is it that the result of increased civilisation has been to teach us the more skilful use of such artifices? If so, time will in due course go on perfecting Art till Nature herself is outrivalled.

In detail the consideration of the miscellaneous articles for the toilet is not uninteresting. They suggest many strange ideas, and conjure up pictures of the past that even invest them with a certain historic and romantic air. In the mind's eye a pageant of dames, "dainty, painted, powdered and gay," passes at the mention of fans, patchboxes, and pomanders, and with thoughts of masks, "scratchbacks," lace "handkercher" and powder puffs, come visions of the lively Mall and leafy Spring Gardens, with their tortuous shady walks, gay with groups of noisy, laughing promenaders—civet-scented, sarcastic, artificial, and affected.

Snuffboxes, too, were found among the perfumes, paintcloths, and washes; for the toilet has not always been a weakness peculiar to the fair sex. Our beaux and macaronis have been no less guilty in this respect than the ladies of the period, as contemporary plays and romances abundantly prove. Having sauntered about the coffee and chocolate houses, dawdled in the parks, and consumed a hasty dinner washed down with copious draughts of wine, gentlemen then sat themselves down at their toilet tables and commenced the serious business of the day with a formidable array of washes, paints, tooth powders, and lip salves, which in due course gave place to the hair-dressing arrangements that occupied another hour. Then, gummed, glazed, bewigged and bedizened, they practised gestures before the glass; selected from among the heterogeneous collection on the toilet the indispensable snuffbox, a pocket mirror made, by-the-way, of highly polished steel, a dainty handkerchief and a scent-ball; and sallied forth to flatter, and gossip, and intrigue with the ladies in the Parks.

Perfume, which by reason of its antiquity, claims precedence of discussion, has figured in the toilet-tables of different centuries in

many different guises. Red leather, Spanish paper, scarlet cloths, and "other cosmical rubrics," as Bulwer puts it, have served in turn till the "rouge de théâtre" of the present day has been reached. All these appear to have had a deleterious effect upon the skin; and in a "Spectator" of the year 1711 a man grumbles that his wife's face "has become so tarnished with the practice, that when she first wakes in the morning she scarce seems young enough to be the mother of her whom I carried to bed the night before." The modern preparation has at least the merit of being innocuous when properly prepared. The colour is obtained through a long and elaborate process, by precipitating it from the safflower by means of citric acid or lemon juice on to prepared cotton. Liquid rouge is the liquor left from the manufacture of carmine.

White has always been as much in demand as colour. Evelyn and Pepys both exclaim against its immoderate use. Horace Walpole declares that Lady Mary Wortley Montague used the cheapest white paint obtainable, and further adds that she left it on so long that it had actually to be scraped off; whilst Elizabeth, to "hark back" an instant, Ninon de l'Enclos, the Pompadour, and Nell Gwynne, were literally encased in hardened compounds of this order. The celebrated portraits, by Boucher and Lancret, of the beautiful Madame de Pompadour, are obviously intended to show the white and rouge upon the cheeks; their use being considered so essential to a person of fashion that no lady attending the Court was said to be "en habit décent" unless rouged, and whitened, and dyed; for the little "étuis" of mother-of-pearl and Vernis-Martin, now so prized in collections, contained, besides the rouge, the three other colours necessary to the regulation "make-up." These were white for the "taint," black for the eyes, and blue for the veins. Overnight, ladies—and, for that matter, men too—were in the habit of donning a waxen mask, dressed with some oleaginous preparation, which was supposed to render the skin soft, and at any rate served as the necessary foundation for the mixtures subsequently laid on, just as cold cream is now used by members of the theatrical profession.

Dyes for the hair have varied from time to time, like the colour of gowns, but their use in some form has never been abandoned at any period; and the red hair, now so

much in vogue, brings round the wheel of fashion to the periods of Titian and Tintoretto, when Venetian ladies all bleached their raven locks and subsequently dyed them with some preparation of lead to the peculiar hue seen in the paintings of that epoch. Later on, however, we find blonde again in the ascendant, and of recent years it has been altogether the favourite shade for hair.

It is a relief to turn aside from the collection of gums and oils with which these folks besmeared themselves to the consideration of the more harmless trifles that littered up their tables; and it may be noted that the common pin was once a comparatively expensive article on a toilet. Some time previous to 1543—when a statute was passed, entitled “An Acte for the True Making of Pynnes,” which were not to exceed the price of six and eightpence a thousand—the poor used wooden skewers; the rich, boxwood, bone, and silver pins, all big and clumsy, of course, but more easily caught, amid the wild disorder of the dressing-table, than in their present improved form. Pins, on their first introduction, were favourite presents to ladies, and money given for their purchase was naturally called “pin-money;” hence the expression now applied to a lady’s dress allowance.

It was about the Elizabethan period that patches were first adopted in modern times, though the fashion was common enough with Roman dames. In the earlier days patches were worn only by fops, and were generally in the form of stars, crescents, and lozenges. The coach-and-horses patch was another especial favourite; but various other designs were indulged in, sometimes of such huge proportions that, even so late as 1754, a writer in “The World” says: “Though I have seen, with patience, the cap diminishing to the size of a patch, I have not with the same unconcern observed the patch enlarging itself to the size of a cap.” The earliest mention of their usage by English women is in 1653, when the author of “The Artificial Changeling” writes: “Our ladies have lately entertained a vain custom of spotting their faces out of an affectation of a mole, to set off their beauty, such as Venus had; and it is well if one black patch will serve to make their faces remarkable, for some fill their visages full of them, varied unto all manner of shapes.”

Mr. Pepys does not seem to have been consulted by Mistress Pepys as to the pro-

priety of her donning a patch; but his consent and approval were subsequently obtained, as he records the fact later on that his wife, adorned with two or three patches, looked much handsomer than the Princess Henrietta. Patches, it is almost superfluous to mention, were largely used by political dames, who declared themselves Whigs or Tories by patching on the right or left cheeks respectively, whilst the non-political adopted the expedient of decorating both sides of their faces.

The “Spectator” says that a lady of fashion stipulated at the signing of the marriage articles that she should be at liberty to patch on which side she pleased, whatever might be her husband’s opinions.

Always in close proximity to the dainty box, wherein these strange adornments were carried, was the unepithetous, but doubtless useful, “scratchback,” which the fair and stately dames really applied to the purpose indicated by its name. These useful little instruments figured on every toilet table as indispensable articles, and were carried to the park and play as unconcernedly as the coquettish fan. They were made as ornamental as the wearer’s means would allow, the ordinary kind being of ivory, carved in the semblance of a hand, with sharp finger-nails; but simpler and cheaper ones were formed of horn, whilst more costly ones were of tortoiseshell, mother-of-pearl, or ivory and silver, chased or jewelled, as the case might be.

Of far more romantic associations was the pomander, or pouncet box, a trifle common to both sexes, though in plays and pictures most frequently given to the sterner sex. These were doubtless originally intended merely as disinfectants, and were certainly used for that purpose by the doctors, who are always represented with their ball-topped sticks under the nose, in an attitude of apparent profundity; but, as a matter of fact, this meant precaution, not knowledge. The canes carried by the doctors were always struck upon the floor prior to entering a sick room, in order to shake up and revive the odorous contents. Pomanders were carried by men between the thumb and forefinger, like the “certain lord” described by Hotspur, who was

... perfumed like a milliner,
And ’twixt his finger and his thumb he held
A pouncet box, which ever and anon
He gave his nose, and took’t away again.

Ladies suspended them from their gird with the other appendages that formed their battery of coquetry.

Like the "scratchbacks," the scent-balls were often of costly material, being sometimes a nutmeg set in silver and decorated with stones, and sometimes a golden or silver box containing musk, civet, ambergris, and spices, the odour of which emanated from perforations in the metal, whence originated the vinaigrette of our own days. Various compounds were used in these pomanders, and when oranges were introduced into England, they were largely used for the purpose, with the inside removed and the skin filled with cloves and other spices. Cardinal Wolsey is described as entering a crowded assembly "holding in his hand a very fair orange, whereof the meat or substance within was taken out and filled up again with the part of a sponge whereon was vinegar and other confections against the pestilent airs, the which he most commonly smelt unto, passing among the press." The case so frequently simulated an orange that in the eighteenth century the painted representations of these articles in the hands of celebrated persons, led to the supposition that the real fruit had been used, and it consequently became fashionable to introduce a fine Seville or St. Michael into family portraits, a custom satirised by Goldsmith in "The Vicar of Wakefield."

It will thus be seen that our predecessors of all ages very firmly and substantially laid the foundations of the multitudinous articles now employed on our modern toilet tables; but civilisation, which is generally accredited with most vices and failings, is not alone responsible for the artifices that adorn or disfigure the "human form divine." There is as much coquetry among savages as among the civilised races who paint and dye, and many are the forms thereof. The Abyssinian dandy frizzes his hair and places a fresh pat of butter on his head before sallying forth to court the dusky beauties of his acquaintance. The Orientals consider red-stained nails to be peculiarly fascinating; whilst other nations resort to the painful process of tattooing in order to secure the distinction which Fashion in all parts of the universe confers upon her followers. Happily for her cosmopolitan votaries her requirements are not always so exacting; "il faut souffrir pour être belle" is not ever the case, though whether the torture of permanent tattooing is not, after all, less terrible than the daily process of hair frizzing, painting, and bedizenment, is left to readers to decide. Perhaps the

truth of the old proverb applies alike to savagery and civilisation that "Pride knows no pain."

THE NEW HEBRIDES.

SCARCELY a twelvemonth after the conclusion of the Anglo-German agreement for the regulation of international interests among the Pacific Islands afforded us an opportunity of writing something about Samoa,* public attention has become forcibly drawn to the New Hebrides. These islands were, by the agreement just referred to, declared open for communication, and both Great Britain and Germany engaged to respect their independence. Another agreement to the same effect was already in existence between Great Britain and France, which bound both countries not to annex the islands or interfere in their government without the consent of the other contracting party. This agreement with France was first made in 1878, and was confirmed and renewed in 1883, and it was the reported violation of it by France in sending an armed force to the islands, and hoisting the flag of the Republic on one of them, which suddenly recalled their existence to the mind of the British public. The interchange of official communications and the political aspects generally do not concern us here, but we will endeavour to give some account of one of the least known corners of the not over familiar regions of the South Pacific.

There is one thing to be said, and that is, that however novel the subject of the New Hebrides may appear to average English readers, it is far from a novel or a pleasing one to our relatives, the colonists of Australia. These have for years past been living in dread lest the New Hebrides should be appropriated by France, and they have again and again urged on our own Government to "annex" them, not out of sheer land-hunger, but in order to prevent the French from getting them. This sounds like a dog-in-the-manger proposition; but it is not so, because the Australians have suffered materially and bitterly by the proximity of the French convict station at New Caledonia, and it is supposed that France can have no other object in acquiring the New Hebrides, but that of founding another convict station there also. The supposition may be gratuitous, and as a

* ALL THE YEAR ROUND, New Series, No. 370.

matter of fact the most important trade organisation—which is not saying very much—in the New Hebrides is that of a French concern—"La Compagnie Néo-Calédonienne des Nouvelles-Hebrides"—which has a number of establishments, cultivates several plantations, and professes to own some two or three hundred thousand hectares of land in the group. Still the Australian apprehensions are natural and reasonable.

New Caledonia and the Loyalty Islands, which lie between the coasts of New South Wales and of Queensland and the New Hebrides, have been in the possession of France since 1866. The island called New Caledonia is the largest island in the South Pacific, but not the most fertile. A range of mountains traverses its entire length of two hundred and thirty miles, and leaves but a narrow margin of good land on each side, the breadth of the island ranging from thirty to forty miles. If, however, never likely to be rich in products of the soil, New Caledonia is peculiarly rich in the treasures of the rock. It is essentially a mineral country, and yet, although one of its headlands is called Mont d'Or, we are not aware that gold has ever been found. There are indications of iron, however, and the nickel mines are very valuable. Although in the possession of France, the trade is nearly all in the hands of the English or Australian colonists, and a tolerably large and lucrative trade it is. Even the mails are carried by an English company, yet the whole administration of the island and the mode of life of white residents is French. Noumea, the capital of the colony, is a hot, dusty, treeless, dreary place, and has been called twin-sister to Port Said. Just within the harbour is a small island called Nou, on which are the principal prisons, barracks, and convict workshops. The prisoners number some eight thousand of the very worst class of scoundrelism, and there are besides some two thousand "libérés," or ticket-of-leave men, who are permitted to form settlements among themselves and to own land. There are only a few hundreds of free settlers on the island, but the attractions are few to a people like the French. The country resembles more the Australian continent than the South Sea Islands, but the aborigines had some reputation for bravery. The Loyalty islanders especially used to be in high request as seamen on any particularly risky or adventurous voyage, and that notwithstanding the fact

that cannibalism was practised by them within the last twelve or fifteen years. The natives in New Caledonia are estimated to number still some twenty or thirty thousand, but they are rapidly decreasing, and since the terrible rising of 1878, when over one hundred and fifty white people were killed by them, they have been driven back into the mountain districts.

New Caledonia, then, is neither more nor less than a penal settlement of France, and it has absorbed as many criminals as the French Government dare send. But away some two hundred miles to the north-east, there lies a fair range of islands, which are not only beautiful and fertile in themselves, but which seem to present quite a succession of comfortably isolated residences for those who have to leave France at the expense of their country and for their country's good.

The New Hebrides Archipelago comprises some twenty islands, large and small, the largest being Espiritu Santo, which measures about seventy miles in length by about thirty in breadth. The aborigines of the group have all come from the same Papuan stock; yet not only do they differ very much in physical aspect, but tribes are absolutely foreigners to other tribes. Not only has each island its own language, but so also has each tribe; at any rate, it is recorded that on one of the islands alone there are six native towns in which six distinct languages are spoken. These languages, no doubt, have all a certain affinity, yet they are marked by differences somewhat broader than what we are accustomed to regard as dialects. This confusion of tongues is one of the most remarkable characteristics of the New Hebrides, as well as one of the greatest difficulties with which Christianising and civilising influences have to contend.

These influences have so far made greatest progress in Aneiteum, the most southerly of the group. In this island missions have been long established, and the natives are now all accounted Christians, and probably are as genuine Christians as the exemplary Fijians. It is certainly remarkable that two races of islanders in the Pacific once so notorious for cannibalism should so readily have taken to prayer-meetings and hymns. In Fiji, as we know, cannibalism has not been practised since the British annexation; and in Aneiteum it has not been heard of for five-and-twenty years, although still practised in other

parts of the New Hebrides. And if Aneiteum has been rapidly converted, it has been exceptional, for the rest of the group has proved as intractable as the most savage of the islands of the Pacific, which is saying a great deal. It was on one of the smaller islands, Erromango, that the missionary Williams was murdered some thirty years ago.

Melanesia has generally been written of as if it contained only the lowest types of humanity; but this is a great mistake. That portion of Oceania which is properly called Melanesia—although the term is applied with much looseness—is, as defined by Behm and Wagner, the long stretch of the Western Pacific which extends from the north-east of New Guinea to about the Tropic of Capricorn. It thus includes Fiji, the people of which, if not industrious, are certainly intelligent, and are now Christians; the Solomon Islands, which are remarkable for excellence in marine architecture and for wood-carving; and the New Hebrides, as well as other groups. Now the New Hebrideans, as a whole, although not among the best, are certainly not among the worst of savage races. They have virtues of their own, and one of these virtues is a capacity for work, as the planters of Fiji, Samoa, and Queensland long ago discovered. In fact the New Hebridean Archipelago was one of the favourite hunting-grounds of the old "black-birders," and the more recent, but not much more reputable, legalised "labour-vessels." It has also been the chosen ground of a much much higher and nobler enterprise—that of the Melanesian Church Missionary Society, which was founded by Bishop Selwyn some thirty-five years ago, and which has pursued an educational method with much success. The method was—and we believe still is—to send a vessel to make periodical voyages among the islands, with the purpose of taking on board as many of the young natives as could be induced to go. These were then conveyed to the head-quarters on Norfolk Island, where they were educated in secular as well as religious matters, and then sent back to their homes. The influence thus brought to bear upon the native tribes was considerable, and one of its effects was that missionaries were gradually enabled to settle and establish schools, etc., in different parts of the group itself, where previously they dared not set foot. But it is not surprising that the cruises of the missionary vessels and the cruises of the labour-vessels

were frequently confused in the minds of the savages, and the good men had occasionally to expiate the wrongs committed by bad men. The curse of the Pacific has been the "mean white," and it is impossible to estimate the fearful barrier against the spread of civilisation which has been created by the iniquitous "black-birders."

With regard to the Christianised island of Aneiteum, or Anateum, however, the reader must not form too bright a picture. Some ten years ago, Mr. J. W. Anderson, the author of an interesting record of travels in Fiji and New Caledonia, visited this island, and he was distinctly disappointed with the appearance of things. "The people and their houses," he says, "alike looked small and dirty. The houses were inferior to Fiji houses, having the roof often slanting down to the ground, with one side open, and a platform of small branches as the sole piece of furniture. The interiors were characterised by smallness, stuffiness, smokiness, and general uncleanliness. The men wore almost no clothing, and the women very little more, except on Sundays, when "we observed a few decked out in their best finery on their way home from afternoon church. They were dressed in very spacious and ill-fitting straw hats, and wore large, bulging-out garments of the petticoat order, no doubt a recently introduced garb." Mr. Anderson thought them "a stupid lot," and more in a condition for the services of sanitary inspectors than of missionaries. But Mr. Anderson, it may be parenthetically remarked, has throughout his volume many digs at the missionaries.

Mr. Walter Coote, who visited a number of the islands in the company of Bishop Selwyn, gives one a brighter view of their condition. He first went to Vaté or Sandwich Island, in which is the harbour of Havannah, a favourite place of call for men-of-war and trading vessels. This is a fine natural harbour, formed by an island lying across a bay or bight. It is about six miles deep, although narrow, and at the upper end is capital anchorage. At this place there is a station of the Presbyterian mission which, at the time of Mr. Coote's visit, was not making very much progress. We are not greatly surprised to hear this when we are told that the missionary then in charge had been eight years in the place and had never had the curiosity or enterprise to penetrate more than three or four miles into the interior of the island. The native village, however, is, contrary to Mr^e

Anderson's description of Aneiteum villages, described as clean and pretty, and "in front of the missionary's house was a pleasant garden sloping down to the white coral-sand beach, where the tiny waves were tumbling musically."

The Island of Vaté seems to be one of the most attractive of the group, for more attempts at settlement by Europeans have been made there than on the other islands. French, Australians, and Germans have in turn made experiments but, after clearing ground and landing sheep, have in turn abandoned the place. The uncertainty of tenure and the character of the natives, as well as the absence of convenient markets for produce, will no doubt account for the failure of previous efforts at settlement; but probably in Vaté, as well as in several others of the islands, there is a field for European enterprise, if the New Hebrides were under some defined and orderly administration.

The harbour in Vaté has a fine background of hills which, like the rest of the islands, are volcanic, although here inactive. On the Island of Ambrym, however, there is a large volcano, which is believed to rival in size that of Kilauea, in Hawaii; but no white man has ever made the ascent, and the natives dread it.

Another island described by Mr. Coote is Aragh, or Pentecost, a long, narrow island running due north and south, having on the north one good little bay. The hills in this island rise to a height of two thousand feet, and are clothed to the summit with most luxuriant vegetation. The villages are scattered along the shore; and the natives have not a good name, for more than one instance of attacks and murders of boat's crews are credited to them. Still, they are not indisposed to trade, when their suspicions of visitors are allayed; and they have plenty of yams, and maize, and other fruits of the earth to offer. The scenery of Aragh is described as magnificent, and the youths of the island are taught, like the Spartans, from infancy, to draw the bow. Whether the other part of the Spartan education—to speak the truth—is also taught is more than doubtful.

Another interesting island is Maewo, which is called in some of the maps Aurora. This is a favourite place for watering, as there is a beautiful stream forming a double waterfall quite near the shore.

The villages here are located away from

the coast, on the high table-land in the centre, and the natives are comparatively friendly. Of Maewo Mr. Coote says, there is no island in the Pacific to surpass it for natural beauty. He calls it "an earthly Paradise," and is unable to find words to express the loveliness of the scenery.

"The steep hillside up which we climbed was covered with a beautiful convolvulus-like creeper, between which and the black fern and moss-sprinkled rocks we made our way. Now and then at a turn in the zigzag path there would be an opening in the wall of creepers, through which, while resting a moment or two, we could gaze out upon a beautiful scene of blue sea and distant isles. I shall never forget the delight of leaning back against the moss-covered rock in the deep, cool shade, and looking across the path at these lovely pictures with their flower-frames. . . . The path was literally a gallery cut in the rock face, as are the passages of Gibraltar, but the defence afforded was not that of live rock against an enemy's cannon balls, but of thick walls of bright green foliage against a burning sun."

On the level ground above was found a banyan-tree—which was roughly calculated to cover two acres.

A Maewo village, too, is a pleasant contrast to native settlements elsewhere in the group, being located in a wide clearing, clean, and so orderly, that not even a cocoa-nut shell was found lying out of place. About a dozen houses constitute a village, and many of them were fenced with white cane, and all of them had flowering plants or shrubs growing near the door. Some of these flowering shrubs must be magnificent—one with great scarlet flowers; another with cream-coloured honeysuckle blossom; another with bright yellow bells, amid a variegated foliage of crimson, brown, and gold.

The houses of Maewo are small, have no walls, and are more like large hen-coops than anything else. A low doorway leads into the single room, the floor of which is covered with rough mats—all very clean and neat. The natives, however, are far from good-looking, and the clothing is restricted to a banana leaf stuck into a string and tied round the waist. This is for the men. The women wear nothing because of innate bashfulness; they say they are ashamed to wear

any clothing because it makes them so conspicuous!

There is a curious system of club-life, called here "gamal," which prevails largely in the West Pacific, although varying in detail. The boys of a village are sent, as they grow out of childhood, to a common-house—the village "gamal." This is generally in some central position, and there they must eat and sleep. They pay a small fee on entering, and taking their places at the lower end, they work their way upwards, paying a fresh fee as each successive step is gained. The money in Maewo consists of mats which are dried in the smoke of a slow fire so as to become encrusted with a shining black. An old mat in good condition is considered equal in value to a large boar with finely-curved tusks.

The custom of burying alive was universal in the New Hebrides, and even now is frequently practised in parts. Even in Maewo Bishop Selwyn was aware of instances. For burial-places in Maewo they build a little wall of stones round the grave, and plant the enclosure with flowering shrubs. These flower-encircled graves are scattered about the plain on which the villages are built, and have a peculiarly picturesque effect.

The people are chiefly occupied with their yam plantations and taro fields. "Taro is grown, like rice, under a few inches of water, and the irrigation works in connection with these little patches were very elaborate, resembling those of the paddy fields of China."

Near Maewo is the Island of Opa, sometimes called Leper's Island, which is described as magnificently mountainous, the hills rising to four thousand feet, with an outline resembling that of a whale's back. The natives of Opa are better-looking than those of Maewo. The women are very elaborately tattooed and wear their hair cut short, while the men have theirs in well-oiled ringlets. Here the women wear a short skirt, and the men a mat tucked round the waist. The natives of Opa have not a good reputation; but no doubt they have had sad provocation for the massacres of white "traders," with which they have been charged. The "black-birders" hand was against every man, and we cannot wonder that the Pacific Islanders came to regard a white skin and a black heart as inseparable. An Opa village is neither so clean nor so picturesque as a Maewo village. The natives of Opa use the bow and

poisoned arrows; but they also have a few European guns, and know how to use them.

Tanna, the most southerly of the group, except Aneiteum, is nearly circular, stretching, from east to west, about forty, and from north to south, about thirty-five miles. In the centre is a high mountain, richly wooded, and the island throughout has a pleasantly diversified surface. Tanna is also distinguished by a volcano, which Dr. Turner says produces an eruption still every five, seven, or ten minutes, just as it did when Captain Cook first saw it in 1774. These regular eruptions are supposed to be caused by the steady inflow of water from an inland lake through a crevice on the west side of the volcano, and they answer the purpose of a lighthouse. Dr. Turner estimated the population of this island at ten or twelve thousand, the people being of middle stature and of the colour of an old copper coin. They have more of the negro cast of countenance than Papuan tribes usually have, but there are good-looking men and women among them. They paint their faces with red earth, which they get from the neighbouring islands of Aneiteum and Erromango. They frizzle their hair, and the men especially carry hair-dressing into a fine art. Dr. Turner says he counted no fewer than seven hundred separate curls on the head of one young exquisite! A similar practice prevails on the other islands of Aneiteum, Nina, and Futuna, and Dr. Livingstone has noted a somewhat similar practice of twisting the hair into innumerable small spiral curls, among the Banyai of Central Africa. The people of Tanna are fond of ornaments, but not of very much clothing. They do not tattoo, but they wear fearful and wonderful tortoiseshell arrangements in their ears. They seem to live in a chronic state of war, or they did when Dr. Turner was there, for they were fighting among themselves during five out of the seven months of his residence. But they seem to have no great Chief or King, and the authority of an ordinary Chief does not extend a gunshot beyond his own dwelling, which may be the centre of a settlement containing eight or ten families. A Chief may have two or three wives, seldom more; and the women do all the work of the plantation as well as of the household. Here, as elsewhere in the group, yams, taro, breadfruit, cocoanuts, sugar-cane, and bananas are abundant, and form the chief food of the people. They have no idols, and the banvan tree forms their sacred

grove; but the real gods are the disease-makers, the rain-makers, the thunder-makers, and the mosquito-makers, of whom the disease-makers are the most dreaded and the most propitiated.

To the north of Tanna is Erromango, containing a kindred race to that of Tanna, but scattered, and without any well-ordered villages. In this island there are two distinct languages, and the customs are much like those of Tanna. In this island Mr. Brenchley, who was there in 1865, says that the government is patriarchal and the chieftainship hereditary; but that since the decimation of the population the island has been in the hands of petty Chiefs, who have usually much power for evil and little for good. The exports of the island were then sandal-wood and—women. The current price of a damsel was then two guns, or about five pounds. Erromango is the third largest island of the group, being some thirty miles long and twenty-five broad.

It is impossible, however, within the limits of an ordinary article to refer to all the members of the group, and, indeed, of the more northerly islands not much has been recorded, although they are frequently visited by labour-vessels and men-of-war.

Whatever has been done towards the civilising of the New Hebrides, has been done by British efforts and British money. Sir Andrew Clarke (Agent-General of Victoria), estimates that one hundred and sixty thousand pounds have been spent by British subjects in building churches and supporting missionaries; and there can be little doubt that if the islands were to fall into the hands of the French, whatever good has resulted from this outlay would rapidly be neutralised.

In conclusion we may summarise the result of British toil, and money, and blood in the words of the Rev. Mr. Paton—one of the best-known of the noble army of Polynesian missionaries:

“Ten of the native languages have been reduced to a written form, and other four are being reduced to writing. The Bible is translated, printed, and now read by those who were once cannibals, in ten different languages. Eight thousand natives profess Christianity; family worship is regularly, night and morning, conducted in every Christian family, and all things are rapidly changing under the blessed light and power of the Gospel. Life and property are now safe on the fifteen islands

occupied by missionaries, and comparatively safe on the whole group.”

What would be the character of the security if the New Hebrides were made now a depôt for French convicts?

THE CHILDREN OF MYSTERY.

SOMETIME, towards the end of the fourteenth or beginning of the fifteenth century, there suddenly, and almost simultaneously, appeared on the horizon of nearly every country in Europe, and in parts of the other continents, before the astonished gaze of the original dwellers therein, a group of olive-hued, oriental-featured, fantastically-attired people, the like of whom had not before been seen.

Their appearance, their manners, their habits differed from those of any foreign travellers hitherto. A haughty, proud, exclusive people; seeking no companionship, satisfying no curiosity; living an outdoor existence, and pitching their brown, squalid, but picturesque tents where a spring of water gurgled through the hedgerow, or where a bare rock rose up, affording a natural shelter from the keen east winds.

At first they were looked upon with suspicion, as something more than intruders; but when it was found that their ostensible simple handicraft of weaving straw and rushes, of mending carts and tinkering pots and pans came in often as a useful help to the housewife far from a town or village, that they interfered with no legitimate trade nor established any rights, they were let alone. Here to-day, there to-morrow, generally, however, revolving round a wide circle, they were a constant source of wonder and “fearful joy” to the youth of the neighbourhood, who stole out to peep at the strangers through the greenery of their woodland home or the rents in their brown tents; to thrust in a hand containing a coin, and listen open-eyed and open-mouthed to the tale of that future which wiser men have longed to forecast.

Down the long centuries we look in vain for authentic information regarding this people, so distinct in their type and their personality from all other tribes and nations. History is silent on this subject; tradition has nothing substantial to tell us. The mere mention of wandering nomadic tribes under nearly every sky is given, but of their origin, their birthplace, the reason of their going forth from their native land

and spreading over the world, the spell which lay on them whose potency was such that they "folded their tents and silently stole away," no man knows anything, and all that as yet is ascertained is hazard, deduction, or conjecture.

Was it a curse? Was it the inevitable, mysterious law of the visitation on the children of the fathers' sins, which caused the patriarchs of this tribe to go forth from the sunny, luxuriant plains of Asia or Africa—more probably the former—awe-struck, trembling, fulfilling some doom laid on them ages before, which made them tear up the deeply-twining roots of love of country, of home, and kindred, and parting from each other with no hope of reunion, silently, sadly—each tribe and family apart—separate, some east, some west, some north, some south, to follow out a precarious existence in perverse climates and under alien skies?

If facts are denied us we can picture the scene. The glowing level rays of an oriental sunset lighting up the dark, gleaming eyes of the fathers of the tribe, as they raise their voices in trembling blessing—a blessing which has more of a doom in its utterance—the merry gambols of the unconscionable, lithe-limbed babies, marking a bitter contrast to the anguish depicted on the faces of their parents; set lips, stern with the desire to conceal their suffering, eyes glaring revenge on their wrongs, and cheeks pale at the coming parting. They swear to keep separate; to sully their race with no alien blood; to speak, amongst themselves, at least, no foreign tongue; to worship no strange god; to bow down to no monarch; to acknowledge no law; to live in the world yet not of it—a strange, separate, melancholy, proud, and yet light-hearted and careless race.

This is what I imagine they promised themselves to do, a difficult thing in this world where lesser tribes are swallowed up in larger nations; where old families dwindle and lose their identity, mingling with the coarser, healthier, more numerous common stock; where the dominant power swallows up all individuality, and the conquered race merges into the family of the conqueror. But this one tribe has done it. To-day their characteristics are as strongly marked as they were centuries ago. They have not lost the keen, searching, filmy eye; the tawny, swarthy skin; the sensitive hand, with its long taper fingers; the lithe, lissom figure; the fiery, passionate nature.

Meet them where you will—in Spain or Norway, in Hungary, Wallachia, or Scotland, in Italy or Epping Forest, in the arid deserts of Morocco or the snow-swept steppes of Russia, there is no mistaking the Gypsy face, the Gypsy blood, or character. They all understand the same language, that of Romany, subject though of course it is to variations in dialect, and tinged and interspersed by the language of their several adopted countries.

Even their name is shrouded in mystery. Nearly a century before they appeared in Britain they were known in France as "Bohémiens" or "Égyptiens," and for long they were popularly supposed to hail originally from Egypt; but philologists and antiquarians differ as to their nationality. There is a faint traceable likeness in the names given to them in different lands: "I Zingari" of Italy, the "Gitanos" of Spain, the "Tzigan" of Hungary, the "Gypsy" of England. They are as ignorant of their origin as we are; they have no archives, no family history, no possessions, no patrimony, no literature.

Perhaps they were the cursed descendants of Ham; perhaps the posterity of that first outcast wanderer, Ishmael, whom jealousy and injustice drove out to the wilderness to give a name to the hapless pariahs of society to time immemorial—"their hand against every man's, and every man's hand against theirs." Or were they wandering Bedouins, wandering first by choice and then by necessity, till habit grew to second nature, and grown too numerous to find their needful prey on their native soil, they spread over the known world? A dreamy mystery, deep as their own dark eyes, surrounds them; a halo of antiquity on which history has thrown no side light; they are a people complete, individual, separate, with no rights, no titles, not even a home.

They come a silent, slowly-increasing, pertinacious procession down the long avenue of nearly five centuries; they tell no secrets—perhaps they have none to tell—the same spell lies on them to-day which lay on them hundreds of years ago, and it drives them still, as it drove them then, to wander on.

The Gypsy has been contemned, despised, and lightly spoken of; he has been persecuted and killed, as in the time of Elizabeth, for the supposed hiding of proscribed priests. Whatever has happened of lawlessness in his vicinity has been attributed to him; his name has been a synonym with vagrant thief.

murderer, witch ; and yet in the long run, judged by comparison and taking into consideration his ignorance and lack of any education, his almost savage existence, his virtues have been as many as his vices.

And here I must warn my readers against confounding the Gypsy proper, as I am trying to paint him, with the far more numerous tribe who are classed unthinkingly under the generic name of "Gypsy"—tramps, tinkers, showmen, Irish itinerant dealers in wares, people who travel about in caravans, and who are generally the embodiment of brutality and vice. The Gypsy proper despises these spurious branches of the tribe ; they have adopted a few words of his language certainly, but he calls them "the dirty people," and they rank with all other "Gorgios" in his estimation—only a trifle lower. The real "Romany chal and Romany chie" (sons and daughters of Rom) are being "moved" off the scene by the active exertions of the rural police ; laws are coming into force which will oblige them (happily) to educate their children ; but it is a matter of deep regret to think that a closer association of late years with "Gorgios" has robbed them of their acknowledged and fairest virtues—the sobriety of their men and the chastity of their women—which were at once the pride of their tribe and the admiration of a more civilized but less moral people.

The Gypsies have from earliest times taken up the innocent trades of mending, tinkering, and such like ; but, mingled with these, and found to be a more fruitful source of profit, were the less legitimate trades of horse-dealing (where they "tinkered" the horses to some purpose) and fortune-telling. In this latter capacity the Gypsy has been much blamed, but, sooth to say, I think his dupes have been quite as blameworthy.

From the results of these professions he provides the simple necessities of existence. Sticks and turf are the produce and property of his great mother earth, so he considers he has a right to them ; rabbits and hares, his companions—are they not children of Nature like himself?—and he sees no harm in snaring a few. The alien biped animals who walk about are by some instinct his natural enemies, and he is ready to take advantage of them if they fall into his clutches. So he promises a handsome wife or husband to the young and fair ; a long journey and riches in a far country to the strong and eager ; a mysterious destiny, crossed by

many lines, to the melancholy-eyed and dreamy ; and a short shrift to the old and weary. If he does these things, is not the material ready to his hand ? And if he works upon the credulity of the crowd around him, is he the only one ? And have we not some compensation, even if we are cheated in a small way, in his very existence ? Is not our artistic taste gratified by the blue smoke curling from the brown, picturesque tent, and losing itself in the denser blue sky ! Look at the lithe, graceful figure of this youth striking the unconscious beauty of a Southerner's attitude against the rugged tent-door ; look at that slip of a girl, unkempt, ragged, but with the promise of exceeding beauty in the white gleam of close-set teeth, and the soft eyes glowing in the oval, tawny face, full of the free, joyous abandon of untrammelled childhood.

Many a man might be proud to woo such a bride when the child will have merged in the woman, and the maiden's pride will deck her hair with pale June roses from the hedgerow, or the flaming red leaves of autumn's colouring, and a shy look will soften those bold black eyes. But the maiden will be true to her tribe. She has the instinctive abhorrence of a "fair face," a "Gorgio"—a dislike fostered by her tribe, especially by its male members ; nay, even if her heart did waver in its allegiance, and were stolen, perhaps unawares, by a white face, obedience—even to her untutored, half savage mind—is a higher law than love ; and she too, wild creature of the woods, has to learn alike with her Gentile sisters the universal, bitter lesson, that duty and pleasure are not always synonymous, and that self-sacrifice and self-abnegation are the rule of life, above all of woman's life.

Novelists from 'time' immemorial have made this—the love of a "Gorgio" for a Gypsy girl—a pet incident in their tales. Stolen interviews, secret marriages, abducted heirs, lords of high degree changed at birth, have figured largely amongst imaginary circumstances ; but, although such unions have taken place they have been exceedingly rare, and the girl who consented to such a marriage has been thrown off by her tribe, and has had to choose between the handsome lover, whom she has known for a few short weeks, and the people who have twined themselves in the very fibres of her being in a manner well-nigh ineradicable. Google

She may prove false to her kindred and

wed the "Gorgio," but frequently she pines and dries. Bare walls and oaken beams choke the breast whose every breath was the wide air of heaven; her impatient feet drag heavily on a carpet, which heretofore scarcely brushed the dew from the flowery grass; her long eyelashes droop over the slow consuming fire of "life's fitful fever"; eyes, which had blazed and flashed with admiration of every living thing under heaven's own blue, are heavy with unshed tears; the voice which had sounded thrilling and sweet as she sang under a moonlit sky, breaks tremulous and ghostly in a curtained room: and the lover who had taken this wild bird to his bosom, finds her beating her bruised and drooping wings in her narrow cage.

Of religion, sad to say, the Gypsies have little or none, as we know it. They have not learnt, and they care not to learn. Some notable exceptions there are, who teach their children the Lord's Prayer, which is translated into their language, and allow them to attend Sunday school when they are some time in the neighbourhood of one. But they have a rooted objection to churches; and some of them lay a curse on their children, if they break the promise they extort from them on their death-beds, that they will not bury them in a churchyard.

In common with all savage, uncivilised nations, they speak of and know a Great Spirit, to whom they look up and whom they try to propitiate; but the idea of Him is so overlaid with superstition, with a belief in lesser powers, fairies, brownies, kelpies, omens, that even this vague worship is incomplete. They resent intrusion, but at the same time have met the advance of Christian teachers with a gracious and dignified, if somewhat condescending manner.

They have no ambition, for they have never striven to rise; and, strange to say, any special talent or cleverness among them has been found on the female side. As a rule the women are far quicker in intellect than the men. They have made money, some of them; but the only manner in which we know it to have been spent is in silken coverlets for some of the low divans in the tents of the Queen; in silver jugs in which they fetched milk from the neighbouring farm; in gay dresses; in jewels, coins, and amulets, which they sport at fairs and races, or at some of their evening gatherings.

Unlike the peasantry of nearly every

European nation, they have produced no genius, no poet, no painter. Of the Gitanos there is nothing recorded to indicate a rise in life, save that at some foreign Court in olden time the fiery glance of a magician or astrologer betrayed his Gypsy origin. Ignorant without being brutalised; the natural kingliness of their dispositions keeping them from utter degradation; contented if the needs of to-day are satisfied; forecasting the future, dim yet vivid with all possibilities; having no grand past to revere; each generation passes its life as the preceding one has done, and dying, leaves no trace behind it, no "footprints on the sands of time."

Where are their graves? Have they no Macpelah to which they carry their dead, no God's acre or holy ground? No. In lonely woodland glades; by mossy tarns as well as beneath palm trees; by wild, sea-girt shores as well as by the blue waters of the Mediterranean, there are dotted solitary mounds, where, with many a wailing sob and all the prolonged noisy accompaniment of Oriental mourning, they have laid their dead to rest, and lapped the green sod over the fierce, hot hearts, which are stilled for ever in their unhallowed graves.

And so they dance and play through life, dancing the gay "cachuka" to the sound of the tambourine and castanet in Spain, threading with swift winged feet the giddy mazes of the "tarantella" in Italy; singing the gay light songs of the Troubadour, whose soul would have loved to see such living embodiments of his verse.

Two years ago, in London, a band of Tzigans, from Hungary, came over with curious instruments, discoursing the strangest, sweetest, wildest music, and no fashionable party was deemed complete without those weird, brightly-clad, dark-eyed, Gypsies forming part of the entertainment.

I was told by one who was thrown by accident into the company of a Gitana in Spain, that her eyes, of the largest, blackest type, had such an extraordinary power over him, that, when she stared into his, it was exactly as if he were obliged to sit motionless under some wizard's spell, paralysed as if by some narcotic; and that when by sheer force of will he had risen, shaken the feeling off, and left the place where she was, he felt that her fierce, strong, uncontrolled nature might have compelled him to anything.

I was on one occasion rather anxious to

have my fortune told by a wandering body of most respectable-looking Gypsies, but the clergyman in whose house I was staying, considered they were in league with the Evil One, and requested me to hold no communication with them. I visited them, however. One woman seized my hand, and began the usual preliminary jargon about the line of life being crossed by diverse evil fortune (that I knew for myself), but if I would cross the palm with silver she would tell me, etc., etc.

I assured myself that she could have no knowledge of my individual history, and yet the straight, stern gaze of those deep, mysterious filmy eyes, flashing with piercing intensity into mine, filled me with the "creepy" sensation of being in the presence of something uncanny. Touching this same disputed question as to whether any knowledge they have possessed in bygone ages, or are credited with forecasting now, is derived from the powers of evil, I have little to say; and in this age, sweeping away as it does all old customs, old traditions, old superstitions (pretty, if perhaps somewhat foolish), old fasts and festivals, what I can say will have little weight, as every man must judge from his own point of view, or form conclusions from his own experiences.

We know that some evil powers exercise a wide-spread influence in the spiritual world; how can we tell that they do not exercise an occult influence on the material and moral world?

Science has not yet probed all mysteries. Perhaps the Psychical Research Society, lately sprung into existence, and most actively conducting its enquiries, may be able in the future to explain the peculiar reputed powers of the Gypsy.

I only know two instances where the curse of one of those wandering prophets fell with a dire and unerring stroke on two blameless families. In the one case the head of the family had refused alms, and incurred the fierce anger of the beggar; in the other, the seer was evidently the involuntary medium through whom the curse came, and, like Balaam of old, was compelled to speak the words which, perhaps, fell reluctant from his tongue.

Their language is a strange intermixture of different tongues: Sanskrit, Hindustani, Persian, Wallachian; the paucity of words it contains eked out by words of the countries in which they wander. Their counting is most primitive; they can only count to six. Seven is represented by two threes and one; eight by two fours, etc., etc.

They have favourite places in the various countries they affect, which they make their head-quarters, sallying out in different directions to pursue their avocations: the men horsedealing, the women "dukking" (telling fortunes), or "caur-ing" (filching coins from a till, with their long, flexible fingers), persuading foolish maidens, as happened only a few months ago in Surrey, to buy love philtres to lure back the affection of an errant lover. In this case the draught not having the desired effect, the girl applied to a magistrate to prosecute the woman who had sold it to her. The lover must, we conclude, have been worthless, for she rated the loss of her half-crown higher than the loss of the reluctant swain!

Epping Forest and Norwood; Battersea and Wandsworth; some parts of Yorkshire; and Yetholm in Scotland, where the Faes, the heads of the Scotch Gypsies, long resided, are some of their favourite haunts.

In former days a common accusation against them was the stealing of noblemen's and gentlemen's children. A few scattered cases, for the sake of a ransom or the carrying out of revenge for some injury, may have occurred; but it is the old story of popular delusion and popular prejudice, the most difficult things in the world to rid oneself of. "Give a dog an ill name, and you may hang him," says the old proverb; and to the end of time children will be warned against straying near Gypsies' tents, or they will infallibly be stolen.

To tell the truth, a Gypsy encampment is generally overburdened with children already, without their adding more to feed and care for.

Their love of tribe and family is profound; "waters cannot quench it." Their jealousy is in the same proportion; it is "cruel as the grave." The songs they sing are light, and frivolous, and gay; laughter and moonlight, dancing and love, wedded to merry tinkling music. Their dress—originally a gay one, and still pre-eminently so in some countries—has naturally had to adapt itself, like their speech, to their environments. Like some species of the lower animal world, both bird and beast, they have taken their tone from the colouring of their surroundings.

But even in cold, foggy Britain, an uncongenial soil in which to take root and live their out-of-door and romantic life, the scarlet Gypsy cloak and gay kerchief tied over the black hair, was long a feature in the landscape, delighting many an artist's

eye and awing many a trembling child. Their names number some good ones amongst them, and are nearly all pretty: Boswell, Hearn, Cooper, Lee, Lovel, Stanley. In Scotland Reads, Tates, and Andersons abound.

But, as I said before, the genuine Gypsy is being swept away before the quick march of nineteenth-century civilisation—let us hope for his future good—or, forgetful of his old stern rule of separateness, he is being slowly merged in the hideous horde of "Hindity mengré"—literally, "dirty, sordid fellow"—whose brutal language and foul habits, whose degraded ignorance and want of decency, are a disgrace to a civilised and Christian nation.

VICTIMS.

By THEO GIFT.

Author of "*Lil Lorimer*," "*An Alibi and its Price*,"
Etc., Etc.

CHAPTER XXXI.

THE FLICKERING OF A LAMP WHEN THE OIL IS GONE.

VERA'S reason had fled, but her life was saved, perhaps because of that very fact, the snapping of that frail intangible link between the mere physical life, and all that makes life real and valuable. Fever of mind and body had indeed worn her to the very verge of the grave; but no sooner was the connection between the two severed than, as often happens in such cases, the emancipated body seemed to mend and recover of itself, and to recover health and strength in a manner which would have been actually impossible under other and happier circumstances.

Perhaps the word "happier" is a wrong one, however; for, whatever she might have suffered in the past, whatever those who loved her might suffer seeing her at present, Vera herself was perfectly happy now. All the horror and anguish, the perplexities, fears, and misery of the last month were blotted out, and in her own fancy she was back in Guernsey, in the pleasant lodgings to which her new-made husband had taken her, waiting for his return from an errand on which he had gone for her benefit.

What the errand was she did not seem clearly to know. It was connected with a telegram and "fetching some one;" but she was not even impatient for him. He would be back soon. He had only been gone

"a little while," and she was "so tired, so very tired after the voyage." She would like to go to sleep a little. He had told her to sleep till he came back, and whispering this in faint and broken murmurs, but with a placid smile on her pale lips all the while—the first, Heaven help her! that had rested there since they thrilled to Marston's good-bye kiss in the little cottage parlour—she fell asleep again, and slept, waking now and then for more or less brief intervals, to take food, or utter a few disconnected words, during the greater part of the night and day that followed.

Of course it was not possible for the others to realise all at once what had happened. Even Leah thought the girl was still only wandering from weakness and such remains of the fever as clung to her, and said as much so as to allay the dismay and disappointment which had succeeded to poor Madame St. Laurent's momentary gladness; but when the doctor, who had been sent for, came, there was something in the startled flash which passed across his face as he bent over Vera, took her hand, and spoke to her, which filled the hearts of the two women watching him with a nameless dread, which was increased still more by the absence of anything like recognition in the patient's answering gaze.

He asked her how she was, and she replied, but with a certain air of reserve, even through her extreme feebleness, as to a stranger who had no business there; and even Leah's well-loved face, her tender words and caresses, met with the same blank response. She did not repulse them, it is true; rather it seemed as if they soothed and gave her pleasure. Her small wasted hand rested with evident content in that of her friend, and a pleased light came into her eyes when Leah spoke to her; but it faded again when the voice ceased, the heavy eyelids fell wearily over her eyes, and she dropped off to sleep again, leaving the doctor free to whisper to Madame St. Laurent that she was not to be frightened or distressed, for her daughter was not only better, but far less weak than he had at all hoped to find her.

But he took Leah out of the room with him, and in a few plain words put her in possession of the real state of the case, a reality which the girl already suspected, though to hear her unspoken dread confirmed by a competent authority filled her with a grief, which almost made the kind-hearted physician repent of his plain-spokenness.

"Come, come," he said at last, "this is wrong, Mademoiselle. You grieve, then, that your friend lives, for I tell you plainly that if the mind had not given way she must have died. The body cannot live without sleep, and when the mind has been so tortured and overstrained that sleep is no longer possible, either the body breaks down and death supervenes, or Nature in very mercy steps in, looses the restless, frenzied intellect from the fleshly cell which its struggles are destroying, and so leaves the latter to the dreamless tranquillity, the blessed peace and rest without which it could not continue to exist. Had Madame la Comtesse awakened to the full possession of her faculties, do you think she would have smiled as she did just now, when the first benefit which she might have derived from her senses would have been the tidings, which you may hear the newsboys in the streets shouting even now, of the sentence pronounced on her lover for causing the death of her husband, the Comte de Mailly?"

"The—the sentence, Monsieur!" Leah faltered, and turned as white as death. Her very heart seemed to stand still for a moment.

"Yes, a light one to my mind, though heavy perhaps, when it is considered how often duelling is passed over unpunished in this country. M. Marslan is sentenced to three months' imprisonment, and I hear he brought even that on himself by the obstinacy with which he persisted in avowing that he meant to kill his rival, and that if the latter had declined his challenge after the first beating, he should have beaten him again and shot him afterwards. Such vindictiveness of language is not decent after one's antagonist is dead; also it is foolish and unbecoming at any time in a man of discretion."

"He had been wronged too terribly for discretion, Monsieur. The Comte de Mailly had robbed him of his wife."

"Truly! Ah, it is a sad story, perhaps; but, Mademoiselle, you are trembling all over. I have told you this news too suddenly, forgetting that the gentleman is probably your friend. Yet in that case you must have known that his trial was to commence yesterday."

"Yes, Monsieur, I knew it, but—I had forgotten. I had indeed!" Leah said, with a momentary gleam of pride in her eyes, at which the doctor wondered. In truth, she was wondering at herself, at the victory over the past weakness which had been

complete enough to enable her so entirely to forget the crisis through which the man she loved was passing in her devoted watch over the woman to whom his love was given. And now that crisis was over; over in both cases; and Marstrand was a prisoner, and Vera mad! Could any ending be more sad? The momentary pleasure died out in a rush of hot tears, and her heart seemed to break with pity and indignation as she thought of it.

With regard to Vera, however, the doctor had some comfort to give. He would not say that the injury to the brain was permanent or incurable. On the contrary, he thought that with time and restoration to health and strength, above all with tranquillity and avoidance of everything which could excite or agitate her, the unhappy girl might by degrees recover the use of her reason; for which end, as he frankly observed, it might be as well that this "Monsieur Marslan, the fire-eater," was out of the way.

"But, Monsieur," said Leah, "she loves him. She watches for his coming. It is that only—you saw it yourself—that is in her mind. Surely if she were to see and recognise him——"

"And if she were to see and not recognise him! What then, Mademoiselle? Your last hope would be over; and in the other case there would be a shock, and any shock would be fatal to her in her present weak state. Believe me that for the time, at any rate, and until her bodily health is completely re-established, it is better that there should be no risk of anything of the sort."

And Leah tried to believe him and feel resigned; though it was hard to do so when, by the very next post she received a letter from Marstrand, written before the conclusion of his case, and brimming over with heartiest thanks and blessings for her goodness in going to his poor little wife's assistance.

"For now that I know my darling is in your care," he wrote, "and that I can hear of her from you direct, I feel as if the news must be better; as if the love which, even in her delirium cried out for you, must be potent enough to enable you to save her; and that is all I ask; all I care for now. My one thought in this maddening detention is of her, and now gratitude to you is mingled with it and makes it easier to bear. May Heaven bless and reward you!"

And the news that she had to send him was, that the Vera he had loved and known he might in all possibility never know

again; that the worst misfortune life holds in store—worse a thousand times than death itself—had fallen upon her! Truly it was hard indeed, and she needed all the comfort of that blessing to strengthen her for it.

As for the agony of the strong man when the tidings reached him, no matter how gently broken, or with what words of hope and cheering, it is best to draw a curtain over it. The doctor was right in thinking that prison was the safest place for him just then.

He was right also in thinking that Vera could not stand anything like a shock, as was proved in the course of the next few days by a rather curious incident. On her first seeing Joanna, she had smiled at her in friendly fashion and presently had addressed her as "Mrs. Nicholls," as she did her mother, testifying rather oddly thereby that she had been able in her insanity to recognise the likeness which, patent enough even to strangers, had never seemed to attract her attention through all the years that they had lived together. But no one was prepared for the natural sequence of this confusion of identities, or for seeing the invalid start up in bed with a faint scream the first time she chanced to see Madame St. Laurent and Joanna talking together in the room, and then cower among the clothes, exclaiming in tones of terror:

"Two of them! Two Mrs. Nichollses! Oh! it isn't real. It couldn't be. I don't like it. I am afraid. Oh! take the two away."

She was trembling from head to foot, and so frightened and hysterical that it took both time and trouble to soothe her and restore the feeble strength thus easily shaken; but after that Madame and Joanna took care never to let her see them at the same time; and though for a little while there was something nervous and suspicious in the way in which she glanced at either of them, this passed off, and she again called them both "Mrs. Nicholls," as before. Also it became evident very early that she considered it a decided liberty for them to address her as Vera, observing with mild severity that her name was "Mrs. Maratland," and playing rather demonstratively with her bright new wedding ring (the Count's, alas! not Maratland's) as she said it.

Madame St. Laurent submitted with wonderful docility. Indeed, much to Leah's surprise, Vera's mother seemed of all the others the one most able to take comfort

from the present aberration in her daughter's intellect, and to be resigned and submissive under it. In truth, the very intolerableness of the remorse and misery she had gone through; from the time when, driven by her husband and her own miserable false shame and love of appearances, she had consented to deceive and coerce her daughter into what her own conscience told her was a sin before Heaven and man, to those awful days when the betrayed and frantic girl lay between life and death, shrieking out reproaches on her, shuddering from her touch or neighbourhood, appealing to Heaven, to Maratland, Leah, any one, for protection from her; was something so terrible to this unhappy woman, that the present calm and quiet—the fact that she had not actually killed her child; that Vera could still smile in her old way, still speak in her old, soft, placid tones; and that these smiles, these tones, were for her as well as others—seemed like a haven of repose, a healing balm to the mother's sad and pardon-seeking soul. To see her daughter happy, and herself absolved and loved once more, was indeed the one strong desire of her soul at present. To gain it she would have done anything, and yielded anything; and in the present state of things, which she persisted in looking on as only a temporary phase in her daughter's illness, she fancied she saw an earnest of that fervently-prayed-for future, and was ready to call, or to be called by Vera any name the latter pleased; to praise Maratland and listen to his praises; to discuss twenty times a day the probability of his returning within the next half hour; and twenty times a day to invent a fresh reason for his not doing so; to agree that the tall poplar swaying in the breeze outside the window was the chimney of Le Geyt's factory; and the green lawn below the terrace the harbour of St. Peter's—in fact, to humour every whim and fancy of the poor, demented girl with a cheerful docility which would have been almost ludicrous at times if it had not been always so pathetic, and which had at least the reward of winning her a most friendly liking from the hapless object of her devotion.

But it was Leah alone who had any real influence over the patient—Leah, whom she loved best, and to whom she clung with an affection which made her always joyous and tranquil in her presence and fretful and depressed when she was away—Leah, who seemed to draw out whatever sparks of intelligence and memory still lingered

in the poor, distracted brain. And yet Vera did not always know her, could not even remember her identity for long when reminded of it. At first, indeed, if Leah came into the room quietly, or sat down by her without speaking, the sick girl would stare at her blankly as at a stranger, though with a puzzled, anxious look, as though it were someone she had known, but whose name and appearance she had forgotten. Then, if Leah began to sing, the anxious look would deepen into distress, and her eyes would fill with tears, while she stared wildly about her, muttering that someone was calling her—someone she wanted—a voice, oh! whose voice was it? But when the singer took her in her arms, and told her it was Leah—did she not know her? her own friend Leah—all Vera's distress vanished, and she clung to the Jewish girl with eager kisses and caresses, asking when had she come? and had Marstrand sent her? and was he coming too? and chattering away until, from very happiness she tired herself out, and dropped asleep with a laugh still on her lips.

Yet, when she woke again, she had forgotten all about it, had forgotten afresh who Leah was, and had to be sung to and reminded all over again; and this, day after day—for every new day at present was a repetition of the last, so far at any rate as her mental condition was concerned. It seemed as if a certain limited set of ideas—as that she was with Mrs. Nicholls at Guernsey, waiting for Marstrand's return, and that Leah had come to her there—seemed tolerably fixed in her mind; but everything else was a confused jumble, changing and forgotten with each passing mood. Of time in especial she seemed to have lost all cognisance. Each fresh day was the day "he" went away; each fresh night the night "he" was to come back; and the difficulty with her, as she got stronger, and able to struggle for her own way, was to induce her to go to bed or sit down to a meal instead of waiting until "he" came.

"He will think it so rude and unkind," she said plaintively; and it was only when she was reminded that Leah was tired or hungry, when the latter assured her that Marstrand would be angry if they waited, that she would give in.

On another point she was more obstinate. Nothing (even when she was quite well enough to go out) would induce her to leave the Châlet, even for a drive in the fresh air. "He" had told her to wait for

him, and if he came while she was away he would miss her; and each attempt to persuade or coerce her into the contrary produced such hysterical distress that the doctors were fain to decide that it would be better to allow her to have her own way and remain where she was, so long as her physical health did not suffer from the confinement.

This, then, was the life to which Leah had committed herself for the present—an indefinite present, as it seemed—for, though her own family were urgent in endeavouring to persuade her to return, and not wear herself out in watching what seemed to be a hopeless case, Leah herself felt that—with Marstrand relying so frankly on her fidelity to her trust, and Vera depending on her for everything, clinging to her hand and following her with her eyes—it would be impossible for her to forsake, even for a brief rest, the duties which she had imposed upon herself.

Most assuredly, too, Madame St. Laurent did not wish her to do so. Vera's mother felt neither coldness nor jealousy now towards the girl who had supplanted her in her daughter's affections; nothing, indeed, but a warm and almost humble gratitude, which was intensified by the delicacy with which Leah treated her; for, whatever opinion the latter might have of her hostess's past conduct, it was impossible for her to keep up either coldness or anger with a person so palpably penitent, so bowed and sorrow-stricken, and who was besides associated with her daily and hourly in the same labours of love, the same cares, the same anxieties. By tacit consent, as it were, the cruel and shameful story which Joanna had revealed was never alluded to between them, though Leah did manage to learn (and the knowledge made her task easier) that, while Madame was aware that Marstrand had returned to the lodgings and had written what was probably an explanation of his mysterious departure from them, her husband and the Count had never allowed her to see the letters or become acquainted with the contents, and, while exacting from her strict compliance with their arrangements, had treated her with little more confidence than her unhappy child.

"She guessed, of course, from Mounseer's very precautions, that young Marstrand was following 'em up," Joanna said; "but likewise she knew that if Vera got wind of it, and refused to marry the Count he'd have left no stone unturned, in

his revenge, to ruin them and blacken the pore girl's name; and to see the gentility she'd been all them years building up, and her daughter, maybe, took from her, and her husband set agen' her for life, was more than she'd courage to stand, pore soul. She'd always a mortal dread of being looked down on, had Jane."

Fortunately for Leah's comfort, they saw nothing of M. St. Laurent. He kept away, ostensibly because he would not enter a house contaminated by the presence of the woman to whom he chose to attribute the whole of Vera's errors and afflictions; but, in reality, from a species of selfish remorse which made him shrink from the sight of his helpless victim in the condition to which his tyranny had reduced her; and because he was more than sufficiently occupied by the pressure of his pecuniary embarrassments and the fierce litigation which he had already commenced with the deMaily family on the score of Vera's claims.

No one at the Châlet wanted him. Leah, indeed, in her horror and indignation at his conduct, would not have met or spoken to him; and Vera had never uttered his name save once or twice, and then in such a terrified whisper, and with such an expression of wild and abject fear, that Madame St. Laurent was as anxious as Leah to keep him away. Nay, she was, perhaps, more so indeed; for, as soon as Vera was fairly convalescent, Miss Josephs had made it clearly understood that if she was to remain at the Châlet, and continue her care of the invalid, it was to be admitted that these cares were for George Marstland's "wife," as also that, when the young man's term of imprisonment was over, Madame would put no obstacle in the way of his seeing her daughter, should the doctors think it advisable for him to do so; nor of the legalising of their union, if, indeed, poor Vera were ever to recover her intellects sufficiently for such an event to be possible.

So passed the summer away. A strange, sad, monotonous summer, shut up within the four walls of a suburban villa; listening to the disjointed prattle of a demented girl, coaxing her to eat and sleep; watching with her for an imaginary footstep; throwing pebbles with her into an imaginary sea; and deriving such poor comfort as it possessed from the smiles on the poor child's lips, the colour in her cheeks, and the almost infantile gaiety and content which for the most part she manifested.

There were times, however (rare ones

certainly and brief of duration), when this gaiety gave way to a kind of blank, unreasoning terror, refusals to eat or drink, a bewildered stare of incomprehension of everything that was said to her, crouching in corners, and vague mutterings about "blood, blood," or some nameless, unspeakable horror with which someone (she never named the Count; never, save at these times seemed to remember he had existed) was threatening her. On some of these occasions she became actually violent and needing to be restrained from injuring herself; but every physician, who was consulted on the subject, declared that such seizures, distressing as they might be at the time, were rather of hopeful augury than otherwise, as proving that the intelligence was dormant, not extinguished, and, therefore, likely to revive at some future time if not unduly stimulated in the present. For that reason they all joined in deprecating anything like a shock or strong excitement; and as the time for Marstland's liberation was drawing near, Leah wrote very sorrowfully to acquaint him with this, and to tell him that the doctors were all of opinion that it would not be advisable for him, even when free, to risk a visit to the Châlet for some time yet to come, or without much and careful preparation.

She little knew what was to happen before that time came!

It was quite sudden. Vera caught a chill, in the first week of September, from getting out of bed one night, unheard by her mother, who slept in the same room, and, sitting by the open window in her thin night-dress, and for several days afterwards she was very ill, confined to her bed and suffering from a severe cough and some fever and delirium. Care and proper remedies, however, got the better of the malady; but as they did so all noticed that a great change had come over her. Her bright tranquillity was gone. She seemed nervous and depressed; complained of having been removed into a strange room, and of not being able to hear the sea, would not allow Leah to leave her side for a moment, and was only partly pacified by her presence and soothing. Nay, even then a slight thing nearly upset her again. Her mother, who had been absent for some hours taking needful rest, entered the room, speaking to a servant as she did so. Vera did not see her; but the mere sound of her voice seemed to electrify her. Weak as she was she almost sprang from the pillows where

she was lying, and, flinging her arms round Leah, whispered to her with trembling lips that she had heard a voice—"a voice like mamma's! Had Leah heard it too, and oh! how could mamma have come there? And why had they taken her to this place from the lodgings where Marstrand left her, and where he had said she would be quite safe?"

She was in such a febrile, excited state that it was obvious Madame St. Laurent must be kept out of the way, and no one but Leah and the hired nurse allowed into the room; but even when this was arranged, Vera's restlessness was not quieted. Her mind seemed to be oscillating, as it were, between more violent mania than heretofore and recovery. Facts and fancies, reality and memory, jostled one another in her weakened brain, with one desire dominant over all—to get away from this strange place and back to the lodgings from which, as she imagined, she had been removed while she was ill. It was necessary at last to give her an opiate as the only means of soothing her; and though this took effect and she soon slept soundly, Leah dared not leave her, but remained watching by her side all night, and was still seated there in the morning when, to her intense surprise, the nurse brought her a pencilled note written in Marstrand's hand.

"The other doctors and I all think," he said, "that this change may be for good, and that directly she is able to be moved, even in an invalid carriage, it will be well to do as she wishes, and take her back to Guernsey and the old lodgings there. I am going there in advance to secure them, and see that they are arranged in their former way; and should she on waking appear cognisant of any lapse of time, or uneasy about my absence, you are to tell her that I have gone to Les Châtaigniers to make friends with her mother and bring her the latter's forgiveness. That will pave the way for their meeting, when, as I pray—and oh! Leah, best and dearest friend, pray for it with me—she may have recovered her intellect sufficiently for such a meeting to be possible for all of us."

And as he planned it, it was carried out. The mere promise to take her back seemed to do her good; and as she was evidently able now to take intelligent note of the passage of time and the objects about her, her old doctor congratulated himself on his foresight in having had her established at the commencement of her first illness in a

suite of rooms at the opposite side of the house from that where the terrible tragedy of her life had taken place, and which, therefore, were not capable of recalling anything of an alarming nature to her.

To avoid all risk of excitement indeed, her actual removal and the early part of the journey were achieved while she was under the influence of narcotics; but, even when she woke and found herself in the train, she was quite calm, and though too weak to lift her head, seemed so happy and talked so sensibly of Marstrand's mission and her hopes that it might have been successful, that no one listening to her could have fancied that her mind had ever been affected.

So they reached their journey's end, and she was carried up the steep stone steps of the little cottage in Hill Street, and put to bed in the sunny, chintz-curtained bedroom without any accident or ill effect. Indeed, she seemed so pleased at being there and greeted Mrs. Nicholls—whom she recognised at once, and who was touched to tears at the sight of her—with such smiling gentleness, that poor Marstrand, listening with trembling anxiety outside the door for one sound of that dear voice, could hardly maintain his long-tried patience sufficiently to keep himself from entering the room and taking her then and there into his arms. But his own reason told him the risk would be too great, and he crept away at last to watch the night out in the room below, praying dumbly, but with all a strong man's believing earnestness that Heaven in its mercy would end this affliction which had fallen on him and the girl he so passionately loved, and give them once more back to one another.

Suddenly, as it seemed, a hand was laid on his shoulder, and he knew that he must have dropped asleep, for it was only grey dawn when he last looked about him, and now the sun was shining brightly and Leah was standing beside him—Leah, whom he had not seen since last winter, and who met him now with no greeting, but a look on her pale, quivering face, before which he started up as though he had been struck.

"Go for a doctor, George," she said hurriedly; "I—it may be nothing; don't—don't look so frightened—but she has been sleeping beautifully till a few minutes ago, and now—there is a change in her face. I don't like it, and her pulse is so low. Go quickly!"

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A DATELESS BARGAIN.

By C. L. PIRKIS,

Author of "Lady Lovelace," etc.

CHAPTER VII.

"A FOE in chains is a living, not a slain foe." These words which Joyce, with her dangerous aptitude for swift, trenchant speech, had uttered so lightly, kept persistently repeating themselves in Mab's ears. They paraphrased themselves in her mind somewhat as follows: "Here you are content to have got your enemy into chains—chains, by the way, whose links might snap at any moment—when you might wrestle it out with him, and put your foot upon his neck at once and for ever."

The words grew to be a sort of war-cry in her ears at last—a fanfaronade of trumpets calling her to her duty. Mab had ever been a slave to her sense of duty. Convince her that duty called upon her to give her life inch by inch, and she would take good care never to give two at a time. So now when conscience took to playing the echo to Joyce's haphazard words, she did not try to silence it with other voices having less of iron in them, but met it with the simply-put question:

"How, where, when, shall I begin the tussle?"

A straightforward question enough one would think, and bound to have a point-blank answer given to it. Yet a circumstance occurring at this time not only at once and for ever put it unanswered to silence, but forced upon her the unwelcome conviction that her sense of duty must have been warped, her conscience perverted, to have so much as whispered it into her ear.

In this fashion. She had been, according to her custom, acting the perambu-

lating librarian among her poor people one afternoon; she came in hot and tired with a big packet of books under her arm, ran straight up into the drawing-room, hoping to find there two refreshing stimulants—Joyce and a cup of tea—and discovered instead Captain Buckingham alone, seated in an armchair.

"Mrs. Shenstone has not yet come in—I am waiting to see her," he explained, as he shook hands; "and Miss Joyce has, I was sorry to hear, gone upstairs to lie down, with a bad headache."

Mab wondered whether Joyce's headache was born of Captain Buckingham's afternoon call. Joyce had never, from the first day of their intimacy with the Buckingham, attempted to throw more than the flimsiest veil of politeness over her dislike for the brother and sister.

Mab's feelings were something less defined towards the pair. They were antipathetic to her senses rather than to her feelings. Sylvia's semi-satirical smile, her low-toned sleepy drawl, the brother's bold stare and loud domineering voice equally jarred upon her and, so to speak, set her teeth on edge; but, given certain conditions—close companionship, favours conferred—it might have been possible for her teeth to lose the sense of a rough acidity.

"Let me relieve you of your books, Miss Shenstone," Buckingham went on, as he noted how heavily Mab was laden; "ah, this is the good work your mother was telling me about. May I read the titles of your lending library? 'History of England,' 'The Jews in Spain,' 'Lectures for the People,' 'Sanitation and Health.' Why, these are not the books for the hard-working classes. You would give toil to the toilers, mental labour to those who know not mental ease. You

should deal out fiction to them, bright, sparkling, merry fiction, and deal it out right liberally too."

Of course he must lay down the law on every subject, small or great, that came within his cognizance. The words "don't you think," or "it seems to me," would have come strangely from his lips.

Mab rang the bell for the tea-tray.

"I haven't a single volume of fiction among my books," she said, and the minute after regretted she had said so. Question and controversy must follow now. She was very tired with her tramp through the by-ways of Westminster. She wished the man would go, and let her enjoy her tea and talk upstairs with Joyce in peace.

"Not a volume of fiction!" he repeated; "are you afraid of fiction? Does it mean that poetry is a terra incognita to you, that Shakespeare, Milton, Shelley, Swinburne are names to you and nothing more?"

"I never read poetry."

Then she threw off her light summer mantle and busied herself over the tea-table; fussed over the sugar, the tea, the urn, the cream, all the time feeling that Buckingham's large dark eyes were fixed full upon her face with that bold questioning, searching stare, which as a rule affronted her, but which now seemed rather to disconcert her. She made the servant stay in the room, handing the tea, the cake, the biscuits; then, when there could be no further possible reason for the man to remain, walked to the window; raised the blind; wondered what had detained her mother so long; and made jerky little tirades against the uncomfortable weather, the scorching heat, the blinding dust.

Captain Buckingham's eyes followed her round the room.

"Miss Shenstone," he said in the same loud dogmatic tone as before, "you are resisting influence."

Mab gave a great start. These were the words she had felt through long years past would some day be spoken to her by someone's lips, and now they had been spoken by this man's.

She answered calmly enough, though with an effort:

"If influence is bad, it is well to resist it."

"But if good, what then? Do you know the first day I saw you I detected in you a something that cut you off from the rest of the world, though I could not tell what it was? I see it now; the 'something' is

organic, therefore permanent and unalterable. You are made of the stuff of which the seers of old time were made, the augurs, the prophets, the poets if you like. Pound yourself in a mortar, you won't get rid of it. Go atom by atom to dust, it will cry aloud in the ashes."

Mab's face went from white to red, from red to white. She clasped her hands tightly together, and turned facing him, staring blankly.

He went on calmly, yet loudly as before:

"In all my life I have only met one person at all to compare with you. She was a young Vermont girl of French parentage, Marie St. Clair by name, a born seer, clairvoyante, and of the finest susceptibilities. And her parents had set her to sell stockings and calico in a draper's shop! Her sense of touch was so fine she could distinguish the quality and price of any article by the touch of her finger-tip. Ah," here his voice dropped a note or two, "through want of knowledge one may burn oil in an Aladdin's lamp!"

"What became of her?" asked Mab under her breath, and drawing a step nearer.

"I rescued her. I induced her to throw up the miserable drudgery in the draper's shop, and put herself under tutelage at Boston. She developed rapidly enough; had a brilliant career; in fact, at one time, was more talked about than any other person in the States. The odd part with her was, that though she could do some remarkable things in a state of trance, her best moment was on the moment of awaking from deep sleep, before her senses were aroused. Then it was all in a flash that she saw the person, or had the thing revealed to her, on which her mind was set."

Mab gave a painful start. Her memory flew back to that bright spring morning, when to her fancy her dead father had stood before her.

"You seem interested," Buckingham went on. "I'll lend you her autobiography if you like. All the Boston people went mad over her. Three years of a most brilliant career she had."

"And then?" asked Mab again under her breath, and drawing another step nearer to him.

"Oh, she died—at twenty-six years of age. Overdid it, lost control over herself, and died in an asylum."

"Ah-h!"

"But it doesn't follow from that that other people are to go and do likewise. Sup-

posing that I, an English nobleman, defrauded of my rights, were to claim and get back my birthright, and then run riot in my inheritance and die a pauper! Would you argue from that fact that therefore no one to the end of time is to venture to claim a lost birthright?"

Mab yet stood silent and with clasped hands before him, her thoughts all one surging, storm-tossed mass.

It was a relief at this moment to hear a voice outside the door, which suggested common-place morning calls, evening receptions, tea-gowns, small talk, in a pre-eminent degree.

It said, evidently addressing a servant: "I am tired to death, absolutely; with listening, nothing else. I haven't opened my lips since I left the house two hours ago!"

Then the door opened, and Mrs. Shenstone, in a costume that might have suited a modern youthful Lydia Languish, made her appearance. "I knew you were here, Captain Buckingham," she said, smiling affably, "before I was told. I heard your voice all the way upstairs. Now will you tell me why it is that you and your sister do not talk the least bit in the world like any other Americans I have ever heard?"

"It is because we are cosmopolitans, I suppose," laughed Buckingham. "Nevertheless, you mustn't imagine that the English accent is a monopoly for which you've taken out a patent. Some of us Yankees talk every whit as broad as your Englishmen!"

CHAPTER VIII.

JOYCE'S headache turned out a more serious affair than was expected. The next day found her in bed with a crimson face and ice-cold hands. The day after found the doctor in the house, with his watch in his hand and the terrible word "typhoid" on his lips.

"Is it catching, doctor?" moaned Mrs. Shenstone. "Shall we all take it one after the other? Oh dear, dear! Just as we were all going to start for Dieppe, like the rest of the world! This comes of Mab diving into all the holes and corners of London. She has brought it into the house, somehow or other, depend upon it."

The doctor stared at her. "Well, I've seen women blessed with next to no sense, but this one beats all!" he thought. Aloud he said: "In which case it is rather remarkable that Miss Mab was not the first to fall victim. You had better look for the

cause within your own four walls, Madam, and see to your drains and water-pipes."

It may be conjectured that he had but the slenderest acquaintance with Mrs. Shenstone. The old family doctor down in Gloucestershire would have nodded to her complacently, and said nothing.

Three weeks, packed with anxiety, with alternating hopes and fears, followed.

During those three weeks all the household wheels ran down.

Mrs. Shenstone was ordered out of the house by the doctor, and rooms found for her within easy distance. "She'll just frighten herself into the fever and double your trouble," he explained to Mab. And to himself he added: "And if it's all the same to everyone else, I would rather not have such a patient as that on my hands."

"My poor darling Joyce," Mrs. Shenstone said, as she sobbed a good-bye on Mab's shoulder, "such a mercy it isn't small-pox! such a mercy, too, that you are such a thoughtful, careful nurse, Mab. If you had been a beauty, instead of a dear, domestic treasure, you wouldn't have done half so much good in the world. Good-bye, darling; I wish I could be of use to you."

Mab, as might have been expected, at once took up her post in the sick-room as head-nurse. Helter-skelter out of her head went all thoughts save that of watching over her fever-stricken sister, morning, noon, and night. No one knew when she slept nor when she had her meals. Other nurses were there in attendance from the hospitals; but no matter, Mab must superintend them and the general routine of the sick-room, so that her darling Joyce should lack nothing.

Up came Uncle Archie from the wilds of Gloucestershire, with fat, placid Aunt Bell in attendance. The old gentleman was still suffering sharp twinges of intermittent gout, and his views of the situation were coloured accordingly.

He attacked the doctor first.

"Typhoid," he said; "I don't believe in such a thing. There was no typhoid when I was a boy. We called a thing typhus—a disease everyone could understand, or we called a thing gastric fever, something quite different. Now, I don't believe she has what you are pleased to call typhoid, and if you let her die through improper treatment you'll be guilty of manslaughter, sir, manslaughter."

The doctor was at first naturally enough

disposed to grow irate, and to stand upon his dignity under such treatment; but when he heard the old gentleman go into the next room and rate Mab in precisely the same fashion, he shrugged his shoulders, and came to the conclusion that all this only represented family idiosyncrasies coming to the front again.

"Look here, Mab," said Uncle Archie, "you've undertaken the sick-nursing. Very well, you'll break down under it, anyone can see you'll break down—your face is like a sheet, and you're shivering and shaking like an aspen; you'd better have in a sister to superintend the nurses from the hospital, and take turn and turn about with her. If you break down, Joyce will get neglected—it'll be a case of manslaughter." etc., etc.

He stormed at Frank, too, in much the same fashion; or rather, he began to do so, but Frank turned upon him in a way he was unprepared to meet.

"Don't, don't, Mr. Shenstone," he implored, "my nerves are all gone, I can't stand it. If anything happens to her——" but here he broke off brusquely, his own words seeming to choke him.

Uncle Archie stared at him a moment, blinking his eyes very hard. Then he took to stamping up and down the room, muttering to himself and making his stick do a great deal of work.

Aunt Bell came in and carried him off to a neighbouring hotel, where he was laid up in bed for a fortnight, with the worst attack of gout he had ever had.

Frank almost lived in the house for that fortnight during which Joyce was at her worst. He and Mab seemed drawn more closely to each other in those days than ever they had been in their lives before. Mab was less of a living enigma to him, he a more defined and conceivable bit of humanity to her. Joyce's extremity was, so to speak, the light which made them see each other's faces.

"If she lives, Mab, I shall say you have saved her," Frank would say sometimes, as he crept away from the house at day-dawn with face gray and ashen as that of the misty morning itself.

And Mab's answer, given with a look clear and straightforward as Joyce's own could be, "I would give my life for hers, if God would but take it."

Frank seemed all made of nerves just then. His work was almost an impossibility to him. His leader-writing was suspended. One moment he would be all

irritable excitement, the next all depressed misery. He seemed somehow to have let himself slip through his own fingers, and to have lost all power of self-control. He despised himself heartily for his weakness, fancied he could read unmitigated scorn and ridicule in every face he looked into—in Captain Buckingham's especially, when by chance they met on Mrs. Shenstone's doorstep, or within the house making enquiries for the invalid.

These meetings were not frequent. It was a subject for congratulation that they were not. There was a smouldering fire of antagonism between these two men, which frequent intercourse must have stirred into flame.

"Why is he here at all? What concern is it of his whether Joyce is better or worse?" Frank once savagely asked of Mab.

"He comes on my mother's account. He takes her a report of Joyce three times a day," was Mab's reply.

"Good Heavens!" cried Frank, "I forgot all about your mother! Now, Mab, I can undertake that mission and give this man to understand that his services are not required."

Mab, anxious to keep the peace, shook her head. "It wouldn't do at all," she explained. "My mother has asked him to do it. Don't you see she likes him? and——"

"Doesn't like me," finished Frank. "I know it. I only hope——"

But here he broke off. Naturally enough he felt shy of hoping to Mab that her mother "wasn't going to make a fool of herself over the man Buckingham."

The day of crisis came at length. They all knew what the doctor meant when, after staying in the sick-room about double the usual time, he came out saying:

"Come, cheer up, my young friends, she has everything in her favour—youth, a strong constitution, good nursing. We must hope for the best."

And when he announced his intention of coming in again at midnight, and resuming his watch, they all knew that day-dawn most probably meant life or death for their darling.

Joyce's dressing-room, opening off her bed-room, had been improvised into a temporary sitting-room, and here Frank passed the whole of that lagging night of suspense, getting about every quarter of an hour a brief report from Mab, through the half-opened door, and feeling his heart go up and down with a bound every time he heard her touch upon the handle.

The feverish mutterings and tossings of the patient came to him through the thin partition. The sounds of London night-life died down in the street, giving place to those of the young day. Frank felt his hopes sinking low, lower, like that flame of his night-lamp just burning itself out. A great numbness and stillness seemed to fall upon him. He sank upon his knees beside the table, hiding his face in his cold, trembling hands. He felt as though he were wrestling with death for her.

Five o'clock of that August morning found the cool daylight flowing into the little room through the half-turned Venetian blinds. Mab, opening softly the door of the inner room, let out a stream of lurid light which met and quenched it. Frank started and lifted up his wan face inquiringly.

"She sleeps; she has taken a turn. The doctor says all will be well now," was all she found voice to say. And then their hands clasped, their tears flowed together, and their hearts sent up the thanksgiving their lips lacked power to utter.

Someone came tapping at the door—a sleepy servant saying a person was below wishing to see Miss Mab.

Mab, all tottering from excess of grateful joy, went downstairs to find Ned Donovan standing in the hall.

He started back when he saw her.

"They told me it was Miss Joyce who was ill, but surely——" he began hesitatingly.

Mab could see in his startled gaze the reflection of her own ghastly, haggard face.

"It was Miss Joyce," she answered. "It is, rather, for she is not yet out of danger. It is very good of you to come. Oh, it is only anxiety that has made me look so wretched. I shall soon be all right again, now she has taken a turn."

Ned's eyes seemed rivetted.

"Miss Mab, you will be ill if you don't take care. Is anyone looking after you? I only heard late last night of Miss Joyce's illness. I could only get a train one station up the line. I've walked the rest of the way. No, thank you, Miss Mab; I'm not tired now I've seen you and know the worst of your trouble is over."

Mab made him come into the dining-room, and fetched him wine and biscuits from the sideboard, making him eat and drink, and asking him questions meantime of himself, of his work, and how he liked it.

"I have only five minutes to give you,"

she said. "I must get back quickly to the sick-room. But you must tell me all you can about yourself. Now, why is it you so seldom write to me?"

If the light had not been so gray and uncertain she might have seen his face flush a deep red.

"I've no time for writing, Miss Mab. It was best to leave it off," he answered a little unsteadily.

"No time? Not even to me?" exclaimed Mab in a pained voice. "I asked you so many questions in my last letter. What you did with yourself on Sundays? Why you never came near the house—not even to see your sister?"

Ned's face flushed deeper and deeper crimson, his hand holding his wine-glass trembled noticeably.

Mab seeing his perturbation, not unnaturally misinterpreted it.

"Is anything wrong?" she asked kindly, "are not things going smoothly with you?"

Ned jumped to his feet.

"Wrong—anything wrong?" he repeated, "what is there right in the world?" He checked himself suddenly. Possibly his thoughts would not translate into words choice enough for a young lady's ear.

Poor fellow! He was only three-and-twenty years of age; he was defiantly, yet despairingly in love with a woman as much beyond the reach of his human arms as the stars in heaven, and so it seemed to him that everything was wrong indeed.

Mab looked at him in silent wonder for a moment. Then those dreadful Fenian societies suggested themselves to her mind.

"What books are you reading, Ned?" she asked. "I hope you are not taking in those insurrectionary papers—I've forgotten their names—you gave up two or three years ago to please me?"

Now in all these kindly speeches Mab was actuated by the simplest, the loftiest of desires to help a man whom she had always looked upon as one of the most hot-headed of a hot-headed race, and liable at any moment to catch the fever of the demagogues, and to catch it fatally too.

Ned was born in England of an English mother; he had had an English education in English schools, and brogue was a thing unknown to him; but for all that, he was, as she had so often told him, "more Irish than his Irish father." Her attitude throughout their intercourse had been that of kindly unostentatious patronage, such

as any lady might extend to any working man. Yet as she stood there waiting for an answer to her question a something crept into his face—a sudden light into his deep blue eyes, a change of expression about the mouth—which startled her, and made her think of her sick-room duties, and that the sooner she got back to them the better.

She made a step towards the door.

"I must go—I am sure I must be wanted upstairs," she began. Then she came back irresolutely. After all the interest she had taken in this man she did not feel inclined to let him go down the hill, when a word from her might perhaps save him. "Ned," she said, speaking up bravely, "I want you to make me a promise—a very solemn promise."

Ned hesitated.

"If it's about any of our national societies, Miss Mab, I would rather not make it," he answered slowly.

"I will have nothing to do with you to the end of time if you join any one of those societies," she interrupted, dashing nervously into the very middle of her subject. "They are secret, detestable, formed only for murder and assassination."

A noise of door opening at that moment made her turn her head. It was the sleepy servant who had announced Ned, showing in Captain Buckingham. There seemed an amused look in his eye, as he looked from Mab to Ned. Of course he must have heard her concluding words.

"I have come for my morning's report. I promised Mrs. Shenstone she should have it before six," he said blandly enough.

Mab gleefully gave him the glad news.

Ned, with a respectful "Good morning, Miss Mab," took up his hat and left the room.

Mab went one step over the threshold, bent on making a final effort. "You must think over what I have said. Pray, pray do not forget what I have asked of you," she said gently.

"Miss Mab," was Ned's reply as respectfully as before, "I am not likely to forget one single word you have ever spoken to me." Then he went.

Buckingham cross-questioned her as to who was Ned, what were his surroundings, what was his occupation? "Irish of course he is, although his brogue is fairly enough hidden. I could swear to the Irish blue eye among a thousand."

Mab, with her foot on the first step of the stairs, all anxiety to get back to the

sick-room, answered him briefly as to the man's parentage and present occupation.

Had anyone watched Buckingham take his departure down the house steps that morning, they might have seen his lips forming to the words: "Irish—no brogue—works at the Arsenal," and his forehead knotting into a thoughtful frown.

The cold daylight had quickened into rosy dawn as Mab passed the staircase windows. A figure glided along the landing from the small room a little hurriedly at her approach. It was Kathleen with a tray in her hand. It did not strike Mab as strange that the girl should be dressed, and smartly dressed as she had been on the previous night: just then no one's toilette was much criticised. They washed and dressed when they could, and wore evening dress in the morning or cotton gowns at night, just as it happened. What, however, did strike her as strange was the brilliant flush and look of confusion on the girl's face as she explained that she had been taking Mr. Ledyard some hot coffee. She had thought he must be tired with his night's watching.

"It was kind and thoughtful of you," was Mab's comment as she went hurriedly into the room, trying to dismiss the matter from her mind as one of no moment.

Later on events brought it back to her and gave it possibly a magnified importance.

RECOLLECTIONS OF A MIDSHIPMAN'S MESS.

IN FOUR PARTS. PART I.

IT must be twenty years ago. Dear me! when I come to count it up it is more than twenty years ago by a good bit since I joined my first sea-going ship at Sheerness. As I glance back at that opening period of my life, many things appear quite faint and dim in the distance, only the shadow instead of the substance of them left, while others are as clear and distinct as on the very day on which they occurred. I have said that I was going to join my first sea-going ship, and naturally I was a youngster, but equally naturally I did not consider myself to be so. I had served twelve months in a harbour ship, and this distinction tilted my nose in the air and enabled me, as the Yankees say, "to put on frills." I knew a thing or two. I spoke naturally of "my messmates." I flavoured my speech with naval phrases, which seemed to me

the simple consequence of such long and distinguished service.

So, with all this accumulation of knowledge, I went down to Sheerness to join H.M.S. "Bruisewater." My recollection of the time makes it an equal solution of glory and discomfort; glory in arriving at an unknown port, to join an unknown ship, to be rowed off to her in a boat of unknown build, to plunge suddenly into a throng of faces all unknown, and yet to have a distinct right to be there and a thoroughly well-defined place to hold. Discomfort in exchanging the beauties of Plymouth and all its familiar sights and sounds for the hopeless dead-level of mud and marsh which constitutes Sheerness; in joining a ship in the first throes of commissioning; in trying in vain to find a familiar face, a familiar sight, a familiar spot in which to take refuge for a moment from the din, and whirl, and confusion, of the new and strange life. The first week or so of my life on board seemed to me then, and still seems, a sort of dyspeptic dream. No constituted mess; no properly appointed sleeping place—for the hammocks were not served out for the first few days, and even when they were, my marine servant was obliged to sling mine anywhere he could; no proper food, but only a sort of skirmishing apology for a meal, necessitating sundry dinners at the "Fountain" to satisfy the cravings of young stomachs.

On board the ship were caulkers, shipwrights, dockyard officials, blue-jackets, marines, stokers, shavings, wet paint, dirt, tar, rope-yarns, putty, spars, tanks, hawsers, casks, bales, biscuit-bags, all knocking about in apparently hopeless confusion. The decks above and below resounded incessantly with the noise of hammers; of cheeping-blocks; of men running and stamping; of enormous weights bumping down so as to make the whole ship quiver; of short, sharp orders given in a voice evidently long accustomed to authoritative tones, and repeated noisily by important warrant officers, boatswains, and others. The atmosphere was packed as full as it could hold with the mingled smell of new rope, of ship's rum, and of tobacco in the leaf, save when, from the engine-room hatch there came up a reek of oil pure and simple, such as a man might live on for a year without other food, and which overlaid the other combination like rancid butter on sour bread.

By-and-by our messmates began to join, and the mess, hitherto comparatively de-

serted, became a centre of noise and liveliness. Our berth was on the lower deck. It was lighted by three scuttles—bull's-eyes of glass set in the solid thicknesses of the ship's side—and no other light pierced its gloom. Perhaps it was as well that it was so, else the dirt and neglect which would have been revealed might have sickened us. It was lamentably small, even for the number it was intended to hold; and we were to be packed with supernumeraries for the distant Pacific, shedding a few on the south-east coast of America as we passed. The berth was very long and very narrow, and had a sliding door at each end, by which entrance was gained by ourselves and by the steward and his boy. There was no attempt at ornament on the walls or bulkheads, and the whole area of the berth was taken up by the table, which, allowing just room enough for seats all round it, stretched from one end to the other. This table was, moreover, a gigantic chest, in the bowels of which, known generally as the "jolly-boat," were stowed wines, preserved meats, jams, sardines, and so on. At the after end of the berth was a tiny continuation of it, separated from it by a bulkhead, or wooden partition, and called the steward's berth. This communicated with the mess place by a small sliding panel in the centre.

At first, with the exception of Peregrine, the Assistant-Paymaster, all the fellows who joined were youngsters, and we were all very friendly and noisy, each trying to outbrag the other, and all striving to appear quite at ease and at home in a situation which was obviously utterly new to everyone. Still, there were some far greener and more ignorant than others, and of these we naturally made game, and thereby exalted our own superiority. But presently a hush came over all this. Three sub-lieutenants joined, with a master's assistant, and an old, old midshipman with whiskers, and of such standing that even the sub-lieutenants looked up to him and listened respectfully to his yarns, which smacked of Nelson and of Blake. They seemed to be of ships and men of so very, very long ago; while his masterly handling of the art of profanity and the stream of blasphemy which issued continually from his lips struck awe and admiration into all, and made them own themselves in the presence of a master. In the face of this real talent we poor pretenders slunk away abashed and admired from a distance; and when, with many a fine manly oath and blustering sea-far-

ing expression, these our senior officers threatened "to stick a fork in the beam," at eight p.m., and drive us all on to the lower deck while they talked "politics," as they called it, we acquiesced humbly enough, as being powerless to object. Then they too would begin to brag, and swell, and talk of what they had seen and done, and the ships which they had served in, and the courts-martial they had but narrowly escaped; and, as the conversation went round, the grog would do so too, and by-and-by the berth would follow the example, and some of our seniors would find it a matter of some difficulty to retire gracefully to their hammocks.

But old Peregrine, our Assistant-Paymaster, outdid them all; he had served longer, had been on more stations, in more ships, had been more under arrest, and could drink more rum (with very little water) than any of them, or indeed than all of them put together; and he looked down with contempt on their young experiences and their old yarns served up as new; and he would sit silently drinking his grog, listening to it all, and occasionally putting in a word calculated to throw them all aback, as it were, and make them try another tack. The best of fellows, old Peregrine—a gentleman by birth and breeding, a man of great intellect, of considerable humour, of boundless generosity, of tireless good-nature, a real good messmate and friend, but for one miserable vice—the vice of the British Navy. He was an incorrigible drunkard. I don't know what it was that forced him into such a habit—who ever does know that of most drunkards?—but I have often thought that, with his undoubted talent, he had recognised the fact that there was no possible chance of rising above the dead level of his lot in life, and that this was a bitter disappointment to him, for he had brothers who had greatly distinguished themselves. Peregrine it was who invented the original idea of a free cask of beer in the mess; he it was who ordered it on shore, who superintended the placing of it in the berth itself, who saw to the tapping of it, who drank the first and many another glass from it, and who, I believe, finally had to pay for it, as nobody would admit any responsibility in the matter except himself.

I know it was a vast mistake; and that many of us boys drank a great deal more of that beer than was good for us, for the simple reasons that we were all utterly

thoughtless; that we were in considerable numbers; and that there was nobody to exercise any kindly control over us. Often and often I have since thought that, if the tender and anxious mothers of those boys could have seen them in the first blush of their new lives, they would never have had another hour's peace until they had torn those boys from the pestilential place, and abandoned all thought of making them into sailors. Well, well! All that is changed now, I hear; and youngsters dine at 7.30, instead of noon, as we did; and are particular about the light sherry they drink, and the cleanliness of the tablecloth and napkins; while some even have decided opinions on the subject of mess waistcoats and such fripperies.

But to my story—if story it can be called. Our seniors, the ward-room officers, had joined now, and we were, of course, much interested in them. The Commander was an object of intense awe and interest; the Lieutenants were criticised very powerfully by our "subs," who treated them with great respect on deck, but declared them to be the most incapable body of men they had ever met, down below. The Marine Officers, Paymaster, Chaplain, and all came in for severe and trenchant criticism; and of course among the medicos there was a young Irishman. No ship in Her Majesty's service could possibly put to sea without one Irish doctor on board, affording much relaxation and amusement to his messmates, especially during the first few years of his service.

By degrees the ship began to assume the appearance which one expects a British man-of-war to wear. The casks and bales were down in the hold, or stowed in the various store-rooms; the spars were sent aloft, or lashed in their proper places on deck; the hawsers were coiled down and sent below; the paint gradually dried; the shavings were swept up; the dirt was removed; the decks were persistently holystoned, scrubbed, "squeeged," and swabbed, till every speck was removed from them, with about a quarter of an inch of solid wood as well; the guns were oiled and polished till they shone like a top-boot; the cabins of the officers down below began to glow resplendent with the little gay curtains and strips of gold moulding. The wardroom dinners took, to our hungry eyes, as we peeped down the skylight on the main-deck, the semblance of splendid banquets,

amidst the glitter of glass and plate and the dazzling snowiness of white linen. Alas! the only thing that did not change was our mess, which was still dark and dismal, as on the first day of the commission; still dirty and neglected, if only the light would have let us see it; still bare, as to its walls, and curtainless, as to its doors. We got some cushions to sit upon, that was all I can recollect in the way of improvement.

All these signs of smartness and good trim betokened that the ship would soon be ready for sea. Our trial trips came off, were pronounced satisfactory—what trial-trip of one of Her Majesty's ships is not pronounced to be satisfactory, unless the screw shaft actually refuses to turn round? The Admiral came and inspected us, and we were reported ready to sail, at a given date, for the far Pacific. Then came a lovely, bright spring morning when we actually did get up our anchor, as we lay at the Nore, and bear away for Plymouth, picking up our Captain on the way. A very grim and powerful-looking little man he was, and we felt very much in awe of him as, for the first time, we watched him pacing up and down the bridge in conversation with the Commander.

That short run to Plymouth established the fact that our ship could sail, for we logged eleven knots during a good part of the distance; and though some of us were not nearly so well as we could have wished, and turned into our hammocks as soon as ever they were "piped down," yet we at once started that feeling of pride in our own ship which is so universally seen in the service, and which certainly aids in keeping up its efficiency. Many a proof did the good old craft afterwards give us of her speed under sail; and had she been in the hands of a captain who was fond of "carrying on," I believe her record might have been something extraordinary; but we were in careful hands, and she was never really pressed.

Then came two or three hurried days at Plymouth, occupied in duty of all sorts, and in scurrying through the place to take a long leave of old friends; and then at last one afternoon we were steaming out of Plymouth Sound, conscious that for three years at least we should see no more the faces of those who were dearest to us. But we were youngsters; sorrow sat lightly on our hearts; all our world was in the future. It is the man of middle age—leaving behind him wife and child, all the holiest ties of life—who suffers most at such a time.

Ere the coast-line had disappeared in the gloom of that spring evening we had recovered our spirits; we had cast retrospection overboard, we had strained our eyes ahead to see what the great world had in store for us. One word about the ship: she was a splendid frigate of those days—nearly three thousand tons—with moderate engine-power, capable of driving her some eight knots in calm water; but she was essentially a sailer, and, as I have already said, she sailed splendidly. She carried about forty guns, mostly thirty-two pounders, and one one-hundred-and-ten-pounder forward, which we youngsters then considered the most ponderous and perfect weapon ever invented; but which we have since learned to regard with much less enthusiastic feelings, both as to its power and especially as to its value in action. It usually split its vent-piece at the third round, and remained sulky and ailent for many hours afterwards, while its attendants in vain attempted to remove the injured fitting. We were five hundred and twenty-five officers and men all told, or rather we ought to have been, for we were several hands short.

Now that we were at sea with no distractions, we settled down into our places in the berth with little trouble; but we were anything but a happy mess. We had too many members in the first place. Our senior, Peregrine, was the best of fellows when sober, and should have given a tone to the mess, but he was not often sober. Our three subs were very young in their new rank; we had a few midshipmen who had been to sea before, but they, having been youngsters and felt the misery of it in their last ship, were determined to be oldsters, and let us know it in this.

Never will the recollection of those first days at sea in that mess be erased from my mind. The atmosphere reeked with bad language; the youngsters were either outrageously bullied or were taken up by oldsters, who constituted themselves their "sea-dads," and were by them instructed in the arts of ornamental blasphemy and rum-drinking with an assiduity worthy of a better cause. At night the whole mess—as many as could wedge into the berth—sat round the table by the dim light of a couple of lanterns, and, while supplied by the steward with the necessary liquor, made the whole ship ring with the most disreputable songs that the lowest type of East End music hall could supply, the

chorus of which was sung by all, oldsters and youngsters alike, with infinite gusto, the piping treble of the children fresh from the "Britannia" rising shrill and loud above the discordant roar of their older and more intoxicated messmates. Every night these saturnalia went on; the same lot congregated round the table, the same songsters sang the same miserable ditties, which were listened to with the same interest, joined in with the same spirit, and applauded with the same enthusiasm; and it was a merciful release when the master-at-arms came round and announced, "Nine o'clock, gentlemen; lights out, please."

But it was, perhaps, at meal times that the mess may be considered to have risen to its greatest height of artistic disorder. Let us take dinner at noon as a specimen. I have said there were two doors, both on the same side of the berth, but at opposite ends of that side, which slid to and fro instead of moving on a hinge. Just before dinner time the berth would be crammed to its utmost capacity, every one eager for his dinner, and drumming the table with his knife handle in impatient anticipation of it. The cloth, such as it was, was already laid, and the plates placed round the table, almost touching each other by reason of their numbers. All eyes would be turned towards the door. Presently a sound outside would announce the arrival of the food; the doors would be drawn back, and the steward would appear at one with, say a smoking dish of hot "salt horse," while the boy would enter at the other with an enormous bowl of potatoes, if we were lucky enough to have any. They entered, but they seldom, if ever, reached the table. No sooner had the steward got inside the doorway than the strongest of the oldsters seized the dish from his hands, slapped it down in front of his own plate, and savagely hacked off from it as much as he thought he could devour.

"Here, you fellows!" he would sing out; and in an instant half-a-dozen hands had seized the dish, and were tugging at it in all directions in their eagerness for the next help, when some more enterprising and experienced member would suddenly snatch up a fork, plunge it up to the hilt in the steaming mass, and bear it off to his own plate, while the others still wrangled and fought over the dish on which it had reposed, hardly conscious that their prey had escaped them.

The same scuffle had in the meanwhile

been taking place at the other end over the bowl of potatoes. The bowl was snatched from the boy's hand by the most active member near enough to the door; its ownership was disputed, hands were thrust in, and potatoes—"spuds" as we used to call them—were carried off in this manner; and finally the bowl was capsized on to the table, and the rest of its contents were rolled all over the place, while the surrounding mob, each armed with a fork, fought for each individual spud, swearing, laughing, threatening, and jobbing at the potatoes, regardless of the hands of those who snatched at them; scrambling over the table in their eagerness; smashing plates and dishes; and even doing more serious damage, for on one occasion the table itself gave way under the strain.

Such was "dinner," as I learned to know it in a midshipman's mess—the most horrible and rowdy spectacle that one could imagine, associated in my mind with every feeling of misery and discomfort. I tried it for a bit, but it was of no use. I was a youngster. I was not then one of the strong ones. I frequently got no dinner at all, and so at last I hit upon the plan of offering to exchange my tot of grog—which I loathed—for my marine servant's allowance of pea-soup, and this, with a couple of ship's biscuits, was all the dinner I used to have until we arrived on our station, got rid of our supernumeraries, and established, as we did at length, a more decent order of things.

It is needless to say that in such a mess there was plenty of ill-feeling—the oldsters against the youngsters, with a middle party of those who were neither oldsters nor youngsters, but who alternately sided with either—the "executives" against the "dry idlers," or those whose duties did not take them on deck—growls, bullying, reports, mock court-martials, ending in "four dozen over the mess table with a sword scabbard." These were matters of frequent occurrence, and to me it seemed as if one could not be worse off in Pandemonium itself. But it is but justice to say that at this time we were a more than usually unfavourable specimen of a junior officers' mess.

We conducted our relaxation in the same frantic manner that we exhibited in our other occupations. We "slung the monkey" on deck, and let into the poor victim when slung with a malicious virulence which would have made an outsider believe him to be our deadly foe instead

of a chance messmate. For the benefit of those who know not the customs of the sea, I must explain that "slinging the monkey" is a kind of nautical "baste the bear," the difference being that the "monkey" is slung to some spar overhead by a sling which passes under his arms, so that his toes just touch the deck—by this means he can swing himself violently into the air in any direction and attack with his rope's end or knotted handkerchief any one of the crowd of players who stand around him, eager to assault him in the same manner, and who, on being struck, is obliged to take his place.

We fenced on deck in the evening with single-sticks and no masks, and smote each other hip and thigh as hard as we could let drive; we boxed in the same terrific manner; and when we got on shore we devoted ourselves to the pursuit of pleasure with such headlong eagerness that we were utterly unfit for duty for twenty-four hours afterwards. Well I recollect how we touched our first land at Madeira—how I, in conjunction with many others, landed immediately after breakfast; how we hired horses and rode up to the Grand Corral; how we rode down again, mostly at a hand gallop, along places where I should now crawl on hands and knees; how we abandoned the horses only to instantly hire a boat for the purpose of bathing; how on the termination of our bathe we at once went ashore and hired more horses and again rode off no one knew whither, certainly not ourselves; and how, at six p.m., having eaten nothing since our breakfast on board, we had a high tea at Miles's Hotel, and then actually knocked about the town, which was in festal garb, until long past midnight, and finally went off to the ship utterly and hopelessly knocked up in a blaze of indescribable phosphorescence.

Such was our method of recreation—all done at high pressure, with no suspicion in our minds that it was possible to have too much of any good thing. Practical jokes naturally appeared to us to be the most humorous and harmless methods of extracting enjoyment, as long as we ourselves were not the objects of them. And of this form of amusement some specimens shall be given in my next chapter.

OLD WEST-COUNTRY PROVERBS.

"IN winter's tedious nights sit by the fire with good old folks and let them tell thee tales," is pleasant advice, as full of

charm now as when Mr. William Shakespeare set it down in print, in his play of "Richard the Second."

But it is not permitted to everyone to get into some comfortable old farm-house, where homely fare is proffered with homely speech and quaint sayings, that in few sentences prove that "Saxon and Norman and Dane are we."

When the chairs are drawn up round the blazing wood fire, and when fresh fuel is added, that sends the chairs shrinking back from its blaze, and when light wreaths of smoke go curling up to the old blackened carved oak ceiling, then many a saying and many a story comes forth that has done its work in the district since Saxon and Dane veritably ruled there.

In the West-country of Somerset and Gloucester here and there such a house may still be found, where good Saxon speech is yet unconquered, and where many a quaint saying is used that carries one far back into history.

But it is very difficult to collect these sayings and phrases. They are only used to intimate friends, and were they used to the passing stranger he would hardly understand them. Perhaps one of the most quaint lists ever published has lately appeared in a purely West-country book, issued under the auspices of the Bristol Archæological Society.* Sir John Maclean, in his editing of the three quartos, has done well to preserve this famous list of "Gloucestershire proverbs and phrases."

John Smythe the chronicler says: "In this hundred of Berkeley are frequently vsed certaine words, proverbs, and phrases of speach, which wee hundreders conceive (as wee doe of certaine market moneyes,) to bee not only native but confined to the soile bounds and territory thereof; which, if found in the mouthes of any forraigners, wee deem them as leapt over our wall, or as strayed from their proper pasture and dwellinge place. And doubtles, in the handsome mouthinge of them, the dialect seemes borne of our owne bodies and natural vnto vs from the breasts of our owne nurses; with some fewe of which dishes I will heare feast my readers and sport my selfe."

The use of the "y" between words ending and beginning with a consonant he gloats over, to prove they "bee true patryots and

* The Berkeley Manuscripts: A Description of the Hundred of Berkeley in the County of Gloucester and its Inhabitants. By John Smythe, of Nibley.

true preservers of the honoured memory of our old forefathers, Gower, Chaucer, Lidgate, etc." and this usage of the connecting "y" is still in common use in the district, as, Sit-y-doun, Will-y-goe, Don't-y-say-so. The first phrase given to illustrate the pride of the inhabitants in their native place is pure German, as a hunderer being asked where he was born would reply, "Each was geboren at Berkeleyburns." The first three words are in modern German, Ich war geboren; and the word "Ich" for "I," pronounced Ik, is in daily use still in parts of Gloucestershire.

"Wee hunderers have a powerfull prerogative of transplantacion over the alphabet," cries out John Smythe, "for do not we use 'f' for 'v,' and 'v' for 'f,' and 'g' for 'c,' and 'ous' for 'us,' as 'fousty' for 'fusty'?" A prerogative still retained in full usage, as also the puzzling use of "thick" and "thuck" for "this" and "that."

"Putton on thick way," quotes our writer of three centuries back; but a phrase heard but the other day, used by a washerwoman who had had the wrong basket of clothes handed down to her from her cart, well illustrates the usage of these words, and is a good phrase to puzzle the learned foreigner who may boast that he understands English dialect, "Te'unt thick un, tis thuck un." (It isn't this one, it's that one).

But it is more in the proverbs than in the phrases that the non-philological reader will find his feast of quaint humour and sound sense, although about four pages are devoted to the phrases only.

The saying, "Hee thinkes himselfe as great as my Lord Berkeley," is by no means a dead proverb, even in these crowded days of steam and travel in the villages in Gloucestershire.

Some of the proverbs given are too outspoken, and too plainly call a spade a spade for our own days; although could John Smythe read some of our present-day literature with its borrowed French innuendo, he might say in that matter "wee mend like sowre ale in sommer," or that we go from bad to worse.

"Day may be discerned at a little hole," is a shrewd saying, and the fact of "the gray mare is the better horse" appearing in these proverbs disposes of the absurd notion that this saying came in with the grey horse of Hanover—with the white horse of the Saxons might be nearer the mark.

The saying, "Hee hath offered his candle

to the divill," is given here as coming from the fact that a certain "old fillimore of Cam, goinge in anno 1584, to pcent Sir Tho: Throgm: of Tortworth with a suger lofe, met by the way with his neighbor S. M: who demanded whither and upon what busines hee was goinge, answered, 'To offer my candle to the Divill:' which cominge to the eares of Sir Tho: at the next muster hee sent two of fillimores sonnes soldiers into the Low Countries, where the one was slayne, and the other at a deere rate redeemed his returne."

Many a badly-mated man, who has found marriage to be but a sorry exchange for his early days of freedom, might exclaim, as did these hunderers, "If once again I were Jacke Tomson I would never after be good man Tomson while I lived."

They laughed at the foolish and unthrifty man with "hee hath sold a beane and bought a peaze," or "hee hath sold Bristol and bought Bedminster," an allusion of forcible weight, when the little separate town of Bedminster (now a part of Bristol) was compared against the wealthy city.

Then as now the newsmongers turned their imagination to account in developing tiny events into facts of great portent, and so arose the saying that such a story was "Simondsall news." This being a purely local saying requires some elucidation, and the words given in explanation bring a full picture of life in the sixteenth century before one. "The clothiers, horse-carriers, and wainmen," says the writer, "of our hundred who weekly frequent London, knowinge by ancient custome that the first question (after welcome home from London) is, 'What newes at London?' doe vsually gull vs with feigned inventions, devised by them upon those downes; which wee either then suspecting vpon the report, or after findinge false, wee cry out, 'Simondsall newes.' A generall speach betweene each cobler's teeth."

The returning wains and packhorses and the "welcome home," the inventions of the "newes" upon the "downes," and the retailing it in the town of Berkeley, in the broad street that is but little altered, except that the pointed gables have nearly all given place to square houses; all is brought vividly before one in this explanation of this doubting saying, and the title of "Simondsall newes" would perhaps be useful for the Society papers of to-day. "Hee is as milde as an hornet," was a saying as common in the chronicler's wife's mouth

a "true hundreder" as "chidinge with her maides;" letting a little glimpse be taken into the goodwife's character.

"Poorly sitt ritchee warme," is a curious but pithy saying, and

In little medlinge is much ease,
Of much medlinge comes no sound sleepinge,
may well be remembered by lovers of a calm and quiet life.

The use of the word "smicker" for pretty, reminds one of the Danish "Smukke pige" for pretty girl. "Smoke will to the smicker," says the proverb, meaning, if many gossips sit against a smoky chimney, the smoke will bend to the fairest.

Bee the counsell better, bee it worse,
Follow him, that bears the purse,

smacks strongly of "Put money in thy purse."

There is a fund of worldly wisdom and shrewd teaching throughout these proverbs. As in "The owner's foot doth fatt the soile," which is explained by a second saying of "The master's eye doth feed the horse."

Right well knew John Smythe the tricks of hostlers, and that the impression of the master's foot made richer the land by the more careful labour that prevailed under his eye. His choice of these one hundred proverbs proves him to have been a painstaking, careful, kindly, generous man; for the hard or coarse sayings he throws doubt upon, or boldly objects to their teaching; but to the gentle sayings that urge to kindness and thriftiness, he lends weight to by some sententious words of his own. The following he does not comment upon:

"As the good man saies, see it should bee; but as the good wife saies, see it must bee." The hundredth proverb is: "Beware the fox in a fearne bush," to which he adds, "i.e., old fearne of like colour keeps often the fox unperceived. Hypocrisy often clokes a knave."

With which old-world, ever-true motto, we leave these lost-sight sayings, now once more brought to light in these volumes; that are indeed "an abstract and brief chronicle of the times," through which the Berkeleys have lived and reigned from 1066 to 1618, as plainly set forth on the title page.

One glimpse at the preface of the work, which is a noble monument to the compiler, will, perhaps, increase the interest that may have been aroused by the quotations of these proverbs from the labour that their writer offers "to the memory of the most antient and honourable family of the Ber-

keleys of Berkeley Castle," as an "oblation of a servant's myte and duty."

With manly dignity, but with even noble words, this servant (as he shrinks not from describing himself) commences his preface with: "The custome of those who write histories, is to propose in the beginnunge a modell of the subiect they meane to handle; mine is, of noble men and noble mindes, whom I will not celebrate aboute the merit. Stand or stoope they shall unto themselves."

The whole preface is worthy to be quoted; but the last paragraph must suffice, with which John Smythe launches himself forth upon his task.

"He beg noe further fauor or protection, than as upright and fayth-full writinge shall deserue. In a playne and home-bred stile, cleere from passion or partiality, Ile freely write the truth I know. And beginne my story thus."

And his beginning must be our ending.

LAST YEAR.

LAST year, he wrote: "The roses blossom red
And palely white to scent the hot, still air;
And then, soft-springing in the garden bed,
The aromatic pinks, all tall and fair,
Nod to each other, as the dawn grows clear."
That was last year: sad heart! that was last year!

Here is the page! as there I sadly trace
The failing hand, that pain's keen touch had
pressed,

I note the faltering, the increasing space,
As if the task were hard, the longed-for rest
Were yet more urgent. Ah! I sitting here
Remember all this letter said last year!

And now I rise—and wander all alone
Beneath his roses; when wan night glides by
I see the moonlight sleeping on the stone
That marks the spot where he out there doth lie.
At rest—alone—he who was once so dear,
From whom that letter came: last year—last year!

Is it not cruel how his roses bloom?
How lives this letter, though the writer's dead;
How there last on his chair, his desk, his room,
The flowers he planted—white or pink or red—
While he is deaf, nor heeds each heart-wrung tear
That falls as I think of him there last year!

How laugh the children, gathering in the dusk
As love-gifts for each other, sacred leaves!—
Sacred to me at least. That old-world musk
We always gathered: God! how memory weaves
Immortal spells! I feel—I see him near,
That true, good friend God took from me last year!

And yet I am alone: beyond life's pain
That friend I loved lies silent—while his flowers
Rise from the earth, and blossom once again
As they did blossom in those better hours
When that which is was but a haunting fear,
And he was with us still: oh! sad last year!

And yet! if they can spring from out the sod,
Will he and I not meet and speak once more?
Thou maker of our friendship: patient God!
Send me one message from that silent shore!
Yet nothing see I, nothing can I hear,
Save echoes faintly calling—ah! last year!

STUDIES OF OVER THE WAY.

A HOUSE IN LAST STREET.

THOSE readers, who have thought it worth their while to wade through the histories of my strange experiences, must often have set me down as a prosy old fellow. I shall not complain of any such rating, but I shall ask for a little further indulgence, and beg them to defer for a little their final judgment, at least till they have read the story of the house in which I am at present located; and, if this narrative does not make every hair stand on end, thrill every nerve to the borders of frenzy, and freeze all the marrow in their bones, they are beyond the reach of nervous stimulants. I myself have always had a great liking for my novels hot and strong. "The Italian," "The Mysteries of Udolpho," "The Monk," "Frankenstein," these are the novels for my taste. They are a trifle old-fashioned, but more recent favourites of mine are those wonderful stories of Le Fanu's, one in which a man is nearly buried alive, and another about a savant who is haunted by a horrible little ape with fiery eyes, the result of overmuch study and green tea. This last is indeed rather absurd in its conception, for men who sit close at their books, as I do, are the last people in the world to be troubled with such delusions. Whenever I open one of my old favourites I wonder how people can ever wade through these new so-called novels of the historico-religious order; or these melancholy maunderings of Mr. Drivell's, from which one discovers, after a week's hard reading, that a certain neutral-tinted young lady has decided not to become the wife of a young gentleman of the same hue, and has "concluded" that they had better pursue a separate path through life.

Well! put all the wonderful horrors you ever read into one story, and then multiply by ten, and the product will fall infinitely behind the tale I have now to set before you. The house over the way—which stares at me now as I write, with its blank windows like dead men's eyes—holds within its four walls a secret so terrible that, as I sit down to write, I shrink with dread from the task of lifting the veil. A nameless horror seizes me when I reflect that for weeks I have been living within twenty yards of a thing so awful that it seems to require a new set of terms to describe it; but I must conquer my fears and set to work at once.

Before I took these rooms, I had been well-nigh driven out of my mind by the noise of the cab traffic, which had been turned into my formerly quiet street by the removal of some barriers, and I was determined to find a street which led nowhere. I succeeded to a marvel. Last Street runs between two other streets, in which the traffic is next to nothing, and since I have been here I have never seen a hansom cab pass my door, so in the matter of quietude it suits me perfectly. Quietude, I may remark, is with me now a matter of primary importance; for my sleep is worse than ever, and unless I go to my friend the chemist for some of his soothing balms, I lie awake night after night. Last Street stands upon land belonging to a wealthy company; and, looking at its architectural features, I should say it must have been designed by the Company's own architect, or perhaps by the Prime Warden himself. The houses are all mean two-storey basements, with three stone steps before each front door. It is painfully, hideously uniform, with only one single break to its monotony. Only one house differs in the least degree from its fellows, and this one exception is my present "Over the way."

Just in front of my windows is a gap in the street where one house, considerably larger than the rest, stands back ten yards or so from the road. The flagged space in front of it is shut off from the street by a high curiously-wrought iron railing, now cankered by rust, and ruined as to its finer details by the coats of paint with which succeeding Company's painters have daubed it. In spite of the railings, this bit of vacant ground is used by the neighbours as a sort of common dust-bin. Old hats and shoes, broken crockery and bottles, and other nameless rubbish are deposited there privately during the night; and at intervals, when the collection becomes excessive, and seems to threaten the communications with the outer world, the dust-cart comes and clears it away, the operations of the dustmen being directed by a tall, gaunt woman in a black bonnet and shawl, whom I never see at any other time.

In none of the windows which face the street is there ever any sign of life or habitation. I once made an attempt, by venturing down a mews in a neighbouring street, to investigate the rear; but I could see only a very small portion of the house and just half a window. This was all that was not hidden by a projecting outbuilding.

The window was open, and I could plainly see within the chamber a huge wheel, like the fly-wheel of an engine, slowly revolving. I cannot describe how powerfully this discovery affected me. I stood gazing for minutes, and should have waited still longer in the hope of finding out something more, had I not been warned off by a stableman, who informed me that "No admittance except on business" was the rule in that particular mews.

I made no further attempt at exploration; indeed, it was only by a chance whim that I had done so much. So completely have I learned to rely on Simpson in these matters, that I look to him to do all the mystery-elucidating as naturally as a lame man trusts to his stick; but from careful observation at my window I became possessed of further knowledge of a fact concerning that mysterious house opposite, which made me more anxious than ever for Simpson's appearance. This fact was a very strange, a very awful one. In the course of the day I often noticed a dozen, a score, two score people pass into the jealously-guarded door opposite, but not a single one ever came out. No one ever issued from it except the tall woman in the black dress, who came to supervise the dustmen, and she, as belonging to the establishment, does not count.

About a week after I had become firmly convinced of the fact above named, Simpson called upon me and seemed, as I thought, much pleased that the new mystery to be disentangled lay so near at hand and did not require him to go careering over Europe to pick up the scattered threads. He was so anxious to set to work and so incredulous of any danger that I bade him remember that the door opposite, like the lion's den in the fable, showed no footprints coming away from it. I entreated him to go round to the back and clamber over the wall, or effect an entrance by way of the area, or down the chimney even; but he treated all my fears as groundless, and, taking up his hat, bade me good-bye. The next minute I saw him ring the bell opposite. The door was opened by the tall woman, and he entered.

Then followed four days of weary waiting, rendered yet more intolerable by the persistent precaution of that old dolt, Clausius. Every morning, as I took my seat at the window to await the reappearance of Simpson, the Doctor would come in and sit staring at me with his great, goggle, saucer eyes, as if I were a wild animal.

He would say very little. I was thankful he had given up talking metaphysics. I had given him a crusher last week he was not likely to forget in a hurry; but now he kept on telling me I ought to go out for a walk, or into the country, or have some of my friends to be with me, saying he was sure "zere was zomzing ze madder mit me." Maddier, indeed! I told him he was much madder than anyone I knew out of Bedlam, and this made him take himself off. I heard him outside muttering to the landlady; no doubt he was telling her of my brilliant repartee. She kept dodging in and out of my room afterwards in a most unaccountable way. Perhaps she expected that I was going to say something brilliant to her, but I wasn't.

Ah, what weary days they were! I could not sleep at night, though I increased my dose of chloral continually; and all night long I seemed to hear the slow beat of some great engine keeping time in my brain, and to see in the darkness the pitiless fall of the great spokes, as I had seen them fall inside that back window. At last, on the fifth day, Simpson came, and I forgot all my troubles as I bade him welcome and prepared to listen to his story.

As I glanced at Simpson I saw that he, at any rate, had not suffered physically in his recent adventure. He seemed to me to have grown stouter; a keen, exultant light shone from his eyes, usually so calm and tender, and his colour was fresh and youthful. Before he began to speak I could see that he had accomplished a great "coup."

"I did not look up at the window when I knocked at the door opposite," he began; "but I was sure enough you were following me with your eyes. The door was opened by the tall woman, of whom I have heard you speak, and as soon as I was inside she closed it and fastened the lock with a heavy key, which she then put in her pocket. The passage in which I found myself was long, lofty, and narrow. There were doors on the right and left; the former was closed, but through the other doorway I could see into a spacious room in which a number of people were assembled. They were all seated on narrow, wooden benches ranged round the walls, and these benches seemed to be well-nigh full. There was, indeed, but one vacant space—to the right of a little door immediately opposite the one by which I had entered. The woman ushered me in, and, pointing to this vacant space, bade me sit down and wait my turn. Google

"I sat down, and, after a little, my eyes having become accustomed to the dim light—for there was no more than could penetrate through those dulled panes you see over there—I could discern what manner of people were there who were my companions in this strange room. I never in all my life set eyes on a more melancholy-looking lot. I have attended spiritualist séances often. My aunt in Norfolk is a Particular Baptist, and I have met select parties of her co-religionists round her tea-table. I often go to Congresses and Conferences, where papers of all sorts are read; but on none of these occasions have I ever seen so deep a shade of melancholy as that which brooded over the faces of the people around me. My neighbour on the opposite side of the door; the man whose turn—turn for what I had not the faintest notion—came next, was a tall old man with long, white hair flowing down upon his shoulders. He sat with his chin leaning upon his hands, which were clasped on the top of a handsome, gold-headed cane. His eyes were restless and wild, and he kept glancing nervously at the door between us, behind which now and then I could plainly hear a passing footstep. He was evidently anxious, and perhaps impatient for the arrival of the moment when the door should be opened and his turn should come.

"Presently, in obedience apparently to some hidden machinery within, the door opened, the old man started to his feet, and with one glance at the dim light struggling in through the darkened window—a glance in which there seemed to me to be more of terror than of hope—he shambled through the doorway into the unknown beyond, and the door closed behind him with a smart, smooth click. The next one moved up into the vacant place, everyone else followed suit, and I also shifted myself a foot or two, making room for a new comer, should one arrive, below me. I felt a curious muddled swimming in my head, for the air of the room was heavy with a strange and sickly scent; but I was not too much dazed to begin to examine more carefully the appearance of my companions. All were seemingly people of the middle class; none bore any sign of poverty; and I doubt whether any poverty could have produced a look of misery more profound than that which appeared upon the faces of all. In type they varied exceedingly. The man who now sat nearest to the little door was small and wizened;

but his eyes, dark and piercing, burnt bright as live coals. His face was deathly pale, as was that of the woman next to him—a tall, handsome lady, with delicate, clear-cut features. Nearly all were well advanced in life, and I myself seemed to be the youngest of the party. All this time silence the most profound reigned throughout the room, broken only by the regular thud of a machine of some sort. It sounded faint and distant, and was evidently broken by the intervention of several thick walls. Now and then, too, another sound—a hissing, sucking noise—would make itself heard, and mingled with this I fancied I could hear low moans, as of a human being in fainting or agony; but on this point I could not be positive. The door opened again, and I expected to see the white-haired old man reappear; but, no, the other, who had taken his place, rose and walked with an unfaltering step through the mysterious portal, which was immediately shut again. After this the turns became much more rapid, and several new-comers came and seated themselves below me, being conducted to their places by the tall, dark woman, who looked at me, I thought, with no friendly eyes. At last I counted those sitting before me, and I found that only fifteen now remained. At the present rate in less than an hour I should learn personally what lay on the other side of that uncanny little door.

"I must confess that I now began to reproach myself for not having made some enquiries as to the nature of the house before I knocked for admission, but the whole affair had seemed so simple and commonplace; and, to tell you the truth, I fancied you must have been mistaken in your theory, that no one who had once heard that strongly-barred front door close behind him ever issued from it again. Now I can quite believe that you are right. I—the exception—prove the rule. I was half inclined to ask my neighbour on my right a few questions, but then it requires considerable resolution to break a silence which had lasted intact for more than an hour, and I did not like to show my ignorance or to pose as an interloper, so I held my peace.

At last I noticed, lying on the bench, a little red book upon the outside of which were the words: "Rejuvenescence. Dr. Thermor's System." Dr. Thermor, whoever he was, had written a short preface to his book, a new edition I remarked, in which he thanked the press and the public

generally for the generous way in which his efforts in the cause of progress and humanity had been received, and ventured to hope that the present revised edition would command as general approval as had its predecessors. At the end of the preface I noticed that he dated his work from No. 40, Last Street, E.W. Now, as I had a distinct recollection of seeing the figures "40" on the outer door as I knocked, I concluded that I was in Dr. Thermor's house, and possibly on the way to be fully enlightened as to the details of his "system," whatever it might be. Therefore I thought I might do worse than gather what information I could from the book I held in my hand.

"This pamphlet was an exposition of what seemed to me to be the wildest and most extraordinary excursion into the by-ways of pathology that ever came under my notice, and you know I have had some curious experiences in that field. The author, Dr. Thermor, M.D., of the University of Saratoga, began by stating how, in the course of medical practice on the ordinary lines, he had become convinced that there is no absolute necessity for man to die; that there are no conditions inseparably resident in his physical frame to prevent him from living for ever, unless he should choose to kill himself by intemperance, or become the victim of mischance. Then followed an account of a long series of experiments undertaken by Dr. Thermor upon the lower animals—an account which would have thrown an anti-vivisectionist into a fit—while he was groping after the truth. Finally came the announcement of success, and the publication of as much of his glorious discovery as was expedient to the human race.

"To begin with, Dr. Thermor had satisfied himself that all the ills which plague mankind take their origin from the unwholesome food which man puts into his stomach, consequently the first step in the new system was an entirely new dietary. This was not to be uniform. Dr. Thermor recognised the wisdom of the saw that one man's meat may be another man's poison, and he proposed to feed his patients according to certain peculiarities of constitution. The primary aim of the doctor was to get the blood into a perfectly pure and healthy condition. Up to this point there was nothing very revolutionary in the principles laid down, or in the methods the doctor proposed to adopt in working out his almost supernatural pur-

pose; but before I had read three pages farther I had mastered the details of the entire system, and when I knew these I confess I felt a cold shudder creeping over me, and I wished myself most fervently outside that well-bolted door. I learned that, when once the blood is restored to a healthy condition by simple diet, and by the use of certain newly compounded medicines, the course of decay in the human frame is greatly retarded, and for many years men will, to outward seeming, get very little older; but decay is not totally arrested.

Here for a long time was the flaw, the removal of which Dr. Thermor regards as the keystone of his system—the most valid title to honour and reward. He had hunted out the causes which led to the deterioration of the vital fluid, and had satisfied himself that no earthly power could remove them. New blood, replete with all the qualities of the healthiest organism, was his desideratum, and after long and patient search he had mastered the secret of its composition. A man wishing to enjoy this new immortality, must submit to have his old worn-out blood extracted, and to be supplied with a due quantity of Dr. Thermor's patent in its place.

"Then the doctor went on to describe with horrible minuteness the mechanism he had perfected for the safe and painless extraction of the worn-out fluid, and for the refilling of the veins with the new decoction containing all the elements of human blood just the same as Brighton seltzer is fabled, so far as chemical composition goes, to be precisely similar to the outflow of the German spring; but the doctor's system did not stop here. By a long series of experiments he had discovered that people were dull or lively, amiable or ill-tempered, clever or stupid, according as their blood was rich or deficient in certain organic salts and volatile ethers. He had carefully tabulated the relations between physical structure and nerval phenomenon, and now he preferred to be able to supply temperaments of all kinds to order along with a fresh infusion of blood. That is, if a man of excitable nature wished to enjoy a calm and uneventful spell of prolonged existence, he had only to put himself under the doctor's hands and say beforehand how he would like his new blood to be made up. A man who was conscious of his dulness, and wished for greater brilliancy of intellect—surely this phrase argues that the doctor

had been too deeply engaged in physical research to study mankind—might in like manner be turned into another Ruskin or Carlyle. Of course there was a danger that the desire for change might not always be upward and onward. A judge might hanker after the temperament of a fraudulent trustee, or a bishop might wish to know something of the feelings of a Monte Carlo habitué, but on this point the doctor spoke with no uncertain sound. It was true it lay in his power to degrade as well as to elevate; a grain of a particular nitrate added, a drop of a certain tincture withheld, and the thing was done; but as a Christian, as the father of a family, and as a churchwarden of his parish, he let the world know once for all that not all the wealth of the Indies should tempt him in this matter one inch from the straight path of morality. The human race, if it wanted to take advantage of the doctor's wonderful discovery, must make up its mind to be elevated. If it desired to travel in the opposite direction, it had better go to some other practitioner.

"As I read on I could not help thinking what a good joke it would be if you could persuade Herr Clausius to submit himself to Dr. Thermor's treatment, and provide beforehand that he should be replenished with blood rich in all the attributes which go to make an acrobat or a jack-pudding. The doctor could hardly find any moral objections to this arrangement, for the change it would propose could not well be called a degradation; but, perhaps, I am a little prejudiced against Herr Clausius, on account of the way in which he persistently ignores me.

"All the time I was reading I could hear the steady beat of the engine, and now and then the ghastly hissing sucking sound would make itself heard, just as though some unfortunate were being pumped dry in the adjacent room. I had been too much absorbed in the contents of the doctor's brochure to notice the opening and shutting of the little door, the entrance of fresh people, and the fact that I had by this time been shifted quite round the room, and that now only two people sat between me and the door of exit.

"At this moment I frankly confess that I would have given a great deal to have made my way out of this horrible room, with its heavy-scented air and tomblike stillness. I looked at the window, but the heavy iron bars stretched across it told me

there was no hope on that side. The door by which I had entered was indeed open; but now the tall woman in the black robe stood by it, glaring at me out of the darkness of the passage with eyes like those of an angry snake.

"I sat gazing at her like one fascinated, when suddenly I was again startled by the soft click of the little door as it closed. The man who had sat next to me all the time had passed in, and it was my turn next.

"I can now fully realise the feelings of the condemned malefactor, as he listens in his cell for the grating of the key in the lock on the last morning of his life. Ah! how the moments sped along; it seemed as if that great wheel which throbbed and groaned inside was rapidly measuring off the reel the last inches of my thread of life. I looked up at the others, who sat on the benches behind me. Many more must have come in, for the places were almost all filled up again. I was beginning to count them when, once more, the little door opened. I turned my head and saw, standing within it, a little fat man clad in a white dress, something like a cook's. He fixed his bright, sparkling eyes upon mine, and bent his forefinger with a beckoning gesture, and I was forced to rise from my seat and turn towards him by some strange influence. Then a broad smile came over his face, his eyes twinkled brighter than ever, and he waved his finger backwards and forwards two or three times. All mastery over my will was by this time quite gone. I passed in through the little doorway; the door swung back behind me, and I stood at last on the threshold of the mystery.

"The place in which I found myself was a lofty, vaulted passage, lighted I knew not how. The air was dim with faint blue smoke, and scented with the same heavy perfume as I had noticed in the room I had just quitted. Suddenly, from a doorway on the left, which I had not noticed, a tall man, dressed in a long flowing crimson robe, advanced towards me with a—

Post scriptum, written by Anton Clausius, Ph.D., of the University of Dummerhausen, and addressed to the editor of ALL THE YEAR ROUND.

"When I was summoned by the bad-news-bearing landlady of my old friend, Herr Christoph. Holt, I found him at his table sitting quite dead, with this not yet finished writing before him. He had been working at it when he was by death seized.

I find that this paper is only one of a lot, all on similar subjects written, and evidently for publication designed. When I through read them I found out the reason of my old friend's altered towards myself behaviour. We were friends, good friends always, till he the subject of metaphysics took up, and for this study his brain was not strong enough. It is only men with strong brains who can study metaphysics; men with brains like mine. My poor old friend thought he had a strong brain; but no! fourteen hours' reading would put it all in a wurr-warr, as we say in German. I often, when we were metaphysics discussing, used to show him his mistakes, and then he would become very angry, and this men often do, who the metaphysic study without the strong brain. This, I find, is the ground-work of his dislike to me. Lieber Himmel! it is very strange that any man should dislike me; but, as I read the papers, I find out another much-more-to-be-wondered-at circumstance. My poor old friend, when his head by the too much study of metaphysics muddled became, would always begin to fancy that some strange mystery in the house over against his lodgings hidden was. Then, when by his strange speculations he had himself madder than he was before made, he invented to help him find out the mystery over the way a sort of phantom, whom he by the name of Simpson call. Lieber Himmel! Did ever anyone before hear of a ghost named Simpson? First he the mystery invents, and then he invents the Simpson ghost to help him to explain it. This shows what comes of studying the metaphysics without the strong brain.

"After I had read through these histories I went to visit all the houses in which my old friend had lodged, and I made out as well as I could who the people were about whom he such strange fancies imagined. Of course, to a systematic thinker like myself, there was no mystery at all. The house where the three Frenchmen lived was pulled down and clean gone, so I could nothing about them learn; but the old man and his daughter were neither Poles nor conspirators. The old man was an Italian music teacher, and his very talented and affectionate young daughter made a little money by water-colour painting till she got married, and then she was to the altar led, not by a Russian attaché, but by a smart young stockbroker, who took her, and her aged father as well, with him at Putnev to dwell.

"The young clerk in Islington he certainly did a holiday take after a severe illness, but nobody but the Simpson ghost has ever heard of the strange reason. The gentleman in the Clapham Road he of his garden is still very fond; but his face is very sad, just as my old friend describes. Perhaps it is because he two wives has got; but any man might well look sad and by care weighed down, who has to listen all day long to the noise of the tramway bells in the Clapham Road.

"The old man in the Horseferry Road was not the victim of a terrible secret, as my poor friend had imagined; he was only the proprietor of several on the river trading between Oxford and London barges, and every week his foreman the money to him would bring. And this last not quite completed, most horrible story about Dr. Thermor, is the greatest delusion of them all; but that is not to be wondered at, for the poor old man took more and more chloral every day, and madder and madder became. The house opposite the lodgings where he is now lying dead, where he saw at work the mysterious machinery, was the public baths and wash-houses and nothing more. The people go in dirty by the door in Last Street, and go out clean by another way at the back.

"Mr. Holt, I find from some memoranda that he has left, intended to send these stories to your magazine, so I feel myself in duty bound to forward them; but I can hardly think you will give them to the world in your so widely read and much appreciated pages. I send with them a little treatise of my own, about four hundred and eighty pages octavo, on the future of metaphysics in England, which would, I am sure, much more amuse your readers, and at the same time raise to a never yet attained point of fame, both yourself and your illustrious magazine."

VICTIMS.

By THEO GIFT.

Author of "*Lil Lorimer*," "*An Alibi and its Price*,"
Etc., Etc.

CHAPTER XXXII

INTO A SAFE HAVEN.

It was some hours later on the same day. The mellow afternoon sunshine, piercing the thick foliage of the pear-tree in Mrs. Nicholls's little garden, flickered pleasantly among the feathery clematis which made a white-and-green bower about

the window of an upper room, and lay like a splash of gold across the foot of a low, chintz-covered couch, whereon, wrapped in soft shawls and with her head pillowed on Marstrand's breast, lay Vera, her face, white as the blossoms of the clematis, filled with a kind of joyous peace beyond all words, her grey, sweet eyes clear and shining with the unclouded radiance of a child who, having lost its way awhile and found it again, is safely nestled in its parent's arms.

They were all there, the young husband, who had known none of the joys but only the pains and responsibilities of marriage; the girl friend, loved so to the last that, even when resting in her husband's arms, Vera would have her seat herself on a footstool close by, so that she might slip her feeble fingers into the warm and faithful clasp that had so long and loyally upheld them; Madame St. Laurent, wan and aged-looking, but striving still to foster a faint hope which no one else, alas! shared, and drinking in with wistful eagerness every light and shade on the face of the child whose agonised appeals she had silenced, whose innocent heart she had broken in that very room; even Joanna, seated a little in the background with red eyes and nose redder than ever, and giving vent every now and then to an irrepressible sniff, which she endeavoured on each occasion to turn into a sneeze or cough, lest the nurseling, to whom she had always seemed so grim, might erroneously imagine that she was grieving, and have her own happiness damped thereby.

For, if it is possible for any human being to be perfectly happy in this life, Vera was then. She had been very ill in the morning, seized with attacks of faintness and difficulty of breathing, hard both to endure and to relieve; but these had passed away, and she was better, "nearly well," she said—so nearly, indeed, that the doctor who had been called in turned away at last with a sorrowful shake of the head, and told those in charge of her that she might see any one, or do anything, that she pleased. Nothing—not even to agitate her—could do her harm now, save for the briefest while.

In truth, however, there had been less agitation after all than anyone could have supposed; for even while Vera was resting on the evening of her arrival, Leah had brought her a loving little note which, at the Jewish girl's suggestion, Marstrand had written to his wife, telling her that

his errand had ended so successfully that he was bringing Madame St. Laurent to Guernsey with him to see her runaway child, and convince her of her forgiveness and affection; and that, as they would arrive on the following morning, Vera must be a good child, and eat and sleep soundly, so as to be well and strong to greet them.

Vera cried a little with sheer joy over this letter. "How dear he is! How beautifully he writes! And oh, how good of mamma to make friends with him so easily!" she kept saying again and again, but obeyed with charming docility when reminded of the orders to eat and sleep; and, holding the precious missive clasped against her bosom, kept it hidden there while she slumbered.

So, after the morning's seizure had sufficiently passed away, her first question was whether the travellers had arrived, and on being answered in the affirmative, she entreated Leah to "make her look pretty," and let her be taken out of bed and laid on the couch near the window, declaring that she could breathe more easily there; and also (with a little conscious blush and smile) that as she could not go down to see Marstrand, it would seem less funny to receive him on the sofa than in bed.

The blush was brighter yet when, a little later, he was admitted, and at the sight of that shy, exquisite bridal bloom lighting the fair wan face with more than its old youth and tenderness, the poor fellow forgot for one moment all that was behind and before him, all the bitter, terrible past, the shadowed future, even the hard lesson of repression he had been so long teaching himself,—everything was forgotten, save that this was Vera, his little love, the girl-bride of one brief, beautiful hour five months ago—and, falling on his knees beside her, he clasped her in his arms, calling her his darling, his own precious wife, his poor little patient lamb, the while he showered kisses on her brow, and lips, and cheek, and more than all on that slender left hand where his own ring (replaced by Vera's mother herself) hung so loosely on the wasted third finger.

As for the girl herself, she simply gave herself up to his caresses with most perfect and innocent content, and, nestling in his arms, hid her cheek against his coat and rested there, happily shielded from seeing the tears which, powerful man as he was, were rolling down her husband's face as he held her to him.

And even the meeting with her mother seemed to have been robbed of all harmful excitement by that merciful dispensation which, by blotting out all memories of pain and trouble, had left nothing but peace and happiness behind.

"Dear, dear mamma, how kind of you not to be angry and to come to me!" the girl said, stretching out her weak arms to her mother, and pressing warm and grateful kisses on her thin cheek. "I never thought you would be so good, after my running away and all; but indeed, indeed, I did not mean to be bad to you, and I said 'good-bye' outside your door before I came away. I did, truly."

"I know—I heard you, my poor child; and I'm not angry, I couldn't be," Madame said tremulously. "It's you I want——" "to forgive me," she was longing to add; but a quick glance of warning from Marstrand checked her, and Vera answered the sentence as if it had been finished.

"Oh, but you will still have as much of me, almost, as if I was not married; for you must come and stay with George and me, and teach me to keep house tidily like you do. Only I don't suppose you ever kept house in a house-boat; and, you know, George promised long ago that, whenever we were married, he would give me one for my own, so that we might live in it all the hot summer days. Don't you think that would be very nice?"

"Very nice, my deary," Madame said, with quivering lips. No one else could speak.

"And Leah is to go with us. Dear Leah, where is she? George, won't you call her back? Mamma will not mind, will you, mamma? You used to like her once, you know; and it was so good of her to come over and take care of me while George was away."

"I do like her now, dear. I can't ever be grateful enough for her care of you," Madame St. Laurent answered, her eyes seeking Leah's wistfully. Vera's face beamed with mild pleasure.

"That is nice," she said, with the long sigh of a thoroughly contented child. "I don't think there's anything so nice as everybody being friends. George," lifting her sweet eyes to her husband, "don't you think I'm a very lucky girl—luckier than other girls, I mean—to have all the people I love so good to me? And I used to be a little afraid of you once, and of mamma too, before I was married. Once, when I

was ill——" She stopped abruptly, and added: "Have I been ill long?"

"Not—very long," Marstrand said gently.

"No, I suppose not; because it was after you went away, and you said you wouldn't be away long. It has been a fever, hasn't it, George?"

"Yes, my darling; you caught cold sitting by the window, and that brought on a fever."

"Ah, yes, I remember. I was watching for you to come back; but it seemed such a fine evening, and the hyacinths smelt so sweet—— I suppose fever makes one forget things, for I can't recollect what came afterwards or——or how Leah came. Was I ill then, Leah? It seems such a long, long while ago, and all filled with dreams—bad, frightening dreams. Just now," her brow puckering a little, "I seemed to remember one about mamma—that she came in at the door there and stood looking at me—oh, such a dreadful look! And she said—she said I was not——"

"Don't think of it, Vera," Leah said, kneeling down by her, and speaking as much in pity for the unhappy mother as for the girl, whose face had grown suddenly worn and troubled. "It was only a dream, as you said, and the fever is gone now, and the dreams too, so you must forget all about them. Your mother only wants now that you should be happy."

The smile struggled back to Vera's lips.

"I am happy," she said softly; "so happy that I only wish——"

"What, my darling?" Marstrand asked, laying his cheek against hers.

"Well, I wish we could all go out for a walk in the sunshine. See what beautiful golden rays are filling the room, and how the shadows of the little leaves seem to dance and beckon on the wall. It seems so silly to be ill and tired when everything is so nice and beautiful."

"Are you tired, love? Shut your eyes, then, and try to sleep," her husband said anxiously, for the weak voice had grown weaker with the last few words, and the lips that spoke them were strangely white. Vera laughed a little faint, far-off laugh.

"To go to sleep—with you here! Wouldn't that be rude? And I wanted to say—so much to you."

"You shall say it when you wake, my precious one."

"Only I have had to wait—so long already; for I missed you, even though I was ill I missed you. You won't go away from me again, will you?"

"Never again, my darling; never for one moment."

"And Leah will come in the house-boat, and little Alix—I shall tell her stories. Do you remember—how she liked that one about Sainte Tryphine? You used to call me your Tryphine once?"

"That was a foolish name, my dearest. 'Wife' is a sweeter one. I call you that now."

"Ah yes, her husband killed her! But he—he was killed too, wasn't he?"

"Yes, he was killed too," Marsland said, with sudden, savage sternness. "Don't speak of him, my own one. Rest now. Rest in my arms and sleep."

"Will Leah take mamma, then, for a walk in the sunshine? But kiss me first, mamma, that I may feel you are not angry, and—Leah!"

"Yes, darling," Leah said, bending down to her, and striving hard to answer the sweet, smiling eyes with as brave and bright a look. Vera lifted one feeble hand to touch her face.

"Dear Leah, how lovely you look, and how I love you! I have taken George from you, but I am not—going to keep him—long. When I am asleep he must go to you—when—I am asleep."

Her lips met Leah's in a long kiss as she said it; but as the door closed she let her head sink back on Marsland's breast, and whispering something about "so tired," and "a little while," closed her eyes.

She was "asleep" already!

It is five years later: five years with all their changes, their joys, and sorrows, and vicissitudes, and Leah is standing one day on the boat-house steps of the villa at Weybridge, looking up and down the river through the gathering afternoon mist. That villa is Mr. Lucas's own property now, Naomi and he having decided, after the birth of their sixth child, that for the sanitary interests of the young brood, as well as for the relaxation from City cares implied in Mr. Lucas's piscatorial exertions, a country residence easily accessible from town was preferable to a London one.

Naomi does not mind. Increasing fat and family diminish the liveliest woman's zest for dancing and party-going, and Naomi resigned herself—as she told her mother—"to give up the world for the sake of Lucas and the babies;" but since then there have been no more babies, and she has grown fatter and more lively than

ever, while Lucas and the rest of the party thrive equally well, not even the fish being excluded from the category, unless indeed—as Mr. Lucas is sometimes fain to suspect—they deserted that pleasant bend of the Thames in a body at the mere news of the arrival "en permanence" of himself and his rod.

Leah is often there; as often indeed as Professor Josephs can be brought to spare her from home, for the old house in Addison Gardens is Leah's home, and Leah is Leah Josephs still. In vain has little Rosenberg worn himself limp and hoarse, and taken to wearing dejectedly sentimental-looking weeds in the button-hole of his velvet jacket, in the endeavour to induce her to change that name for another.

In vain have sundry long-haired, wild-haired, and no-haired-at-all musical geniuses hailing from Bloomsbury, Berlin, or Buda, joined their persuasions to his in the same cause, though on their own account. Leah will not listen to any of them. She simply says that she does not intend to marry, and adds—for the benefit of her family circle—that being now an ugly, middle-aged woman, she thinks it is high time she was let alone on the subject.

That latter assertion is not quite correct in its premises, however. She is not certainly as pretty a girl as she was five years ago. She would scarcely be a Jewish woman if she were; but in some respects, in the noble lines of her form and features, and the exquisite sweetness and gentleness softening what might otherwise have been an undue gravity of expression, she is yet more beautiful as a woman than she was as a girl; and so Lady Hessey thinks each time she persuades Miss Josephs to pay her and Sir John a visit at their "place" in Lincolnshire, and, watching the charm of her face, listening to the glory of her voice, wonders what her brother could have been thinking of in the past, what he can be thinking of at present.

For, though Marsland has been very little in England during the last five years, he and Leah have often met during his brief visits to the old country, and are the best of friends, but nothing more!

His partnership with the Kensington physician had been cancelled at his own desire while he was still in prison, and almost immediately after poor Vera's funeral he engaged himself as surgeon on board a large emigrant vessel sailing between Liverpool and Melbourne, and for the next two years and a half devoted himself to

the dry monotonous duty of ceaseless doctoring of poor emigrant men and women, and ceaseless ushering of poor emigrant babies into the world, managing in the course of such duties to bestow so much extra and unprofessional kindness and aid on his patients and their friends and neighbours, that there was a general outcry from employers, captain, and passengers when, at the expiration of the time named, the handsome, sad-eyed young surgeon announced his intention of relinquishing the sea and joining a scientific exploration party into the interior of Australia.

In truth, however, that dull round of self-imposed duties in the way of saving or mending life which, when his trouble was newest, seemed a better medicine than mere idle travel or excitement, grew to be unendurably wearisome after a time to a man of Marstland's talents and culture; and when, after an absence of two years, he and one other man, the sole survivors of a party, all the rest of whom had succumbed to hunger, thirst, or native spears in the trackless wilds of Australasia, returned to England to receive the gold medal of the Royal Geographical Society as a reward for the labours and sufferings which had added a fresh leaf to the laurel crown of scientific discoveries, Lady Hessey declared that she thought her brother looking brighter and better than he had done since the day when she went down to Liverpool to bid him good-bye ere he started on his first voyage in the good ship *Kaikoura*.

She half hoped he might be going to settle down at last, and took an early opportunity of asking him if he had heard that his friend Miss Josephs had become a Christian? Well, not perhaps what she, Lady Hessey, would call a Christian, because she did not think Miss Josephs had even been baptized as yet; but so much so that her pet society for the study and strengthening of Judaism among the women of her race had come to an end some time ago, owing to the fact that the deeper her own researches led her into the records of the Jewish Church in opposition to Christianity, the deeper and more fervent became her admiration, not only for the latter faith, but for its Divine founder.

But Marstland hardly seemed to be interested in the intelligence; and though, as usual, spending most of his time with the Josephses during his stay in England, he only remained there six weeks after all, before taking himself off to the south of

Europe and spending three months there in the cholera hospitals at Naples and Marseilles, an experience from which he had only lately returned.

It really seemed, Lady Hessey said, as if the sight of his old friends and old haunts was actually prejudicial, rather than the reverse, to her hopes, and by re-opening that terrible wound, the depth of which she had never fathomed, made it more difficult of healing.

He never talked of it to anyone but Leah; never, by word or sign even, alluded to the trouble which had, as it were, cut his life in two in the very prime and promise of it, and made all that was left valueless to him; nor had he ever met, or held intercourse with any member of the St. Laurent family from the hour when he and Vera's mother stood beside the grave of the girl they had loved less wisely than too well, and for the first and only time clasped hands in the mutual forgiveness of a common heart-break. Leah, however, knew well that in all the arrangements between them up to that time he had shown a quiet magnanimity and forbearance, which had won him the unhappy woman's hearty gratitude and respect; and on one point he had been quite firm. Nothing would induce him to take back one penny of the money he had made over to "his wife" for the payment of her father's debts. It had been the girl's own desire, one of the few she had ever expressed, that they should be discharged; and every wish and word of hers was sacred to him, and should be—so he argued—to her parents. Whether M. St. Laurent was of the same way of thinking is not known; but as his daughter's premature death cut off all hopes of his getting any benefit from the de Mailly property, and as his debts were nevertheless paid, it is fair to conjecture that he did in some manner arrive at recognising, if not Marstland's rights, at any rate his duties, as a son-in-law.

But we have left Leah too long standing by the river's brink, for the autumn was drawing in by now, and the evenings getting damp and chilly. Leah felt it so herself, and after a last glance in the direction whither Benjy and Alix had betaken themselves in their own special dinky an hour back, she gave a very decided shiver and turned her steps back to the house where, as she was pleasantly aware, a warm fire and afternoon tea were then awaiting her.

Something—or rather someone—else

was waiting also; for, as she entered the drawing-room, a tall, broad-shouldered figure rose from the arm-chair nearest the hearth and answered her exclamation of surprise by saying:

"I haven't been here long. The maid said Naomi was out, but you were somewhere in the garden; so I came in."

"Very sensibly," said Leah; "for you are just in time for tea. I hope you want some."

"I shan't be sorry for a cup. Your tea is always good. But I didn't come for that. I came—to say good-bye."

"Again!" Leah said sadly. She was filling the teapot as she spoke.

"Yes; has my sister told you? She is furious with me; but I can't help it. What else can I do? You know!"

"Yes." The word came sorrowfully, but with no surprise, only a full and gentle understanding.

"I have no home here, and don't seem able to make one. I never even have a home feeling, except in this house perhaps, or Addison Gardens. You give it me; you always did. But then I can't quite quarter myself on you indefinitely."

"We don't grumble at your visits," said Leah, with a little smile—one quickly quenched, however.

"I know you don't; you're too good-natured to grumble at anything. I wonder if there ever were better people than you and your family. She didn't think so. Leah!"

"Yes," very quietly.

"Where do you think I have just come from?"

"Not from Lincolnshire?"

"No, I left there last week and ran over to Guernsey. I wanted to make sure the—the grave was being kept tidy, and to plant some white hyacinth bulbs round it. She—you remember?—she liked the scent of them."

Leah nodded. She did not trust herself to speak.

"I had the old rooms, and I thought—I had thought, I mean—I could manage to pass the winter there; but the memory of all that past pain made the present emptiness worse. I couldn't stand it; and yet they tell me I must go somewhere. Gull says—what's the matter?" for she had started and uttered a low cry.

"Nothing," she said composedly. "Go on. What did—Gull say? He—he does not think you ill, does he?" But her deep bright eyes were reading the rather hag-

gard lines of his face eagerly, and if he had been nearer he might have seen her tremble.

"Oh, no! only that it is evident that old spear-wound, where the Australian nigger dug into me, did touch the lungs, and that I can't stand English fogs and frosts. He wants me to go to Malaga. They've written to him to recommend them some one to the English practice there; but——"

"Oh! don't say 'but,'" she interrupted eagerly; "it's a pleasant place and a lovely climate. Do go there, do. You oughtn't to delay a day if it is as he says; and you know there is nothing to prevent you."

"Except the old thing, the restlessness and loneliness which the very sight of other men in their happy family circles always makes worse, and which generally ends—coward that I am!—by driving me back to your charitable fireside for comfort. I want to be further away, out of reach altogether, to resist it."

"Why should you?" But her eyes were full, and she dared not look up.

"Why? For three reasons. Because it's cowardly, as I said, and selfish; because it's a tax on you and yours, and not fair to either; and because—because it only makes it worse for me, worse each time. Leah, dear, you know well enough what you are to me, what you have been all these years—the best, the truest friend; all that makes life worth living to an unlucky beggar, who has shown too plainly already how miserably unfit he was to be trusted with a woman's happiness to dare to ask you to trust yours to him. Look here, dear, don't you ask me to stay within reach of you, or go on being kind to me. It—it only makes me long the more to have you altogether, and I know it's no use. I know you're miles too good for me, too good every way not to deserve to have been first from the beginning with any man who was lucky enough to win you. And yet I'm such a jealous fool I can't keep away from you, or from hating every man that sits down by your side, and has a better right to you than myself."

"But—if I hate them too!" Leah said rather brokenly, for the tears that were in her voice. She added after a few minutes: "And it is I to choose who has the best right."

But he was kneeling beside her then with his arms round her, and his head resting on her faithful heart, and she got no answer—in words.

THE STORY OF OUR LIVES FROM YEAR TO YEAR

ALL THE YEAR ROUND

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PRICE TWOPENCE.

A DATELESS BARGAIN.

By C. L. PIRKIS,

Author of "Lady Lovelace," etc.

CHAPTER IX.

FRANK LEDYARD, during the night watches of Joyce's illness, asked himself a few questions.

Cut a man off from his work, shut him up within four walls, give him his sleep in snatches, make him eat his food without appetite, and the chances are that his brain will swarm with questions.

Frank's did, at any rate. Irritating, importunate questions they were, one as like another as grains of sand, all eventually resolving themselves into a final and pointed one, running somewhat as follows :

"If Joyce's happiness were, as he was asserting to himself all day long, his one and only object in life, was he in reality consulting it when he had insisted upon the postponement of their marriage ?"

Of course the question could be put in a hundred different fashions. As thus : "was not the sacrifice he had made to his pride compounded in part of her happiness?" Or thus : "was it not rather like straining at a gnat and swallowing a camel, under the circumstances, to sacrifice to his pride at all? Supposing even that, by dint of strenuous exertion, he could match Joyce's income in a few years' time with his own, he certainly could not hope to the end of his life, let him work as he might, to accumulate an equivalent to the fortune that would accrue to her on her mother's death, when the whole of Mr. Shenstone's property came to be divided between her and Mab."

A man of Frank Ledyard's energetic temperament cannot admit into his career anything that savours of ambiguity or vacillation of purpose. "If you have got

into the wrong path, the sooner you get out of it the better," is the decision with which such men generally cut sharply enough all knotty points.

This was the conclusion at which Frank, in due course, was to arrive. In his character, as in Joyce's, all sorts of contradictions met. An old schoolfellow of Frank's describing him about this time had said, "He is the most impetuous plodder that ever came into the world. He was so at Eton. See him begin a foot-race, no one would bet on him unless he knew him. He'd start with a spurt and everyone would say with a chuckle, 'that fellow won't keep up that pace long.' But hang it! he would and did, and always came in the first and the freshest at the end."

The anecdote was typical of Frank's conduct of life. In early youth he had been given to understand that his future was in his own hands to make or mar, and that from economic and other reasons the Bar was the only career open to him, and his proclivities in other directions were sharply nipped in the bud. His father had been a man of fair fortune, had died young, leaving his property at the sole disposal of his widow. She soon wearied of the widowed state; entered the bonds of matrimony again; and, in her turn, died, leaving the boy Frank on his stepfather's hands. The stepfather repeated his wife's career—with a difference. He speedily re-married, but, instead of dying, brought into the world a large family. Under these circumstances it was not surprising that Frank's patrimony had dwindled. Land had to be mortgaged to cover his school and college expenses, and, to meet the mortgage, had eventually to be sold. Subsequently the wreck of the property had been handed over to him, a sum amounting to something under two thousand pounds. On this he was duly

informed he was expected to thrive and be content, or else to build up for himself a fortune in life. He chose to attempt the latter, and set to work at the mill with a vast energy. No incentive to hard striving was needed by a man of his large ambitions and strong will; but, naturally, when he came upon his fate in the form of Joyce Shenstone, his interest in his work doubled and trebled itself, and straight ahead of other men he went with a sure-footed swiftness that was bound to win the race.

"That is a rising man," had been the comment freely passed upon him by his seniors in the profession, as they noted the steady grasp of his intellect, his clear eye for an outline, legal or otherwise.

And "he'll make himself a name before he has done," had been more than once said of him by his colleagues on the press, as they marked the sure-handed vehemence with which he struck at his nails, and the straight, steady fashion in which every one of them went home.

But, coupled with these essentially masculine traits, were others, which some would consider of less robust growth—a sense of honour so fine as to be superfine, a pride so wire-drawn as to be all but attenuated. Under the dictates of this pride he had taken fire at foolish Mrs. Shenstone's foolish words, and had done his utmost to retard Joyce's happiness and his own. The pride, however, was for a time quenched by a stronger, deeper feeling: a terror lest, by retarding his happiness, he had lost his chance of it altogether. He now saw matters in a clearer light, and lost no time in coming to a new resolution upon them.

He took the first opportunity that presented itself to explain to Mab the change which had come over his views; how that, instead of wishing to postpone his marriage with Joyce, he hoped he might now be allowed to press matters forward as much as possible.

"Of course it costs me something to put my pride into my pocket, I won't say it doesn't; and I expect (and deserve) to be made to eat humble pie all round," he went on to say. "But you will understand, I know, Mab, whoever else makes mistakes on the matter, that Joyce's happiness is my first thought; that if I thought I could not make her happiness for her, I would step out of her path at once and make way for someone who could."

Mab was deliciously sympathetic. "Of course it will be a terrible wrench for me to part with Joyce," she said with a sigh,

"but I know it will be for her happiness. I am going round to mamma's rooms this afternoon; I will tell her, if you like, what you have said to me."

"Thank you, Mab, that is kind; I am afraid your mother, however, will not take my petition quite so graciously as you have," said Frank, a little doubtfully.

"Oh, but I am sure she will," was Mab's ready reply; "only yesterday she said to me, 'I shan't believe in Frank's devotion to Joyce if he prolongs their engagement much longer.' I'll undertake to manage mother, if you can undertake Uncle Archie. He'll be the one to give you trouble, I'm afraid."

Frank in silent wonder apostrophised his own folly, that had ever attached the slightest importance to words spoken by so feather-brained a woman as Mrs. Shenstone.

He took the earliest opportunity also of hinting to Joyce from which quarter blew the wind of his wishes now.

Joyce, looking fragile enough from her sharp illness but withal as coquettishly beautiful as ever, turned her deep shining eyes upon him. At heart she was triumphantly glad, but she did not intend yet awhile to show him the gladness, only the triumph.

"Ah," she said, smiling up at him from the pillows of the couch whereon she rested, "this is the man who meant to serve ten years of Egyptian bondage before he entered Canaan, and he hasn't had the courage to serve out one!"

"I know I deserve to be laughed at," said Frank humbly; "and I don't mind your laughing at me one bit, dear. But oh, what will Uncle Archie say?"

"What will you say to Uncle Archie? That's the point, I think," laughed Joyce. "How will you begin your letter, how end it? What will you put in the middle of it?"

"You shall see it, Joyce; you shall dictate it if you like—you shall tell me word for word what to put down."

"Shall I? Then take out your pencil and begin to write at once." Frank obeyed her immediately.

"Now begin: 'Dear Mr. Shenstone, I feel so small as to be absolutely microscopic, and I sincerely hope you won't overlook me together with the request I have to make.' That is to be by way of making a beginning. Your request is to be sent when you get Uncle Archie's reply; that is, if you dare send it at all after the crushing answer you will be sure to get."

"I deserve 'crushing' I admit," said Frank, sharply rapping his knuckles with his pencil. "But I don't believe any reply of Uncle Archie's will crush me, let it be never so ponderous. Just now with you given back to me, dear, I am in the seventh heaven, and it would take an army of Uncle Archie's to bring me down from it!"

"Ah, but fancy such an answer as this: 'Sir, remain the atom that you are, and keep your request unspoken.' I assure you I have known Uncle Archie go farther even than that in a letter."

Strange to say, when Uncle Archie's answer to Frank's petition for an early wedding-day came, it was something quite other than Joyce or Frank could have pictured in their most sanguine moments. It was the heartiest of complacent consents given with the most thorough goodwill.

"To say truth," wrote the old gentleman, "I have been very ill since my trip to London, though I have not liked to lay stress upon my illness for fear of causing you all needless anxiety. I am, however, beginning to feel that I am getting near the end of the race, and I should like to see my dead brother's children in safe keeping before I drop out of it. What you told me when you wrote some little time ago, and what I have heard from other friends in London as to the sort of people my sister-in-law is gathering about her has filled me with anxiety on my nieces' behalf. Joyce married to you is safe, of course, (you are made of sterling stuff, though you have your whims and your cranks like other people,) and there will be always a haven for Mab should anything arise to make her feel the need of one. So, my dear fellow, all I say to you is make all arrangements for as early a date as is admissible, and the sooner it is the better I shall be pleased."

CHAPTER X.

AFTER her illness, Joyce, accompanied by Mab, went for a month of sea air to some old friends in Wales; Mrs. Shenstone, for reasons best known to herself, refusing just then to take flight anywhere. Her quarters seemed very much to her liking, and she appeared extremely loth to be dislodged from them. It was possible that, alone in rooms, she was able to claim a freedom of action for herself, which her daughters occasionally begrudged her.

The house in Eaton Square was mean-

time thoroughly cleansed and disinfected by her orders. Someone must have suggested this sanitary measure to her, for common-sense on the matters of health or comfort she utterly lacked. It might have been the Buckingham's, who, during the absence of her daughters, passed a great deal of time in her society.

Joyce and Mab, returning from their seaside trip at the end of September, to their immense surprise found Sylvia Buckingham installed in their home as something of a major-domo, that is to say, she held the household keys, and appeared to be keeper of the privy purse.

Joyce came back in altogether redundant health and spirits, intending to make brisk preparations for her wedding-day, and to wind up generally the household clocks.

In straightforward fashion she took her mother to task on this matter.

"Is Miss Buckingham going to-morrow, mother?" she asked, trying to be as sunshiny as possible. "If she stays over another twenty-four hours, you may be sure I shall snub her frightfully."

Mrs. Shenstone begged the question. "How can you speak so rudely of my friends?" she said querulously. "I can't tell you how kind the Buckingham's have been to me while I have been so lonely and wretched. Sylvia and George——"

"Who? Who?" exclaimed Joyce, aghast at her mother's easy and familiar mention of this man, with his doubtful captaincy and objectionable personality.

Mrs. Shenstone turned her head towards the looking-glass to see if she had a girlish blush on her face. "Well, Joyce," she said deprecatingly, "you know I never could adopt your stiff and formal way of speaking of intimate friends."

"Friends! Mother, get upon stilts as soon as you can, if you can't keep out of the mud any other way."

"Mud! Stilts! That is always the way you and Mab talk when I want to have a little rational conversation."

"Ah, then we're of one mind now," cried Joyce brightly. "I only want a rational answer to my very rational question—how much longer is Miss Buckingham going to inflict her presence upon us?"

The door opened at this moment, and Miss Buckingham entered. There was nothing to give the impression that she had heard Joyce's last sentence, for her small mouth always wore that semi-satirical smile: but nevertheless, Joyce felt unre-

that she had done so, and that in due course she would acknowledge her indebtedness for it.

Mrs. Shenstone gave a sigh of relief. There could be no more cross-questionings from Joyce, so long as Sylvia remained in the room. She would do her best to keep her there.

"Sylvia, darling," she began, "what do you advise about that black lace dress of mine? Must I condemn it, or shall I get it retrimmed with blush-rose tints?"

But "Sylvia, darling" had something else on her mind at that moment.

"In a minute, Tiny," she answered.

Joyce looked up at her. Her mother's name was Ernestine, but even her father had never made a diminutive of it.

Miss Buckingham laid a bunch of keys on the table.

"I have much pleasure in resigning my post, now you have returned; but it has been an equally great pleasure to keep the keys in your absence, and so lighten Mrs. Shenstone's housekeeping cares," she said, addressing Joyce in that patronisingly amiable manner of hers, which Joyce said always made her want to open the windows to avoid suffocation.

"It was more than kind of you," answered Joyce, getting on her stilts at once, and laying a conspicuous emphasis on the word "more."

But though Sylvia resigned the keys, she did not bring her visit to a close, and the privy purse still remained in her keeping.

So at least Joyce surmised, from the manner in which Mrs. Shenstone constantly appealed to her on various matters of expenditure. "Was she running ahead in dress expenses? Could she afford this or that luxury or piece of extravagance?"

It was very irritating; but an even more potent cause for annoyance was to follow. Captain Buckingham, who had been on a few days' visit to Ireland, returning, made himself quite as much at home in the house as his sister.

Joyce flew for sympathy to Mab, and, for the very first time in her life, strange to say, did not get it.

Mab, scratching away with her pen at answers to a pile of her mother's letters which had been left unattended to, looked up nervously for a moment.

"I don't like to hear you call them adventurers, Joyce. I think you are rather hard upon Captain Buckingham. I'm sure he is honest and straightforward." Then her face drooped over her note paper again.

Joyce for one moment thought her ears must have deceived her.

"What!" she exclaimed, staring blankly at her sister. "'Honest and straightforward,' did you say?"

Mab grew confused. She never seemed able to stick to her opinions, if Joyce stared her full in the face and asked her to repeat them.

"I mean," she began hesitatingly, "he has ideas, and does not mind giving other people the benefit of them."

To this Joyce agreed with a nod.

"And the ideas are always worth listening to."

Here Joyce shook her head vehemently.

"Well, at any rate, they are opinions that have been well thought over. I should say he never speaks until he has given careful thought to what he has to say."

"What of that?" cried Joyce scornfully. "Heaps of people never speak without thinking beforehand what they are going to say. The wonder is to find a person who says the right thing all in a moment without thinking about it. Talk about second thoughts being best, I would alter it to sudden thoughts are best. All my best thoughts come to me in flashes. Oh, Mab!"

Here she abruptly broke off. A sudden thought had that moment come to her, which the next found her giving utterance to.

"What if the subject of the man's meditations at the present moment is to get round mother and make her marry him? Oh, it would be too dreadful!"

Mab's colour went to a russet-red. She did not flush so becomingly as Joyce did. She was lighting a candle at the moment to seal a letter by, and her hand shook so much that the lighted match fell to the ground.

Joyce put her foot on it.

"Well, there's one comfort," she went on, "I know how to put a stop to that little arrangement very quickly, by a reference to dear papa's will." She gave a second energetic stamp on the extinguished match, adding: "I wish that were Captain Buckingham. I should like to stamp on him and put him out in exactly the same fashion."

She had not heard the door open, and a light step across the room, or she might have slightly modified her expression. Sylvia Buckingham had a very quiet way of opening doors, and her footfall might have

been that of a beetle for all the noise it made upon the carpet.

Once more Joyce came to the conclusion that her words had been heard, and registered on the debtor's side of Sylvia's memorandum book, although the fair, immobile face made no sign.

"How dare she come creeping into rooms in this way? This is the second time!" thought the girl; and she looked across at Sylvia and gave another emphatic stamp on the defunct match.

"Am I intruding?" Sylvia asked patronisingly and amiably as usual.

Joyce made her manner as much a reflection of the other's as possible. "Not in the least," she answered coolly; "Mab and I always lock the door when we wish to be alone."

Sylvia lifted her large steely-blue eyes, giving Joyce one steady look.

Translated into speech it might have run somewhat as follows:

"The time for paying off debts has not yet come. When it does, you may trust to the goodness of my memory."

Aloud she said: "I'm looking for a book to read to Mrs. Shenstone. Now can you recommend one?"

Joyce pointed to the bookshelves. "If you want to read mother to sleep there are no end of books there admirable for the purpose. Darwin, Tyndall—ever so many. But if you want really to interest her, I should recommend one of the society journals." Then she turned to Mab and, apropos of nothing, brought out the following surprising remark:

"Mab, I do think our dear father was the best and wisest man that ever lived. He couldn't have taken better care of mother if he had tried. It was so sensible of him only to leave her a life interest in all his property. Only fancy, on the day she gets married again she will have nothing left her but a paltry five hundred a year for her life!"

Her words launched themselves like a thunderbolt on her two listeners. Mab's face was a picture of confusion and distress. Sylvia suddenly found the volume she wanted and left the room.

"Oh, Joyce! how could you?" cried Mab, her eyes filling with tears, her cheeks aflame.

"How could I what, dear?" asked Joyce calmly. "I have said nothing Miss Buckingham need take to herself or convey to her brother unless she is so disposed. I have only done my best to take care of

mother on the lines dear father laid down."

"I do—do believe you are mistaken," cried Mab excitedly, clasping her hands together.

"Perhaps."

"I'm sure you are hard on them, hard on mother too!" Mab went on vehemently. "Why shouldn't she choose what friends she pleases for herself? We left her so much alone, you and I being always together, no wonder she felt dull and thought she would like some nice companionable person to be in the house with her."

Joyce ended the discussion with a reminiscence of their sea-side trip.

"Do you remember the hermit-crabs we used to catch at Rhyll, Mab?" she asked. "They were a delightful study. Such voracious creatures! And so thoroughly at home in their friends' houses!"

Mab thought it wiser to say no more.

THE FRENCH-CANADIANS.

A CENTURY and a quarter ago the white population of Canada consisted of about sixty thousand hardy French colonists, who, with their Indian allies, principally occupied the best and richest lands on the shores of the St. Lawrence, between the towns of Quebec and Montreal. Some few were settled on the banks of the Richelieu, which flows northward from Lake Champlain, and empties itself into the mighty St. Lawrence, near the little town of Sorel, formerly called William Henry, after the sailor monarch who once honoured it with his presence. The remainder of the vast area now known as the Dominion of Canada—which stretches from the Atlantic to the Pacific, and, bounded on the south by the frontier line of the United States, touches with its northern boundary the extreme limits known to Arctic explorers—was then a wild and trackless country, covered in great part by thick forest, teeming with animal life, and traversed by wandering bands of savage and crafty Indians, who were supported by the huge herds of buffalo which roamed over the prairies, and by the fish that abounded in every lake and river. The province of Quebec, alone the size of modern Germany, was, with the exception of the region between Quebec and Montreal, an uninhabited wilderness.

To-day the French-Canadians have increased to a number which may be com-

puted at over one million and a half, and they have become something more than an ordinary factor in the population of five millions, which, including English, Scotch, Irish, and Frenchmen, has spread itself over British North America, from Halifax in the east to Vancouver's Island in the west. They are still chiefly to be found in the province of Quebec, French names being as rarely met with in other portions of Canada as they are in England. The spectacle of fifteen hundred thousand Frenchmen, speaking their own language, following their own manners and customs, and practising to a certain extent their own laws, in a country in which they are a conquered people, is a very remarkable one. How many nations besides England would have allowed this condition of things to continue, it is not very difficult to say. That the Canadian people might have suffered more injustice and oppression beneath the sway of the Germans, the Russians, or any other European nation than they endured under the disgraceful rule of the intendant Bigot, and the wilful neglect of their own King, cannot justly be said. But it is certain, on the other hand, that the gratitude displayed by the French-Canadians on the cession of their country to Great Britain, has been remarkably well justified by subsequent events. To hear the French language constantly spoken in the parliaments and tribunals of an English colony; to note that every public document in the province of Quebec is—at a vast expense—printed in both the English and the French tongues; and to mark the preponderance of French names and influence in the municipal and other councils throughout the province; is to be assured that the very fullest liberty which may possibly be desired, is granted to the French subjects of Her Majesty in Canada.

Whether the granting of so full a measure of liberty is wise or prudent, under all the circumstances, is a grave question. The French inhabitants of the Dominion have, it is true, constantly professed, and even occasionally asserted by a call to arms, their loyalty to the British Sovereign, but this has mainly arisen from the natural shrewdness which is a property of the race, and which enables them to appreciate the many advantages of good-natured and easy-going English rule.

They fought willingly against invaders and rebels in 1812 and 1837, and cheerfully responded to appeals for assistance against the dastardly attacks of Fenians in

later years; but times have changed, and in their response to the call to all good subjects of the Queen to assert the Imperial authority against Louis Riel and his horde of ignorant half-breeds, there was a comparative apathy and a sullenness which it would be impossible to misinterpret. Riel was, though Indian blood coursed in his veins, to all intents and purposes a French-Canadian. That he had the full sympathy of a very large proportion of his fellow-countrymen and co-religionists, cannot be denied. During the progress of the rebellion last year in the North-West provinces, a sheet was published in Montreal, which bore the title of *Le Metis*, and which advocated, in the strongest and most stirring language, the cause of the people whom Riel was at that time endeavouring to establish in independence on the banks of the Saskatchewan, in defiance of the constituted authorities of the country. This journal was widely read and circulated amongst the French-Canadians of the province of Quebec; and at meetings openly held in the city of Montreal, under the patronage of well-known and influential politicians and lawyers, the action of the Government in sending a force against the rebels was violently denounced. When Riel was captured, and General Middleton broke the neck of the rebellion, a groan of consternation went up from the sympathisers with the rebel, and from that day until Riel paid the last penalty of the law at Regina, the most strenuous efforts were made to obtain his pardon and release. Money was freely subscribed for his defence, although your French-Canadian is by no means a generous man as a rule; and utterances of a most disloyal nature were freely made, culminating, amongst certain sections, in distinct threats of revolt.

But, long before this, in 1884, while Louis Riel was still a sojourner in the dominions of Uncle Sam, a great French-Canadian festival was held in Montreal. It was glorious weather, in the height of the brief Canadian summer, and from far and near came the Canucks in thousands to do honour to Saint Jean Baptiste. The festival lasted for a week, and during that time many banquets were given and many speeches were made. At these banquets speeches of the most inflammatory character were delivered by hot-headed young lawyers and budding politicians, the nature of which, even if the impetuosity of youth be allowed for, must be seriously taken into account by the

rising generation of English-speaking Canadians. These representatives of public opinion did not scruple to say that, if they were not prepared at the present moment to retake possession of their country, their numbers were so rapidly increasing that in the course of a few years they would be enabled to sweep the British invader from the land of their fathers, and again gather the French-Canadians beneath the flag of *La Belle France*.

Now all this, at present, sounds very much like unadulterated bunkum, and it is the habit of the English-speaking inhabitants of the country to disregard these theatrical and passionate utterances. But it must be remembered that the men who gave vent to these opinions, though now young and irresponsible, will be the politicians and the leaders of the people of the next decade or two, and that what they now threaten they may in a few years be in a position to perform. At least, if it should never be carried to a successful issue, a French-Canadian revolt, which might possibly be supported by secret enemies of Great Britain, would lead to a very serious loss of life and treasure. The French-Canadian of to-day is a different creature to the ignorant and simple-mannered holder of a seigniorial fief, who, a century ago, quietly followed his agricultural pursuits on the fruitful shores of the St. Lawrence, and who blindly obeyed the behests of his parish priest. He is an educated man, excitable and full of impulse, with a certain amount of antagonism to English rule implanted in his breast; whose leading passion it is to talk and play at politics; and who, in the hands of experienced agitators, might become a dangerous and implacable foe. In the towns, the priest has still a certain amount of power over his flock. In the country districts he is its absolute master. The Roman Catholic Church in Canada is extremely rich, but would doubtless like to become richer; and if, in order to further its own designs, the influence of its priests were to be exerted amongst the people in such a manner as to excite them to revolt against the English Government, the effect would be disastrous. Ambition is the dominant characteristic of the young French-Canadian's mind, and when that ambition takes the form of wishing to obtain possession of what he is taught to consider the rightful property of his nation, it behoves the legal proprietors of the soil to be on their guard.

Socially considered, the French-Canadian

is an interesting and picturesque character. The peasantry are ordinarily contented, industrious, and frugal to a degree; and plots of land, which an English farmer would look upon as ridiculously small, the Canadian peasants, or "habitants," as they are generally called, manage to till in such a manner as to provide themselves with a sufficiency of food, a suit of black clothes for fête days, which are numerous, and with a few luxuries in the shape of tobacco—grown in their own gardens, and prepared for consumption by themselves—and whiskey blanc. This latter delicacy consists of alcohol slightly diluted with water, and, together with a fiery kind of gin and the native rye whiskey, constitutes the intoxicating fluid mostly affected by the French-Canadians.

Their diet is extremely simple, and consists principally of soup and vegetables, though meat and poultry are very cheap in the country districts, costing somewhat less than half the price paid by the English labourer for the same articles of diet. The French-Canadian farmer is a strict conservator of ancient habits and customs, and is strongly opposed to any progressive principles. The soil in some parts of the province of Quebec has therefore been so systematically starved by long habits of neglect, handed down from father to son, that a bare existence is all that has been gained from the land. However, if the same farm has come into the possession of an enterprising Scotch or English farmer with liberal ideas of progress and advancement, the result has been striking; and in the course of a few years the old decaying buildings have disappeared, a new farmhouse and substantial barns have been erected, and the estate has recovered all the appearances of prosperity. This is not an uncommon instance. The old seigneuries on the St. Lawrence have lost but little of their ancient character. In many cases even the venerable manor-houses still stand on the river-banks, surrounded by prim old-fashioned gardens, and approached by straight avenues of poplar. These seigneuries were, in old times, usually granted by the Government to persons of distinction, or to Court favourites, and consisted of immense tracts of land (in some instances three leagues in breadth by the same in depth), extending for miles from the river-shore back into the primæval forest. The seigneur, or lord of the manor, parcelled this land out into small fiefs, which were frequently

again subdivided by families into almost infinitesimal proportions. The fief-holders made a small annual payment to the seigneur, who had also certain feudal claims, the principal of which was a considerable proportion of the amount payable on the sale or transfer of land.

The French-Canadian peasant, or "habitant," is a hard and willing worker; and while the short summer of his climate lasts, not an hour is lost, and he is early and late in the field. But, during the long and rigorous winter, the hardships and severity of which must be experienced to be appreciated, Jean Baptiste has more leisure for amusement, and the old stone farmhouses often ring to the sounds of the violin and of merry feet, as they tread the sandy floors in measures learnt many years ago from old Norman and Breton ancestors, and now forgotten in the France of the tri-coloured flag. The French-Canadians love music, and many a melodious voice is to be found amongst the peasantry.

It has been said of French-Canada that the country is more Romish than Rome itself, and the many evidences of the sincere attachment to their religion which abound among the people go far to prove this. Scapulars are almost invariably worn by the men, and there is hardly a room which does not contain at least one crucifix and a few tawdry pictures of saints. The village churches are in some instances magnificent edifices, and on Sundays, and on the countless saints' days which during the year furnish a pretext for a holiday to the French-Canadians, these buildings are thronged with devout worshippers.

The "habitant" is a hardy individual, and though, through ignorance and superstition, the infant mortality amongst the French-Canadians sometimes attains alarming proportions, the individual, on growing to man or womanhood, generally displays physical qualities which, without being of that robust type so dear to English hearts, are more fitted to cope with the extremes of heat and cold which are so common in the climate of Canada. In a country where the thermometer frequently falls to twenty below zero, and remains in that uncomfortable position for a few weeks at a time, the cold may be termed intense, but one may often observe a French-Canadian farmer jovially driving homewards across the frozen St. Lawrence on a winter's day, the snow flying before a north wind with penetrating force, and yet he seems, seated on

his rough wooden sleigh, to all appearance as comfortable as an English coachman on a fine spring day in the Park.

The "habitant" is a loud, shrill, and incessant talker, and it is apparently impossible for him to perform the slightest manœuvre with a horse without giving vent to torrents of ear-piercing and blasphemous language. In appearance the "habitant"—clad in grey hooded surtout, with a sash of some bright hue bound round his waist, high thick boots, and fur cap—is original and picturesque. Here and there delicate features and clever expressions are noticeable, though, as a rule, the French-Canadian cannot be said to be handsome. Occasionally the true type of the grenadier of the "grande armée" is to be met with, possessing a spare figure, shaggy eyebrows and moustache, deep-set and piercing eyes, and sharp, beaked nose. Black eyes, aquiline features, and sallow complexions, are the prominent characteristics of the women.

In the towns the French-Canadian swarms in all professions, but principally affects the law, which appears to be the natural vocation of all those educated young men who do not enter the priesthood. In the cities of Quebec and Montreal the majority of the highest civil and municipal appointments are filled by French-Canadians, who, in their turn, confer upon their poorer friends and relatives the less dignified offices of policemen, postmen, and other kindred positions.

At the bar of Quebec, besides innumerable solicitors and barristers—the professions are generally practised together in Canada—are to be found several brilliant legal luminaries of French-Canadian descent, and some of these men would be a credit to the bench of any country. In the Parliament Houses of Ottawa and Quebec they usurp a large proportion of the situations, and in the Senate and the House of Commons they are a considerable power. The present Secretary of State of the Dominion is a French-Canadian, but though one or two more of his race hold seats in the Cabinet, the Premier of to-day, Sir John A. Macdonald, is too far-seeing a statesman to allow any chances of the balance of power being rudely disturbed by permitting the entry of a preponderating, or even an equalising, French-Canadian influence into the government of the country.

RECOLLECTIONS OF A MIDSHIPMAN'S MESS.

IN FOUR PARTS. PART II.

HAMMOCKS were slung with a "slippery hitch," so that the very moment the weary youngster made his effort to swing himself into his bed everything instantly carried away, and hammock and owner rolled alike upon the deck. The more experienced hands never turned in without first closely inspecting both head and foot clew.

Another method well known in the service was to cut one of the clews clean through with a very sharp knife, or even a razor, when the occupant was buried in heavy sleep, when he would come down on deck with a thump which would drive his interior organisation right up into the top of his head, and leave him perfectly dazed and stupid for some minutes afterwards. By degrees one's senses even when asleep got to be so acutely alive to this danger, that the very slightest touch on the clew of one's hammock was sufficient to rouse one at once to full activity; and the practised hand, who was generally to be known by the fact of his turning in with a heavy boot or other missile in the head-clew of his hammock, would rise without a second's hesitation and hurl this with all his might in the direction of the supposed marauder. It seldom, perhaps, reached its mark, but it was a sufficiently emphatic notice to quit at any rate, and it occasionally served a good cause by hitting the dozing sentry and arousing him to a sense of his duties. But I am bound to say that I never saw put into practice the savage jocularity of cutting a fellow down "by the head." In this case it is the head-clew that is severed; the victim falls upon his head, is generally stunned, occasionally breaks his neck, and sometimes falls upon the iron-shod corner of a sea-chest and fractures his skull.

There are many stories afloat of the fatal results of such barbarous skylarking. Another practical joke I remember of a slightly more original turn. We had a messmate, a youngster whom we will call Henry Harris, whose difficulty in the management of his aspirates attracted the unfriendly notice of his seniors. Subs would "it 'im over the 'ead with a 'and-spike," just to remind him to "hemphasize the haitch." Others would offer to "eave 'im down a 'atchway" with the same laudable intention; while yet others would threaten to make him "sling 'is 'ammick

in the 'old" for a like purpose; and, though the persecution was severe and unpleasant at the time, it did entirely succeed in curing him of his defect. But I doubt if it could be said to have been "done in kindness," and for the time he was never allowed a moment's peace, and his nights as well as his days were often made miserable to him.

One night "Enery," as they used to call him, had turned in early, and was enjoying unmolested his first sleep, when his somewhat stertorous breathing called the attention of several jokers who were prowling around the steerage in search of some mischief for their idle hands to do.

They accordingly went to the ship's office and borrowed, on some simple pretext, a large stone bottle of red ink. With this they hurried off to poor "Enery's" hammock, and, while one joker armed himself with an office ruler, another stood ready with the bottle. At a given signal the former hit the sleeper a cruelly hard blow over the head with the ruler, and simultaneously the other deluged his hair with the contents of the bottle. Up jumped poor "Enery," thus savagely roused from slumber, and, setting up a howl of indignation, clapped his hands naturally to the injured part, feeling for the bump which I fear was too surely there, and apostrophising his assailants as brutes and cowards; but when he felt the wetness of his hair, and became aware of moisture trickling down his face as he sat up, his fears overcame his indignation, and singing out lustily for the sentry and a lantern, he set about a close investigation of his injuries, and finding his head, his hands, and his pillow apparently soaked in a copious stream of his own blood, he came to the conclusion that he was bleeding to death, and made an announcement to that effect.

A wild burst of laughter from the conspirators posted in concealment among the chests and hammocks of the steerage awoke in his mind the suspicion of his being the victim of a practical joke, and finding that his loss of blood did not produce any symptoms of faintness, and moreover detecting the acrid smell of red ink in his nostrils, he dropped his head upon his gore-stained pillow with a sweeping anathema on his messmates and soon fell asleep, waking next morning to undergo a torrent of chaff from all around him, who sympathetically demanded "'ow 'is poor 'ead was."

Sometimes, however, the temptation to practical joking led them to soar to utterly forbidden heights, from which the fall was as severe as the presumption which prompted them was great, and, making one of the senior officers the victim, they had to regret the rashness of their enterprise.

With perfectly appalling light-heartedness, and an utter oblivion of such a thing as retribution, they would plan an attack on the very centre of discipline, the source of all leave-stopping and extra watch-keeping, the embodiment of the Queen's Regulations and Admiralty Instructions—the Commander himself.

Here is an instance. We were in harbour; it was four o'clock in the afternoon ("eight bells" as we knew it); and the midshipman of the afternoon watch was anxiously awaiting his relief on the quarter-deck. No such relief, however, came, and, growing more and more impatient, he at last sent the Quartermaster down into the berth to ask who was going to keep the first dog-watch. The Quartermaster returned with the answer that Billette, whose duty it was to keep it, was sick, and that that there was nobody willing to "look out" for him. Upon this the middy went down himself to the berth, and remonstrated with his messmates; but all to no purpose, and, finally, finding himself unable to get a relief, he went to the Commander and reported the state of affairs to him.

The Commander was furious. He would teach the young gentlemen to shirk their duty in that way! He would show them whose duty it was to keep the first dog-watch! And he instantly sent an order to the midshipmen's berth that the first dog-watch was to be kept by every midshipman in the ship!

There was no getting out of it; and, accordingly some nineteen midshipmen made their way sulkily to the quarter-deck and marched to and fro with black looks and muttered execrations, each with a glass under his arm, to the amusement of the officer of the watch, and the astonishment of the bluejackets. Thus punished en masse it was natural that they should plan vengeance; and the step from convict to conspirator is not a difficult one.

It was the Commander's order that one bell in the first dog-watch (half-past four p.m.), should be reported to him, and, moreover, that this should be done by "the midshipman of the watch." The Commander sometimes took a nap at that time, and his

general reply to the report was a smothered grunt on such occasions. It occurred to the conspirators that by turning this simple report into a function, they might cause their chief a considerable amount of annoyance. It never seems to occur to the young mutineer that his victim's powers of annoyance are probably far greater than his own. So, with much chuckling, they awaited the sound of one bell, which they proposed to report to the Commander as midshipmen of the watch. One bell came, and the nineteen conspirators marched off together to make their report. The Commander was in his cabin lying down. The senior midshipman knocked at his door.

"What is it?" shouted the officer.

"One bell, sir," reported the youngster in stentorian tones, and the Commander said:

"Thank you," and settled himself for another snooze. But no sooner was his reply out of his mouth than another loud knock, and "one bell, sir," in, if possible, a still louder note.

Once more the Commander replied courteously, only to hear knock after knock and report after report in ever-increasing volume of sound until, roused to fury, he leaped from his bunk, flung open his door, and found himself face to face with a remnant of a dozen or so of young officers, all of whom instantly saluted, and, with hardly-concealed grins on their faces, reported, in one portentous bellow of a dozen different keys: "One bell, sir!"

The Commander for one moment was speechless with astonishment, and then, taking in the situation thoroughly, he took up his parable and gave those young gentlemen a bit of his mind; and I must say, that when he liked, his tongue had some remarkably rough places on it, and hurt like the mischief. Well, he sandpapered those young gentlemen down very considerably, and then sent them all up on deck to finish keeping the first dog-watch, but with the additional order that, on no account, were they to go below to tea at two bells (five p.m.). Being now thoroughly roused he even went on the bridge himself, and, with his thin lips parted and displaying a very regular, white, but dangerous-looking set of teeth, he enjoyed with grim satisfaction the discomfiture of the enemy.

Presently he went down below again, and the youngsters instantly prepared to set his orders at defiance. They bribed an old Quartermaster to give them instant notice of the movements of the Com-

mander, should he show any disposition to come on deck again, and then, when "two bells" was struck, they disappeared in a shoal down the forehatch and made their way aft along the lower deck to the berth, where they loudly clamoured for their tea and prided themselves on their acuteness in outwitting so old a bird as the Commander. But they reckoned without their host; the Commander had been a midshipman himself—a fact which they quite forgot—and was quite up to the possibilities of the situation. Even as they were slipping, with overdone caution and internal laughter hardly to be contained, down the fore-hatchway, the Commander was ascending the after one, and arrived at the quarter-deck as they reached the berth, to find his orders defied and the birds flown.

I always have thought that he was rather pleased than otherwise—it is gratifying to find that one's suspicions are correct, even though it may entail extra trouble and worry, and the way in which he sent the Quartermaster of the watch to "tell the midshipmen of the watch that I wish to speak to them," was indicative of a certain dangerous gratification. They came—a crest-fallen, shame-stricken mob—slinking up the hatchway now in far different guise from that which they had worn a few minutes before, and stood before their chief with no appearance of exultation now upon their faces. He took a calm, leisurely, acid inspection of them, which was peculiarly trying, and which he seemed to enjoy prolonging to the uttermost, and then he opened his thin lips and poured oil upon the troubled waters—oil of vitriol, that is—and ordered them all to stay on deck till midnight, except two especially malignant offenders, who were to remain on deck until two o'clock in the morning, or till the end of the commission, I really forget which. I know that the punishment appeared to us to be the most crushing and frightful sentence which had ever fallen since the memory of man.

No tea! Think of it! and they had had nothing since noon, and they were boys, great hulking, growing boys, with appetites that would break an ostrich's heart, and they must stay on deck cold and empty as Mother Hubbard's cupboard until midnight, when everything would be shut up and no food of any kind to be got until eight a.m. next day!

But help came from an unexpected quarter.

The "dry idlers," between whom and the "executive mob" incessant feud was carried on, had been undisguisedly glad when, at tea-time, the Commander's order had cleared all the midshipmen out of the mess before they had swallowed a mouthful, and had left the weaker party in possession of the whole place, an opportunity not to be lost. Accordingly, everything was devoured, until the table was as bare as the land of Egypt after the locusts, and much pleasure was expressed at the absence of the executives; but when it was reported in the berth how terrible a sentence had fallen upon them they rose at once from foes to martyrs, and at the risk of lives and commissions, having ascertained late that night, by certain sounds, that our beloved Commander slept, those "dry idlers" conveyed secretly and silently, with such painstaking and elaborate concealment as must at once have revealed the whole matter to the officer of the watch, boxes of sardines, pots of jam, loaves of bread, and bottles of wine to the scene of the temporary exile of the victims on the stern-gratings—generally known as "the Commander's flower garden"—and treated them then and there to such a "blow-out" as they had hardly enjoyed since the ship was commissioned. The danger and importance of the occasion made it doubly enjoyable, and all fully believed that they were thoroughly justified in taking such a step in the face of what we considered the fiendish cruelty of the Commander. Well, well! things looked differently to us then to what they do now.

How immensely disappointed we all were with our first glimpse of the coast of the Pacific! My imagination, and that of many of my messmates, had revelled in the anticipation of deep, land-locked bays, surrounded by hills running down in picturesque spurs in all directions to the water, forming inlet after inlet, fringed with feathery palms, with tall cocoa-nuts, with bread-fruit trees, with mangroves, and every species of tropical vegetation running riot in unutterable luxuriance; huge flowers of the most gorgeous colours and intoxicating aroma delighting the eye and nostril alike at every turn; birds of intensely brilliant plumage, from the great flamingo to the tiniest little humming-bird, crossing one's track at every step; alligators, deer, jaguars, pumas, tigers; Heaven knows what we did not expect to find in the woods as plentiful as blackbeetles in a kitchen:

while, of course, the waters of every one of those tempting inlets would teem with shark, the dorsal fins of which might be seen in numbers above the calm surface of the sleeping bay, as they lay basking in the tropic sun, and affording a new and exhilarating excitement to the pleasure of bathing. That was the anticipation. And what was the reality? A coast formed, as it were, of dirty red brick, and inferior brick at that, fringed with bleak, barren, brown rocks, on which nothing ever grew, or could grow; round, undulating hills, all made, more or less, of red brick, with no vegetation worth naming that the eye could detect, except a few stunted bushes, covered with dust, and here and there a poor, lonely, withered tree which seemed hardly able to extract sufficient nourishment to support life out of the thousand acres or so of which it was the sole occupant; and, when you went on shore, you found that the staple of the vegetable world was the cactus—huge, lofty, useless, uncompromising, savage cacti, covered with spikes of surprising strength, length, and acuteness, with occasionally a red flower stuck on one side, like a rosette pinned on to a German sausage, but usually ornamented only with their native dust. If you longed to rest your eyes from the glare and dust by looking on the pleasant green of vegetation, you could always find a cactus handy to look at; if you wished to hang your hat up (and shoot at it as we used to do), you hung it up on a cactus; if you desired shade, you picked out an unusually lofty cactus, and stood beneath it; and if you wished to sit down, and objected to sitting down on the ground, you sat down on a cactus—but you usually did not stay, the plant developed a feeling of unrest which made it impossible to repose for long. The land, when not under skilled cultivation, was a dreary, barren, thirsty land, developing, as you went further north, into *bonâ fide* desert; desert which produced nothing but nitrate of soda; desert, the only tracks through which were marked by the ribs and skulls of mules and horses; desert, where the hideous naked-headed condor alone held sway, and where the very sea-ports upon its fringe could find no water to drink, save by condensing it from the sea. Valparaiso may be, as its name implies, on the way to Paradise, but we all came to the conclusion that Paradise itself was just as far off as ever. The disappointment was all the more keen, too, because we had

peeped into Rio Janeiro as we passed, and that most fairy-like place had fired our imaginations and made us even more exacting than we otherwise should have been.

With our arrival on our station, our troubles began to accumulate. The poor old "Bruisewater" was undoubtedly "a very wet ship," and such a state of things could not go on for ever without something coming of it. We had been obliged to hold one court-martial before leaving England and had lost an officer thereby, and now such affairs became of frequent occurrence, and lasted more or less through the whole of the commission. One of our warrant officers was bowled out and obliged to leave the ship; our head navigator tripped up over a bottle of whiskey, and was so injured as to be obliged to go home; a lieutenant, after astonishing everybody by the manner in which, during his first watch, he resolutely hunted down "two men in white and one in blue" whom he saw "concealing themselves in the port quarter boat," but who, when searched for, could not be found, went raving mad during the night, and, with a shriek that curdled our blood, seized his sword and made terrific war upon his imaginary assailants in the wardroom. Poor fellow! he was finally run to earth in the cabin of the Captain of Marines, where the medicos got hold of him when he was exhausted by his efforts. The Marine officer himself, thinking it was a private matter, and feeling a delicacy in intruding on it, had slipped out quietly as he with the sword entered. Perhaps it was as well that he did so, for his clothes hanging on their hooks were cut to rags. The poor victim of the curse of drink never served on board a man-of-war again; such a good fellow, we all liked him, but—what could be done? Mr. Dispart, too, found himself intensely annoyed by the persecutions of a forward young demon who invariably sat in his scuttle and denounced him aloud as a drunkard and a profligate. The feeling of the court, however, was one of sympathy with the demon rather than his victim, and Mr. Dispart was recommended to try a more bracing climate. Certainly three more victims suffered from the same disease, and one of these paid the penalty with his life. Among such disasters as these the junior mess did not come out altogether unscathed. In its troubled, ill-regulated, and crowded gloom, the symp-

ptoms of ill-feeling were becoming more strongly marked each day. We were fed worse than ever. Everything except the most ordinary ship's provisions was an "extra," and had to be paid for as such. Even the bread by our plates at dinner was thus reckoned. Our breakfast in harbour for months at a time, with fresh bread and such matter-of-fact materials for food close alongside, consisted of nothing but a cup of coffee (they called it coffee, and the steward had been so much in the habit of serving it out under that name that his moral perception was dimmed, and he believed it was coffee), without any milk or sugar (they were extra) and some broken bits of ship's biscuit, full of weevils, which were placed in the centre of the mess-table in an old rusty, battered iron tray, which had once been japanned. Growls, at first only muttered apart, began to be openly and freely vented; language descriptive of the mess was becoming stronger and less rounded off at the edges every day, and, as in a down-trodden and persecuted state, the poet is often the precursor of the revolutionist, so some among us burst into inspired verse, and circulated their effusions among their numerous sympathisers with much appreciation on the part of the latter. At this moment I can only recall one of these productions, founded on a well-known poem. It ran:

Whene'er with saddened eyes I view
This messplace that we've got on board,
I curse the (something) scoffmates who
Were sole inventors of the Rou-
tine in the mess we've got on board.

And so on through many verses, "scoff-mate" being a word which is, I believe, peculiar to the navy, and is synonymous with messmate—to "scoff" meaning, in the parlance of the berth, to "eat." Billette was the author of that poem—as good a fellow as ever set foot on a deck—and in this case the poet proved also the leader of the revolution.

It was Christmas Eve, and the berth had been devoting itself to unrestrained hilarity in honour of the occasion. At last the lights were put out, and the occupants tumbled up on deck for a breath of fresh air before turning in. It was dark, but the chatter of voices and the laughter were not affected by the fact—they went on as noisily as ever. The officer of the watch, himself a sub-lieutenant, remonstrated; he was foolish enough to use language of a hectoring and particularly irritating description, and pre-

sently found himself measuring his length on the deck with a peculiarly painful sensation in his right eye. Billette was the operator, and, his blood being up, the corporal who hurried up with a lantern at the summons of his superior, shared the same fate as that officer, while his lantern lost for ever its cylindrical form beneath the foot of the infuriated Billette, and was numbered with the condemned stores. Billette was very proud of his work, but he went below that night under arrest, only to emerge again to face the dread ordeal of a court-martial. He bore himself bravely, perhaps too bravely, for he diligently sketched the heads of all the members of the court while the trial went on; but he had committed a serious, a very serious offence, and not even his blindest sympathisers could hope that he would be acquitted.

Still, when the sentence of the court was pronounced, which, "taking into consideration his youth and inexperience and also the excellent character for good conduct which he previously bore" adjudged him "only to be dismissed from Her Majesty's Service," I think most of us experienced a terrible shock, as we realised for the first time what it was to lift a hand against a superior officer on duty. The sympathy of nearly everybody in the ship was with Billette, but still he had to go, and it was with sincerest regret that we bade him good-bye, and thought of what a miserable journey homewards he would have in the mail steamer; but our minds were immensely relieved when we heard that, on his arriving in England, the Admiralty had reconsidered his case, had reversed the sentence of the court-martial, and had reinstated him in the service with the loss of one year's time.

CHRONICLES OF SCOTTISH COUNTIES.

LANARKSHIRE.

IN this county we have again the clear definition of natural boundaries. The great valley that encloses the upper course of the Clyde formed once an independent British kingdom, which preserved a precarious existence, surrounded on all sides by hostile neighbours, till the middle of the seventh century. The Welsh of Strathclyde have left behind them the names of rivers and of many places on their banks, but it would be difficult to

trace any Celtic characteristic among the existing population of the rural districts, whose sturdy limbs and fair complexions seem rather to claim relationship with the Angles of Northumbria.

The enormous increase of Glasgow, and the influence of machinery and manufactures, have obliterated many of the ancient features of the county, and a vast immigration of Irish and other strangers has almost effaced the characteristics of the original Glaswegians. The rise of Glasgow has been effected within the present century—its ancient nucleus having been the Cathedral, with its officiating priests, and the approach

To those high arches where, as Culdees sing,
The pious Mungo fish'd the trout and ring—

in other words, to the bridge over the Clyde, which made the town in a way the gate of the Highlands. St. Mungo and his miraculous haul are still preserved in memory in the city arms, but the saint himself probably chose the site rather for its solitude than its society, he being one of those ascetic Irish missionaries who planted their lodges in the wilderness, and avoided the busy haunts of men. The Cathedral, which at a later date occupied the site of St. Mungo's humble shrine, was once the centre of civic life and grandeur. It is now in the midst of a gloomy and depressing neighbourhood—like some old hulk that has been left to decay in the slime and mud of a dreary backwater. The present structure dates from the fourteenth century, replacing an earlier one, built under Norman influences, and was indeed never completed. At the Reformation it narrowly escaped demolition. Its Archbishop—the well known Beatoun—saved the archives and relics by a timely flight with them to France, and deposited these treasures in the Scotch College of Douay. The people of Glasgow in their fervour proposed to ding down the obnoxious building without more ado. A wily provost saved the edifice by a dexterous ruse. "Let us pull down the auld kirk by all means, but first let us build a new one to take its place." The plan was received with enthusiasm, but zeal was soon quenched at the prospect of the expense, and the danger passed over. Once more the popular fervour was kindled, however, by the Principal of the University and the Calvinistic clergy, who sallied forth to pull the Cathedral down. But this time the city guilds, who had shared in so many processions and time-honoured ceremonies

within its venerable walls, rose in arms to defend it, and the clergy were fain to be content with demolishing the statues of the saints in their niches, and the painted glass in the windows.

The building, however, reduced to a proper state of bareness and desolation, was made to serve as three distinct kirks, for as many parishes. The fine crypt was turned to account in this way as described in Scott's "Rob Roy," and the nave and chancel, divided by a hideous dead wall, served the same purpose. In this state was the Cathedral when Oliver Cromwell attended service within its walls, and listened patiently to a sermon in which the Independents, and even the General himself, their great chief, were treated with little respect.

The chief interest of Glasgow, however, is in its busy industries and the shipping that crowds its quays, and in the persevering enterprise which has converted a river of no great volume into a fine waterway along which the largest steamers can be navigated. A recent historian of Glasgow narrates how in 1812 the first steamer on the river, the tiny "Comet," with a draught of only four feet, grounded at Renfrew, although the tide was still high. "The men just stepped over the side and pushed her across the shoal," replied Mrs. Bell, the wife of the great pioneer of steam navigation, in reply to a question as to what happened next. Over the same spot, as Mr. MacGeorge relates, the great ironclads, with all their enormous load of machinery and guns, steam along with plenty of water to spare beneath their keels. The result has not been attained without cost, for it is computed by the same authority that, between 1770 to 1879, eight and a half millions of pounds sterling have been expended on the river navigation.

The beginnings of Glasgow in foreign trade were small enough. Before the union the chief commerce was with France. Kipper salmon and salt herrings were exported to that country, and wine, brandy, and salt received in exchange. But, after the administrative union in 1707, the Western world was opened to the enterprise of the citizens. It was in 1718 that the first vessel from the Clyde sailed across the Atlantic, and from that time trade increased apace with the planters of Maryland and Virginia. The chequered linens of Paisley and Glasgow clothed the slaves who worked in the tobacco fields, and the

honest woollens and tweeds of Scotland also found a ready market. In return there came bales of golden-leaved tobacco, and the ever-gaping mulls of gentle and simple were replenished with the powdered herb of Virginia. The lairds and gentry of the neighbourhood shared in the ventures, and the merchants of Glasgow emulated the magnificence of the Venetians of old, as with the Trongate for their Rialto they strutted up and down in their scarlet cloaks laced with gold or silver, their cocked hats and clouded canes, their costly velvet small-clothes, and shoon adorned with great silver buckles,

Snuff-boxes, sword-knots, canes, and washes,
An eweetiea to bestow on lassies.

At this time the river was hardly navigable as far as Glasgow. Dumbarton was at first the port where the ships from America discharged and took in their cargoes; but the baillies of Dumbarton thought such traffic beneath their dignity, and requested the Glasgow folk to take their ships somewhere else. Then Port Glasgow, Greenock, and Port Dundas had their turn, and these are still places of call for the Clyde steamers. The war of American Independence interrupted all this prosperity, but an increasing trade with the West Indies made some amends, and trade revived again after the war.

With the rise of the cotton manufactures Glasgow took its first great increase in area and population, and has gone on increasing ever since; and yet the streams of wealth that have passed through the city seem to have left it rather dry, and the dinginess and squalor of its industrial quarters are not redeemed by any beauty and grace in its thoroughfares and public buildings.

The city, with its offshoots and dependencies, engrosses nearly the whole of one of the lower wards of the county. We must ascend the Clyde for some distance before we are out of the range of mills and factories, and then we come to Bothwell Castle, the sight of which carries us back to mediæval times. Two enormous circular towers give a powerful impression of feudal strength and grandeur, and the crumbling walls of red sandstone contrast with the green fields and lovely woodlands of Bothwell Bank, round which the river circles in a mighty sweep.

Oh, Bothwell bank, thou blumest fair!

And yet the very name has something ill-omened and sinister about it; and the castle, with all its power, has always, up to

modern times, been reputed to bring ill-luck to its possessor. Many great families have held it for a while, but the periods during which they held it have been periods of decadence and misfortune. Edward the First, who, perhaps, had some hand in forming its massive strength, gave it to Aymer de Valence, and many English knights and nobles took refuge within its walls in their flight from the fatal field of Bannockburn. The Governor of the castle was then a Hamilton, who surrendered his guests to the Bruce, and the Bruce did not let them go without heavy ransom it may be guessed. But the most noted owner of the castle was that dark Earl of Bothwell, whose evil passion brought so much woe and disaster to his paramour, Mary, Queen of Scots.

Close at hand is Bothwell Bridge, the long and narrow bridge over the Clyde which was the scene of the final defeat of the Cameronians by the Royal army, commanded by the Duke of Monmouth; a battle which owes much of its celebrity to the graphic description of Sir Walter Scott in "Old Mortality." Above the bridge opens out the Vale of Avon, a tributary of the Clyde, and this valley was the mustering place of the Cameronians, who, after their victory at Drumclog, near the source of the river on the Ayrshire borders, gathered a considerable force of sympathisers, well supplied with arms and ammunition. On the approach of the Royal army, the Covenanters moved down to Hamilton, which lies just within the vale, a mile or so distant from the Clyde. Their forces were drawn up on the great moor of Bothwell, now enclosed and highly cultivated, and took possession of Bothwell Bridge, which carried the highway from Hamilton to Glasgow and Edinburgh—the only line of advance available for the Royal forces. The bridge, as well as the scene about it, is altered almost past recognition; but in those days it was guarded on the insurgents' side of the river by an ancient gateway, which the Covenanters strengthened and fortified. The Covenanters threw down the parapets of the bridge on the further side, lest they should afford cover to the enemy, and occupied the bridge and its approaches with a force of three hundred resolute men, under one Hackstoun of Rathillet. The rest of the insurgents were massed upon the rising ground overlooking the river in a state of sad uproar and confusion. As the Royal army advanced. Monmouth posted a

battery of artillery on the opposite bank, and the roar of the guns, as they opened fire, spread a panic among the horses of the mounted troopers—animals fresh from the plough or the shafts—and their mad stampede added to the confusion of the scene. For a while the bridge was resolutely held by the devoted band of defenders, but, unsupported and with failing ammunition, they were driven from their defences. The bridge was carried, and Claverhouse's dragoons dashed across. The wavering mass of Cameronians broke before their charge, and fled in all directions towards the hills. Five hundred of the Sectaries were slain in the flight, although numbers found refuge and succour in the scattered farmhouses, while even the old castles of the nobility were not closed to the unhappy fugitives.

Eight miles up the valley, in a moorland country, lies Strathavon, a curious old town overhung by the shattered walls of a gloomy old castle. This was in those days the seat of Ann, Duchess of Hamilton, the last of the old line of Hamiltons, an ardent Royalist who had suffered much in the cause. All she had was confiscated in the time of the Commonwealth, and it is said that she was supported for many years by the labours of an old and faithful female servant, who earned her own and her mistress's bread with distaff and spindle. Naturally Her Grace had little sympathy with her old enemies, but, finding that many of them were in hiding about her grounds and offices—for her castles and estates had been given back to her at the Restoration—she sent a message to the Duke of Monmouth demanding that her castle and grounds should be respected by his soldiers. The Duke, whose heart was not in the business of destruction, gladly extended his protection to the Duchess's domains; and thus many of those who had run away were spared to fight another day, and fall by other hands: some perhaps in the ill-fated rising headed by Argyll, others on foreign shores in the ranks of the gallant Cameronian regiment.

The Royal army marching on Bothwell Bridge must have passed by Bothwellhaugh, a stretch of grazing land which gave its title to the adventurous Hamilton who shot the Regent Morton in the High Street of Linlithgow. In this the assassin was actuated by a spirit of wild revenge for the cruelties the Regent had inflicted on his kinsmen; and having ridden hard, without drawing bridle, from Linlithgow,

he was received among his kindred with open arms, as one who had done a worthy deed of private warfare. The matchlock with which the deed was done was preserved at Hamilton Palace, at least till the recent dispersion of the art treasures and curiosities which made the almost regal palace in the Vale of Avon an object of pilgrimage for the virtuosi; and no doubt the weapon might be traced, through Christie and Manson's catalogue, to its present resting-place.

But while Hamilton Palace recalls the illustrious fortunes of the later generations of the house, the original home of the race, whose stirring and chequered annals are so closely connected with Scottish history, is to be found in the ruins of the old Castle of Cadyow. And here the scenery of the Vale of Avon is peculiarly rich and charming.

Ye lofty banks that Evan bound,
Ye lavish woods that wave around!

We are now, indeed, in the midst of the luxuriant scenes of the famed middle ward of Lanark; which is known, in contradistinction to the wild and barren upper ward, as the fruit lands. The boundary between the two regions is the River Nethan at its junction with the Clyde. And on the tributary stream, near its confluence, stands Craignethan Castle, an imposing ruin, with a massive square tower crowned here and there by the remains of handsome machicolations, and whose gloomy riven arches afford an effective framework to a sweet rural landscape. The lofty fortified wall encloses the extensive remains of an old baronial hold and a mansion of Charles the Second's time. Here, too, is pointed out a Queen Mary's room; and as the castle was once a seat of the Hamiltons, it is likely enough that Mary was actually quartered here after her escape from Lochleven. The castle, according to general impression, was, in the mind of Sir Walter Scott, as the model for the Tower of Tillietudlum, where His Most Gracious Majesty partook of his disjeune, as will be remembered by the readers of "Old Mortality." Certainly the description of the scene is so characteristic of the upper and lower wards of Lanarkshire that we may be excused for borrowing the picture thus painted by the hand of a master:

"The view downwards is of a grand woodland character, but the level ground and gentle slopes near the river form cultivated fields of an irregular shape,

interspersed with hedgerow trees and copses, the enclosures seeming to have been individually cleared out of the forest which surrounds them, and which occupies in unbroken masses the steeper declivities and more distant banks. The stream, in colour a clear and sparkling brown, rushes through this romantic region in bold sweeps and curves, partly visible, and partly concealed by the trees which clothe its banks. With a providence unknown in other parts of Scotland, the peasants have in most parts planted orchards around their cottages, and the general blossom of the apple trees at this season of the year gave all the lower part of the view the appearance of a flower garden. Looking up the river the character of the scene was varied considerably for the worse. A hilly, waste, and uncultivated country approached close to the banks; the trees were few, and limited to the neighbourhood of the stream; and the rude moors swelled at a little distance into shapeless and heavy hills, which were again surmounted in their turn by a range of lofty mountains, dimly seen on the horizon."

As we ascend the Clyde valley towards Lanark, we come to Lee, the ancient patrimonial seat of the Lockharts, descended from the Simon Locard who accompanied Sir James Douglas on his pilgrimage towards the Holy Land with the casket containing the heart of Robert Bruce. As is well known, the heart and its bearers never reached their destination. Turning aside to fight the Moors in Spain—it was in this way that Sir James earned his title of the "Good," not that he was amiable in disposition, far otherwise, but that he was always good for a fight—the gallant Douglas bit the dust before a Paynim spear. And in Spain, it is said, that Simon had the good fortune to capture a Saracen of renown, for whom, like a cannie Scot, he took care to exact a good ransom. When the Saracen's wife came over to count out the specie, among the glittering contents of her pouch Simon caught sight of a curiously-shaped jewel which the dark-eyed Morisco promptly concealed about her person, in evident fear for its safety. On this Simon at once hardened—and perhaps justifiably—his terms. He still held out for the gold, but he would have the jewel thrown in, or no ransom. The fair Zuleika sighed, wept, entreated, all in vain, and at last consented to part with her treasure—to secure the one she valued more. The jewel was a talisman. she averred. of won-

drous power—good against all the ills that flesh is heir to; a cure for sickness, sorrow, and adversity. And then Simon came home again, with the silver casket containing Bruce's heart, which was buried beneath the high altar of Melrose Abbey. And Sir Simon "took afterwards for his device and painted upon his shield a man's heart with a padlock upon it, in memory of Bruce's heart, which was padlocked in the silver case. For this reason men changed Sir Simon's name from Locard to Lockheart, and all who are descended from Sir Simon are called Lockhart to this day."

More interesting still is the career of the talisman which is known as the Lee penny, as it is mounted in an old silver coin of that denomination, and which enjoyed centuries of repute as the great medicament of the country side. Strange to say, it was for cattle that its healing powers were most manifest—and cattle are not to be cured by the power of imagination—and people came from far and near to test the virtues of the talisman. Thrice the stone must be whisked round through the water to be bewitched, and once dipped deep in the vessel containing it, which must never touch ground before the draught is administered to the patient. When the plague visited Newcastle, the Mayor and burgesses begged for a loan of the talisman, and deposited six thousand pounds in pledge for its safe return. And so convinced were they of its efficacy after full trial, that they proposed to forfeit their pledge and retain the stone. But the then representative of the Lockharts made it a point of honour that the talisman should be restored. The Lee penny would cure the bite of a mad dog, and a titled dame is recorded to have actually owed her life to its power. As lately as 1824 a Yorkshire gentleman came to Lee and took home a quantity of the talismanic water as a cure for cattle which had been bitten by a mad dog. But perhaps the greatest claim to distinction enjoyed by the Lee penny is that it suggested to Sir Walter Scott the novel called "The Talisman."

We now approach the romantic falls of the Clyde and the old town of Lanark, which gives its name to the county, but which has little to show for its ancient associations with the exploits of William Wallace, who here began his career by killing the King's sheriff, after which he hid himself among Cartlane Craggs, a deep chasm through which the waters of Moose find their way to the Clyde. Here a fissure

in the crag of no great depth is pointed out as Wallace's Cave, and there is a picturesque bridge close by which is known as the Roman Arch, although its claim to that distinction is but slight. At Boniton House, near one of the falls of the Clyde, are sundry relics of the Scottish hero—his portrait, which would be of high interest if we could believe it genuine, and a chair, which is possibly enough the very chair of Wallace as it claims to be.

A mile or so above Boniton Lynn the Clyde, which flows down towards the fall in "placid wimplin' course," receives the water of Douglas, whose pleasant valley opens out in a north-westerly direction, with the quiet old town of Douglas lying high among the moorlands. Close by is Douglas Castle, itself a structure of the eighteenth century, but with a ruined fragment still left of the old hold of the Douglas, of whom this was the original seat—that is, if any such word can be applied to a family whose origin is lost in the mists of antiquity, as is written in Wyntoun's rhyming chronicle :

Of Murraye and the Douglas,
How that their begynnyng was,
Syn sundry men speak sundrilee,
I can put that in nae storie.

In a curious building, partly ruin, partly church, and partly mausoleum, are to be found sundry monumental effigies of the great Douglasses—the good Sir James, Archibald, first Earl and Duke of Terouaine in France; James, the fat seventh earl, whose indolent somnolence at a critical crisis of the family history saved the crown of Scotland for the Stuarts—all these may be recognised and remembered in their stately monuments, sadly defaced indeed by the stress of time and the attacks of stone-throwing urchins in the days when the church was roofless and uncared for. Above the junction of Douglas Water the Clyde makes a wide détour about the base of Tynto Hill, an outlying and solitary summit, a notable feature in the landscape for miles around, and familiar as a household word in the homes of those who dwell thereabouts.

Set her up on Tinto top !

There is also an old rhyme of some mystic purport, noteworthy in that there is an almost identical rhyme connected with Hydon Ball, a commanding point on the sand ridges overlooking the weald and the South Downs.

On Tintock-tap there is a mist,
And in the mist there is a kist,
And in the kist there is a coup,
And in the coup there is a drap ;
Tak' up the coup, drink off the drap,
And set the coup on Tintock tap.

The drap from Tintock tap must be an altogether teetotal beverage, or there would be more to make the ascent, which is rewarded by a magnificent view of the great plain of Scotland, the Bass Rock being visible at times on the far horizon, with the gleam of the North Sea, while the Solway Frith stretches out in the opposite direction; a glimpse of the blue mountains of Cumberland may sometimes be had on one hand, and on the other Ben Lomond raises his misty head. Nearer at hand are the Pentland Hills, stretching towards Edinbro' town, and between is a wild uncanny country, with Carnwath as its chief town, where, in a gleam of sunshine, may perhaps be made out the ruins of Cowdailly Castle, the stronghold of the noble house of Somerville. From Carnwath to the Lothians stretches a wide expanse of gloomy moor, across which runs the highway to Edinburgh—of all ways the most dismal and terrible, said those who travelled it before railway times. By the foot of Tinto, too, lies Biggar in its plain, which stretches out with but slight inequalities of ground to the neighbouring plain of Tweed. Michael Scott, it is said, had it in his mind to cut a trench across and send the Clyde rolling down to the North Sea. The old wizard, indeed, has left signs of his handiwork in many places round about. A deep cut in Tinto ridge called Stonegate Mouth was his work, and also a deep cut on the way to Edinburgh, called the Sandy-hill nick, which, if artificial, is a tremendous work that would task the resources of modern engineering to effect. And all this was done, not from motives of public spirit, but to keep his attendant imps at work and out of mischief.

Biggar, too, has its stories of Willie Wallace, who, according to Blind Harry, won a great battle here over the English; and the country people still point out Wallace's Seat and Wallace's Well.

From Biggar the Clyde takes a wide sweep round Tinto Ridge, where Fatlips Castle is perched upon the height, a tower built, according to the story, by the Laird of Symington, to overlook his neighbour and deadly foe of Lamington. Every incoming and outgoing of Lamington was plainly visible from Fatlips Castle, and the Laird was so disgusted with the publicity thus afforded him, that he moved house to another tower further among the wilds.

Another memory connected with Lamington is the drowning of a large party of

Johnstones from Annandale, who had come on a plundering expedition, and having been captured were thrown neck and heels into the pool near the tower, as the simplest way of getting rid of them.

From Lamington the Clyde assumes the appearance of a moorland stream, the broad pastoral haughs now disappearing, and the country assuming a character of unredeemed wildness. But from its very source on the "ae hillside," the birthplace of the three chief rivers of the South of Scotland, the Clyde shows a strength and vivacity that promises well for its future career; and soon it is joined by the Glengonar, a full and plentiful stream, its waters stained, however, by the mining industries on its bank. High up, near the source of the Glengonar, is the solitary mining village of Leadhills, the birthplace of Allan Ramsay, who was a son of the superintendent of the mines.

On Crawford moor, born in Leadhill,
Where mineral springs Glengonar fill,
Which joins sweet-flowing Clyde.

Hereabouts, too, is the gold-field of Scotland, where gold mines were worked with some success from the reign of James the Fourth until the end of the seventeenth century. Of native gold were coined the broad bonnet pieces of James the Fifth, who, like his father, was a frequent visitor to the neighbouring Crawford Castle, which he used as a hunting seat. It was here that, on the French Ambassador and his suite beginning to laugh at the barren and miserable appearance of the country, the King laid a wager that he would serve them with fruit produced in the country which they should own was the finest they had ever seen. For dessert, the King served each guest with a plateful of these bonnet pieces, and he was adjudged, by acclamation, to have won his wager. Again, we read of a "faire deepe bason of Scottish gold," presented by the Earl of Morton to the French King, and filled with gold coins, the produce of Scotland, "where that metal doth increase and engender within the earth out of the two elements, fire and water."

As the product of the mines dwindled, one adventurer after another took them up, with no great success. A Dutch painter, Cornelius de Voss, had the concession for a time, with Nicholas Hilliard, a goldsmith; and Cornelius was succeeded by another Dutch painter, Arnold Bronk-

hurst. To these succeeded an Englishman, Bevis Bulmer,

Who won much wealth and mickle honour
In Shortcleugh water and Glengonar.

Bulmer presented Queen Elizabeth with a porringer of Scottish gold. Bulmer was also connected with the silver mines at Combe Martin, in Devonshire, and was knighted by King James, dying some years after among the lead mines of Alston Moor.

With Bulmer was at first associated Thomas Foulis, a goldsmith of Edinburgh, who soon abandoned the search for gold to his confederate, while he pursued the less brilliant but more solid career of lead mining in the same district. Thomas realised a large fortune out of the lead mines, and, dying childless, left his land to his brother David, and the mines to another brother, Robert. The daughter of the latter eventually inherited the mines, but was attacked in their possession by her uncle David. In the suit that ensued, Ann Foulis employed a young advocate named James Hope, who not only won her cause, but also her hand and heart. In the meantime David had also opened mines on his own property of Glendorch, but failed altogether, and overwhelmed with law costs and mine costs, died in downright poverty. The Hopes purchased Glendorch, and their miners soon discovered on the property a wonderful vein of pure galena, eighteen feet in thickness, of itself worth a King's ransom. Strange to say, an accidental blow of a workman's pick broke through into some old workings, and it was discovered that Uncle David had arrived within a few inches of the vein that would have brought him wealth beyond the dreams of avarice.

As it was, the Hopes soon became altogether in the ascendant, and were raised to the peerage as Earls of Hopetown; one of whom was the friend and patron of Allan Ramsay, who sings:

Oh had I all the wealth
Hopetoun's high mountains fill!—

declaring that he would share it all with the lass of Patey's mill. But poor Allan would probably have been embarrassed with the wealth and the lass, being a douce bookseller, with wife and bairn, in Edinburgh, under the sign of the heads of Jonson and Drummond, where he is said to have established the first circulating library in the United Kingdom. Google

LOST IN THE VALLEY.

By the Author of "Driven of the Wind," etc.

A STORY IN SIXTEEN CHAPTERS.

CHAPTER I.

SUCH a strange place to lose a letter in, and such a strange letter to lose!

The beginning was torn off; but, although only a few lines were lost, the writer, a woman, was well into her subject by the middle of the first page.

And her subject was virulent personal abuse of another woman, whose treatment of men in general, and of two men in particular, she bitterly resented.

Maurice Wilde, lying comfortably on the grass in the valley, gazing up into the sky for inspiration in a poem he was composing, had heard the rustle of the paper under his head, and lazily lifting his hand had drawn this woman's letter from out of the long grass. It had evidently been written recently, for the ink was fresh, and the page scarcely crushed. Holding it in his hand he formed theories about it. It was certainly not a letter anyone would care to lose, still less would anyone be likely to keep it. It had sunk so far into the grass as to be quite imperceptible, unless carefully searched for. There was a rustic bridge crossing a waterfall close to the spot. Maurice decided that the owner of the letter had been reading it on the bridge, and then, intending to destroy it, had let it fall by accident into the water below, whence it had been washed on to the grass, for it was still slightly wet.

There was no one in sight as Maurice looked about, but a Boulogne fish-girl and her sweetheart, and a party of English children and their nurse.

To none of these certainly could such a letter belong. Maurice having satisfied himself on this point, proceeded to read it again.

Half the first page being missing the opening words were the conclusion of a sentence:

"So even you ought to be satisfied with the evil you have brought about. Married to a man who adored you, you ruined him by your extravagance, broke his heart by your faithlessness, and ended it by being his murderess. And my son, another of your victims! Are you never haunted in your dreams by his dead face floating on the waters of the Arno, dying with a curse upon his lips for you, who

encouraged him to love you, stole his fortune, and then killed him by your cruelty and coldness? I know that my words will have no more effect on you now than my poor boy's tears and prayers had then, for you have a heart of stone, and you are rich, and still possess some evil attractions to lure other men to their ruin. But the time will most certainly come when a mother's curse will take effect, and the murderess of her son will find herself alone, unpitied, spurned, and detested as she deserves to be. For your offers of money, made to buy my silence, I feel nothing but scorn. They are beneath my notice; and all I meet shall know you as I know you—heartless, cruel, and vile."

There was no signature to this curious document. The more Maurice read it, the less he understood it. Passions and emotions were things he knew very little about; but they interested him from a spectator's point of view, when they did not disturb his own personal comfort. So he pondered over this letter for a considerable time; being very comfortable, lying on his back in the sunshine. But, not being strongly gifted with imagination, he could arrive at only two conclusions—that the lady who wrote the letter must be a most unpleasant person to meet, and the lady to whom it was written another. Still, it was rather interesting to imagine what her evil attractions were like.

Maurice was three-and-twenty, with a face like that of the young Antinous, regular and beautiful in outline, with dark blue eyes, and hair of extreme fairness. He was not tall enough to be handsome, from a masculine point of view, and was indeed only saved by a certain serious intentness of expression from being girlishly beautiful.

He was more thoughtful and intelligent than clever, and nearly everyone liked him, partly for his good looks and gentle manners, still more, perhaps, from his habit of avoiding anything like a discussion upon any subject.

At this period of his career he had a few male friends, to all of whom he was sincerely attached, and scarcely any friends among women, except one or two of the middle-aged and motherly kind.

He did not care for women. Saying pretty things to them bored him, and he was horribly afraid of falling in love; which process, from all he had heard and seen of it, he judged to be most disturbing and tiresome. He had been a good deal bored at home lately by ill-advised attempts on

the part of his family to marry him to a neighbouring heiress, who was reported, not untruly, to be deeply in love with him.

But though he cared little for women, and hated the thought of getting married, Maurice had an ideal which Miss Dudley the heiress—plump, massive, and perhaps a trifle stolid—failed to realise. She was always being asked to his father's house; and, in her absence, her acres, her attractions, and her accomplishments, were made the staple theme of conversation in the family circle.

So Maurice, one of whose strongest characteristics was a determination never to allow himself to be bored, did not offensively protest, but, after about three weeks' persecution, quietly announced his determination to go to Paris for a month.

This announcement created an explosion in the family circle.

Paris in September! So impossibly hot! And no one could go with him. Mary was going to an aunt in Scarborough, and Ethel and her mother to Cowes. His father did not wish to leave home. Maurice must wait until his mother and sisters could go with him. Or, if he wanted a change, why not go to Cowes? Miss Dudley was to join them there, and it would be so nice—

"I am going to Paris," Maurice repeated sweetly.

And as he had a little money of his own—just enough to live uncomfortably upon—as he expressed it, he was at last allowed to go, with Trevor, his father's man, to look after him.

Maurice had been all over England and Scotland with "his people," but never anywhere without them; and he found it peculiarly delightful now to arrange his own hours for going out and coming in, and to have no one but himself to please. So he had time this afternoon, in his one day's stay at Boulogne, on his way to Paris, to lie in the sunshine and read a letter not at all intended for him.

He got quite excited over it.

It was really possible then for men to make such utter fools of themselves, to waste their lives, and even to die, for love of a cruel, worthless woman! He had read of such cases, but had never absolutely met one before. No man was ever likely to die for love of Miss Dudley, he surmised, as a vision of the healthy, good-looking, somewhat noisy, heiress rose in his mind, and he felt a strong wish to behold the lady to whom such a letter could with truth be written.

"I shouldn't like to know her, but I should like to see her," he said, as he rose at last from the grass, and carefully folded the letter before placing it in his pocket-book, on his way from the Vallée du Nacre to his hotel.

He was so quiet and reserved and so good-looking that his movements were already watched with much interest by all the women in the house, from the elderly head-chambermaid, who decided that he must be "so like his mother," to the Alderman's widow of large wealth and loud manners, who beamed across the table at him under an eccentric cap, and thought she would like to kiss him. But Maurice's thoughts were elsewhere.

During dinner he was partly absorbed in planning out each hour of his stay in Paris, and partly in listening to the conversation of his next neighbour, an English doctor, resident in Paris, and spending a short holiday at Boulogne.

The subject of discussion at table d'hôte was the latest London scandal, an elopement in what is termed in French papers the "ig lif."

"I was not at all surprised to hear of it," Dr. Grantley was saying, "for I knew Lord Seaton when he was a boy, and am only surprised he has kept quiet so long after such dangerous training."

"Dangerous training, doctor?" exclaimed the Alderman's widow. "I have always understood that he was so strictly brought up."

"Just so. Too strictly, Lady Jenkyns. A young impressionable lad allowed to see none but the stupidest country society, and surrounded by a bevy of ugly old women, aunts, cousins, and grandmothers, wherever he went. What follows? As soon as he is thrown into London society, and meets a woman who is neither a fright nor a frump, he at once thinks she is an angel by force of contrast."

"Then what do you advocate for a young man's training, Doctor Grantley?"

"That he should know something of men and women, Lady Jenkyns, before he has to meet them. He will be then less likely to be led away by appearances."

Maurice, as usual, said nothing during this discussion. But later on, in the smoking-room, he entered into conversation with the doctor, who was a tall, distinguished-looking man, with a clean-shaved clever face, and asked him whether he had really seriously meant what he said at dinner.

"Or was it only for the sake of a brilliant paradox?" asked the younger man, examining the cigarette which he was smoking slowly to prolong the duration of his favourite enjoyment.

"I was speaking most seriously. Why do you ask?"

"Oh, nothing," said Maurice, with his low, musical laugh. "Only, the fact is, I have been brought up in much the same way as Lord Seaton myself, and had no idea I was in any particular danger."

Dr. Grantley looked at him, keenly but kindly.

"Of course the temperament decides the risk," he said. "I should think Narcissus's fate a more likely one for you."

But, when Maurice left the room, the doctor looked after him with interest.

"That is a pretty, nice-natured boy," he reflected. "I should be sorry to see him fall into bad hands. But so many young lads begin like that." He was at the station the next day at twelve before the Paris train started, and brought his card to the window of Maurice's carriage.

"I shall be in Paris in three weeks' time," he said, "and I should very much like you to call upon me. I have lived there the best part of my life, and since you have never been in the city before, and I know most of the nicest people in it, I might be of use to you."

Maurice took the card, and thanked him. But he was an extremely methodical youth, and at present absorbed in the loss of a pet hat-box which Trevor had mislaid.

"Most thoughtless of him," he was murmuring, as he fidgetted about at the window and gazed up and down the platform, when his attention was suddenly arrested by the appearance of one of the passengers, a lady of medium height, perfectly dressed in chestnut velvet and dark fur.

"What a beautiful woman!" he exclaimed.

"Beautiful woman!" echoed the doctor. "Beautiful coat! Her veil is so thick you can't see her face. She may be fifty or she may be——"

"Madame la Comtesse would like to speak to you, monsieur," said the French waiting-maid who accompanied the lady in question, leaving her mistress to deliver her message.

"By Jove!" exclaimed Dr. Grantley, a look of utter surprise and bewilderment passing over his face. "Excuse me, Mr. Wilde!" and hurriedly leaving his com-

panion he was soon deep in conversation with the lady in the chestnut velvet cloak.

Maurice forgot his pet hat-box, or rather he remembered it only as an excuse for thrusting his head out of the carriage-window to listen to this lady's voice.

He could not hear what she said—he could not see her face; but he felt as sure that she was beautiful as that she possessed the most melodious voice he had ever heard.

Presently she passed his carriage, still talking to the doctor in French.

"You were never hard and cruel in your judgment of me," she was saying; and a faint, delicate perfume of roses was wafted into Maurice's carriage as an accompaniment to her words.

Stretching his head again out of the window he was in time to see the door of an adjoining carriage close upon her. A moment later the whistle sounded, and the last thing Maurice saw was Doctor Grantley standing on the platform, his hat in his hand, looking pale and disturbed.

Maurice felt annoyed.

The lady in the chestnut velvet interested him. Her coat fitted so perfectly, and the glimpse of her hair under her little close bonnet suggested such a wealth of red-brown colour. Her voice, too, was so melodious. His was the only pleasant voice in his own family. His mother and sisters were all tall, limp women, with aquiline features, who spoke in a high-pitched key, and Maurice shuddered to think of Miss Dudley's strident tones. Now this woman's voice was perfect, and he decided that at the next station he would get out to interview Trevor on the subject of the hat-box, and have another look at the French Countess.

Like Boswell and every true Briton, Maurice "loved a lord," and the fact of the sweet-voiced lady being titled gave her additional attraction in his eyes. So at the next station he got out and reconnoitred, by which means he learned two facts—that her manner of speaking to a railway porter was quite irresistible, and that she was married.

She had let down the window of her compartment, and was saying, or rather cooing, "Merci," to a porter for some information; and the slim white hand with which she raised the window bore upon the third finger an unmistakable wedding-ring.

Maurice returned to his carriage somewhat depressed.

Of course it was not a matter of the slightest importance to him.

"But what a voice!" he exclaimed to himself. "She is probably married to some brute. Charming women always do marry brutes. The very name 'French Count' suggests an adventurer with dyed moustaches. She would be worth marrying, if only to shut one's eyes and hear her talk. It wouldn't matter what nonsense she uttered, so long as that perfect voice was kept going."

He was sufficiently in love with this voice to get out again at another station on the chance of hearing it. But the Countess had drawn down the blind of her carriage, and he saw and heard no more of her.

At Paris the absorbing interest of his luggage occupied his mind, to the exclusion of all other subjects. By the time he remembered the fair unknown she had disappeared. In his cab he reflected that when Dr. Grantley returned, in three weeks' time, he would call on him and try to find out something about her. Then he dismissed the subject, and it might have never entered his mind again had not fate willed it otherwise.

He and Trevor were soon at the Boulevard Haussmann, and in the lift ascending to the third floor, left vacant by an old school-friend of Maurice's, who was travelling in Germany.

It was a pretty suite of about six well-furnished rooms, with a broad balcony overlooking the back of the Grand Opera House. Bénéoit, the "femme de charge," had prepared a tempting little dinner for him, and, after enjoying it, Maurice strolled out to smoke his cigarette on the balcony.

It was about seven o'clock, but still light. The mere fact of being in Paris delighted the young Englishman. He watched the traffic in the busy street below, humming a barcarole in perfect contentment.

Suddenly he bent his head over the railings, in a vain endeavour to distinguish the people on the balcony below.

For a most delicious scent of otto of roses was being wafted upwards to where he stood, and the sound of a voice calling "Hélène" brought back vividly to his mind his fellow-passenger of the afternoon.

With joy he remembered that Bénéoit was a gossiping old dame. So far he had quelled her loquaciousness; now he determined to encourage it.

"I must speak to Bénéoit about getting

my collars properly done," he said to Trevor, when he brought in the coffee. "You had better send her in to me, as she certainly won't understand your French."

Trevor was a funereal person, with long whiskers and jaundiced views of life. He hated leaving home, and the aspersions on his French hurt him. With a look of pallid reproach he went in search of Bénéoit. She was a strikingly ugly Frenchwoman of about fifty, with the saffron-coloured skin, beady black eyes, and pronounced moustache peculiar to women of her age and nation.

Maurice interviewed her on several subjects as he sipped his coffee and smoked his cigarette. At last he steered her discourse into the subject of the other occupants of the house.

On the ground-floor, so Bénéoit informed him, lived a lady who had made a fortune by a hair restorer; the entresol was at present empty; on the first floor a fashionable club met; above monsieur lived an artist; and higher still, in the attics, some dress-makers.

"And the floor below?"

"Ah, au second!" Bénéoit came nearer to the table and lowered her voice. "It is an English lady, Madame Douglas; at least, she styles herself so. But her maid knows, and I know, she is really a Countess. If monsieur could see her appartement! But it is a palace! One can walk upon the flowers that arrive every day from the Madeleine Market. And then her toilettes! They say, too, that her chef is one of the best in Paris."

"Who is this lady?" asked Maurice.

"Monsieur may well ask. All the world asks the same. Who is she? Why does she not use her title? Why does no one visit her? Where did she get her fabulous wealth? Who is her husband? Is he alive? and if so, where is he? And why does he allow a lady so young, so beautiful, to be always unprotected, alone? For she is beautiful as an angel. And Hélène says it is a saint, never out of temper; so charitable, she maintains half the poor of Paris. She drives every day in the Bois; and nearly every Sunday, for six months, she goes to see an Irish lady in the Champs Élysées. But, if monsieur would like to see now, with his own eyes, what she is like," said the shrewd Frenchwoman, remarking the evident interest monsieur took in her discourse, "he should descend the stairs at eight o'clock and he would probably meet her, as her

brougham was ordered at that hour, and she never keeps it waiting."

Monsieur here found the conversation growing too personal, so dismissed Bénédict. But by ten minutes to eight he found the time hang somewhat heavily on his hands, and at three minutes to the hour he began slowly to descend the stairs "for a walk on the boulevards."

He had proceeded half way down the first flight when the door of the flat below opened, and two ladies came out. The first was the conventional companion of a beautiful woman—a washed-out, ladylike-looking person, no longer young; the second was the lady he had seen in the train. She was wearing a long trained gown of apricot-coloured silk; over it an opera cloak of seal-brown plush, lined with fur.

She was a light and exquisitely graceful. Her face was of a pale creamy fairness, the expression of her large brown eyes intensely sad. She walked slowly, with a languid, studied grace of motion. Every detail of her costume was perfect, from the apricot-coloured satin shoes to the diamond star flashing in the smooth coils of her red-brown hair; the perfume of roses that hung about her seemed a natural part of her beauty.

She was so unlike anyone he had ever seen before in her fairness, her sadness, and her exquisite loveliness, that she took Maurice's breath away. He felt as if a dream of years had come to life, and the ideal of all that is lovely which he shared in common with most young men had taken shape at last.

As he followed her slowly at some distance down the broad marble stairs, the door of the first floor, which was ajar, opened suddenly, and two young Frenchmen, dressed in the exaggerated fashion of their class, hurried out so quickly as to push against the younger of the two ladies.

Maurice felt certain, as he listened to the profuse apologies, and watched the bold stare of the handsomer and more dissipated-looking of the two men, that it was not an accident at all, but that they had been waiting for the Countess to pass. He looked at her face, and saw her turn a shade paler as she heard, without raising

her eyes, the unduly prolonged apologies of the young Frenchmen. Then she swept past and proceeded down the stairs.

On the ground-floor the man who had spoken to her hurried forward to hold back the heavy swing-door, and with the slightest inclination of the proud little head she passed through to her carriage outside.

The moment she was out of sight, Maurice heard the younger man burst into a hard unpleasant laugh. Linking his arm in that of his companion, the two sauntered down the street together, leaving Maurice hot with disgust at their conduct, and with sympathy for the woman whose beauty and unprotected position made her thus an object of insult and annoyance. He was filled by a chivalrous longing to be of use to her, and by an unquestioning confidence that so delicately beautiful a frame contained a mind as fair. But then Maurice Wilde was only three-and-twenty, and knew little of the world or of the women in it.

Very different feelings animated the two young Frenchmen.

"Hé bien, mon cher," exclaimed the Countess's principal tormentor, when he was out of Maurice's hearing, "did I not say so? It is indeed the Countess of Montecalvo masquerading as Madame Douglas. Was it not amusing to see her dignity, her coldness? And this to me, who know her history!"

"But are you sure she recognises you?" asked the other.

"Perfectly. At the first sound of my voice she turned pale. I will bet you my new English horse, Paragon, against a napoleon, that in a fortnight she receives me as her friend, and that I am seen driving with her in the Bois."

"Done," said his friend. "But if it is really the Countess of Montecalvo she is far too expensive an acquaintance for me at least. And you, my dear Marquis, who have been already twice ruined, is it for you to risk a third venture for a lady quite so dangerous?"

"I know my own affairs best," answered the Marquis. "She is the prettiest woman in Paris, and in a fortnight I shall be the most enviable man."

"THE STORY OF OUR LIVES FROM YEAR TO YEAR"

ALL THE YEAR ROUND

A Weekly Journal

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PRICE TWOPENCE.

A DATELESS BARGAIN.

By C. L. PIRKIS,

Author of "Lady Lovelace," etc.

CHAPTER XI.

"MOTHER is actually developing a will of her own," said Joyce to Frank, as they sat in the back drawing-room, confidentially talking over the small details of the wedding. "When I said to her the other day how much I should like to be married from our dear old home in Gloucestershire, she said, right out, that nothing would induce her to go back to that 'hole of a place;' she loved dear London, and would like to live and die in it."

Frank's lips formed to the name that was in Joyce's thoughts at the moment.

"The Buckingham," he said; "it's all their doing. I fear mischief will come of this intimacy before we succeed in getting rid of them."

"I've done my best," said Joyce, looking towards the larger room, where Sylvia sat embroidering by the fire, while her brother played an energetic game of *bélique* with Mrs. Shenstone. "Is it bravado, or thick-skinnedness on their part; or did I dream that I had spoken out plainly and shown unmistakably how unwelcome they are in the house?"

"Change your seat, dear, for this sofa. I can't sit facing that man without wishing to—well, never mind, perhaps I may have the chance some day. What does Mab say to it all?"

But Mab, after that one morning of vehement championship, had never once opened her lips on the matter. A new phase of thought was evidently beginning to take possession of her now. Her "practical beneficence" had come to a halt, her household duties were laid on one side. If

Joyce had not contrived to step into her sister's shoes just then, domestic arrangements would have run down generally, for morning, noon, and night found the girl shut up in her own room poring over books.

Joyce considered this a subject for congratulation, and wrote gleefully to Uncle Archie that Mab was at last growing into what nature had evidently meant her to be—a student. She had taken up with literature, and she felt sure would sooner or later blossom into an author.

Had Joyce known what sort of literature was occupying Mab and who was supplying it, she might have told a different tale. But one way or another Joyce had her hands very full at that time. What with intervening dressmakers, milliners, sempstresses; regulating the household; and, as far as lay in her power, keeping her mother within the borders of sanity; Joyce had no spare moments for peeping over Mab's shoulder at her books.

Then, too, there were Frank's leading articles for "The St. George's Gazette," which he always insisted she should glance over and criticise freely before he sent in.

"The St. George's" just then was making for itself a fine reputation for old-fashioned, red-hot Toryism, by the high-handed vehemence with which it discussed various leading topics of the day in certain of its articles.

These articles were signed "Stentor." People were beginning to ask who this man was, what right he had to lay down the law in that vigorously audacious fashion, as though from another altitude he looked down upon the miserable grovelling crowd, and saw panaceas for mundane ills that were hidden from their limited vision.

The question of women's suffrage was discussed, "Stentor" laughed it to scorn.

"Give women votes—no," he wrote; "I would take them away from nine hundred and ninety-nine of every thousand of the men, and the country would be all the better for the freedom from the clamour of ignorant tongues, for the silence in which men could take in the situation, reason, and act upon it. I would vote in the voters, and so simplify the whole machinery of electioneering. Let every town in the country return one voter for every thousand of its inhabitants, then we might expect intellectuality and common sense to be brought to bear upon the return of members. To suppose that one person in a thousand is competent to have a voice in the election of a member is a generous computation."

This was bad enough. The Liberal papers poured vials of wrath upon the unlucky "Stentor's" head. But when Irish politics in their turn came on for discussion in "The St. George's" columns, the vials were turned into buckets, and threats of dynamite and other disagreeable things began to find their way into the office of "The St. George's Gazette."

A word of warning came from Scotland Yard, advising that the incognito of "Stentor" should be strictly preserved.

Frank laughed the warning to scorn.

Joyce grew timorous, and counselled prudence. Her thoughts flew to her mother.

"I wish you hadn't scribbled your name to that one article you sent mother about 'patriotism as an investment,'" she said, referring to a short, spirited sketch of Frank's, detailing how the Irish movement in New York had been turned into capital by American agitators. She made up her mind that the very first time she could get Mrs. Shenstone alone she would impress upon her the importance of not betraying Frank's identity with the writer of these fiery effusions.

It was not, however, easy to get a quiet five minutes with Mrs. Shenstone in those days. One or other of the Buckingham's seemed always in attendance upon her—within doors the sister, out of doors the brother.

Sylvia and Mrs. Shenstone had by this time grown to be all but inseparable, and had appeared to form one of those rapturous friendships rarely met with outside the walls of young ladies' boarding-schools.

Mrs. Shenstone, towards the end of October, had recommenced her weekly receptions. It was to Sylvia, not Joyce, she

carried her appeals for advice as to the decoration and arrangement of her rooms, the entertainment of her guests during the momentous evening.

Joyce felt sure that Sylvia's eye had run over the invitation list, and that not a few cards were sent to personal friends of her own, for the rooms soon began to fill to overflowing, and the Irish-American element was unduly conspicuous. Joyce had never before in her life known that she had a temper. Now she was being perpetually reminded of its existence by sharp twinges something like those of chronic toothache or headache.

There was some excuse for her. Sylvia, for some reason or other, seemed intent on feeding and developing every one of those foibles and follies of Mrs. Shenstone which Joyce had all her life long tried alternately to laugh or to trample out of existence. They certainly were becoming painfully apparent. Never before had her ridiculous love for notoriety at any price, her absurd attempts at juvenility and ingenuousness of manner, been so pronounced and conspicuous. Joyce felt sure that though Sylvia with scrupulous exactitude set herself to applaud and gratify every one of Mrs. Shenstone's foolish whims as they showed themselves, in her heart she was laughing at her, and saying to herself: "See how easy it is to twist a weak-minded woman round one's little finger, if one only knows how to set about it."

Joyce began to lose a little of that confidence in herself and her own resources, which Uncle Archie had so severely reprimanded. The dogged obstinacy that a shallow-brained person can develop under certain conditions came to her as a positive revelation. Not so very long ago she would have laughed to scorn the idea of her mother having a single name on her visiting list, through which she—Joyce—had decided to put her pen. But here was she compelled to stand a silent and helpless witness of an intimacy not only distasteful, but absolutely repugnant, to her.

She made up her mind that before her wedding-day came round and she said her good-bye to her home, she would take Uncle Archie fully into her confidence. The little interest that Mab appeared to take in what went on about her just then made it doubly necessary some one should come forward and look after her happiness in life.

Uncle Archie had written a short letter

to Joyce, grumbling over the ills of life generally, but stating his intention of coming up to London the first week in December, so as to have a word to say respecting the wedding arrangements.

"Why I'm to be dragged up to town at this uncomfortable time of year is more than I can understand," he wrote bluntly enough. "Your father's wish would have been that you should have married from your old home in Gloucestershire, and I certainly think his wishes on the matter should be respected. Don't ask me to stay in your house, I would as lief have lodgings in the County Asylum at once. Besides, Aunt Bell wants to be as near as can be to the big West-end shops so that she can get rid of her money as fast as possible, and if I don't humour her I shall have a life of it, so I'm bound to go to our old quarters in Clarges Street."

"Poor Aunt Bell, it's she who has the 'life of it,' I'm thinking," said Joyce as, with her letter in her hand, she made her way to her mother's sitting-room, intending to found another appeal for a return to Gloucestershire upon Uncle Archie's blunt statement of her father's wishes.

For a wonder she found her mother alone. Mrs. Shenstone gave a great start at Joyce's approach, and looked nervously towards the door. No doubt she thought that a lecture was impending, and that it would be very much better to go shares in it with Sylvia.

Joyce noticed her nervous apprehension, and felt indignant, sorry, and pitiful all in a breath to think that anyone should dare in this way to come between her mother and herself. Those odious Buckinghamas, to set such a condition of things going! That poor mother to allow it! Her thoughts flew to Frank's rashly signed leading article, and she saw what seemed to her a better way of utilising a five minutes' talk with her mother, than by reading aloud Uncle Archie's letter.

"Mother," she asked, "have you any spare numbers of the 'St. George's Gazette'? I'm collecting the year's issue for reference. I'm looking for one dated September 15th, do you happen to have it?"

Mrs. Shenstone breathed again. It was not to be a lecture, then, after all.

"There are ever so many, Joyce, at the bottom of that cupboard," she answered pleasantly. "Look them out for yourself."

Joyce went down on her knees and

rummaged among the newspapers at the bottom of the cupboard.

She counted them up carefully number by number. The one for the date September 15th was missing.

"Do you remember one that Frank signed in pencil, mother, and sent to you while we were away at the sea?" she asked a little anxiously.

"What was it about, dear? Politics, you know, I never read. I'm not sensible and clever like you and Mab."

Oddly enough, following some inverted process of reasoning, Mrs. Shenstone, ever since her daughters had arrived at years of discretion, had been in the habit of founding a claim to distinction among her friends upon the plea: "They are so sensible and clever, I am such a goose," as though it were a disgrace to own to a fair amount of brain power.

"Have you lent or given away any of the papers, mother?" asked Joyce.

"Ah, yes, dear, now you remind me, I did lend one number to Sylvia, with an article by Frank in it. It was all about Fenianism in America, I think. I didn't read it through, but I remember thinking it would be sure to interest Sylvia, as it was all about her own country."

"Did Miss Buckingham return it?" Joyce asked, feeling the farthest limit of silliness had been reached now.

"No. She asked me if she might send it to her brother. She said she felt sure he would be deeply interested in what a very young Englishman thought of their national character. Dear me, Joyce, how you stare at one! I'm sure she meant it as a compliment to Frank. She laid such an emphasis on the word 'young.'"

Forty-five naturally welcomes a compliment that twenty-five turns its back upon.

Joyce got up from her knees and hastily left the room. The mischief, whatever it was, had been done. There was no use making a moan over it. In fact, more harm than good might be wrought by laying stress upon the circumstance. She could only hope that the Buckinghamas had by this time forgotten all about the unlucky article, or at any rate had not associated its writer with the "Stentor" of aggressive politics.

She would keep her eyes open, however, she resolved, to all that was going on about her, and endeavour to ascertain a few particulars about these all but strangers. What was their position in their own country? What was their occupation,

if any, in life? Above all, what was their object in thus making themselves free of a house where they had more than once been made to understand they were unwelcome?

No one but a mere baby in worldly knowledge could have supposed that their conduct in this respect was dictated by personal liking for Mrs. Shenstone. Joyce was no baby, but a woman with a clear head and a fair amount of common sense. Both refused to be satisfied with such a supposition. At one time she had been inclined to think that a comfortable income and an easily-ruled wife had been the objects of Captain Buckingham's endeavour, and that his sister, so to speak, held the ground for him to make his advance. As time went on, however—notably, after her frank statement of the provisions of her father's will—she was compelled to dismiss this idea, though she could find no other to replace it.

Sylvia Buckingham had now been for about two months an inmate of the house. The brother on an average spent three or four hours out of every twenty-four in Mrs. Shenstone's society. If he did not lunch with her, he dined, or vice versa; if he did neither, he walked or drove with her, or chatted away his mornings, or even on occasions wrote his letters in some quiet nook in the house.

The smaller drawing-room had been all but converted into Sylvia's sitting-room. Here she transacted her correspondence, received any friends who might chance to call upon her, or read Mrs. Shenstone to sleep after luncheon or dinner.

In spite of that lady's openly expressed liking, Sylvia and her brother must have felt their intimacy with this family stood on an oddly-strained footing.

Joyce, after her first daring attempt to dislodge the pair, had subsided into a freezing politeness. Mab's attitude towards them was that of a nervously repressed interest. It was a matter for congratulation that Frank's occupations at that period prevented his passing much of his time under Mrs. Shenstone's roof. His professional work was rapidly growing upon him; his hours at his chambers were proportionately lengthening. In addition there were sundry visits to be paid to his own people in Gloucestershire relative to certain business transactions that required settlement. The selection and the furnishing of the London house which he and Joyce were to occupy after their marriage, naturally enough was the occasion

for many pleasant meetings and excursions together. Had things been otherwise, and he had spent as much of his time as formerly in Mrs. Shenstone's household, the chances were that the smouldering animosity between Captain Buckingham and himself must have been fanned into a flame. As it was, by tacit consent the two men, when they occasionally met, ignored each other as much as possible. Joyce could only hope that this condition of things might continue until Uncle Archie came upon the scene, and, speaking with authority, might induce her mother to put her household on a more comfortable footing.

RECOLLECTIONS OF A MIDSHIPMAN'S MESS.

IN FOUR PARTS. PART III.

AFTER the little thunderstorm described in my previous chapter, the atmosphere of the mess sensibly altered for the better. Several changes were made; supernumeraries were sent to other ships; objectionable members exchanged or were appointed elsewhere; and the berth settled down to its proper numbers, among whom there now reigned a curious but decided harmony. We no longer fought for our food, nor did we starve on the poorest of ship's provisions. Every week we had what we called a "sensation dinner," which was held at a late hour instead of noon, and which was marked by the presence of such luxuries as dinner sherry and sweets—"duff," as we used to call it.

Moreover, all at once, under the influence as I think of a new arrival, the mess developed a madness for music. In default of instruments we established ourselves into what we called an "organophonic band," and during the periods of waiting, such as the intervals between the courses, the "band" would play "selections" from well-known operas, each performer imitating to the best of his ability the sound of the particular instrument which he chose to represent. In this we were greatly aided by the fact of our having a regular band on board, and the operatic pieces which we "performed" were nearly always reproductions of those of our band; but we really had a considerable quantity of untrained musical talent in the mess, and our music, bad though it was, served to keep us in good humour and out of mischief. But on one occasion our love for "music" got us, de-

servedly enough, into fresh trouble with the Commander.

Some adventurous spirit, in prowling about the ship late one evening, discovered with a thrill of sinful joy that the Bandmaster—the real Bandmaster I mean—had gone ashore and had left the key of the instrument cabin in the door. Instantly rising to the splendid possibilities of such an unexpected occasion, he hurried back to the mess, and, with his face beaming with delight, announced the gorgeous fact, and added: "let's have a real concert."

The temptation was far too great to be resisted. All embraced the idea with no thought of hesitation. It would be absurd, nay wrong, to let such an opportunity slip. One by one, in order to avoid the eye of the sentry, they slipped quietly out of the mess towards the Bandmaster's cabin; one by one they returned stealthily in a few minutes, each concealing as best he might, the instrument he had selected: the proprietors of the largest brass ones being the objects of universal envy. We ranged ourselves round the table, some, unable to stow the "slack" of their instruments away beneath the table, sat upon it; Moore, our most talented musician, who really played the fiddle and played it well, was unanimously appointed conductor.

He stood up. There was a hush of expectancy; his bâton waved in true conductor style. "Now, gentlemen! when I count three—one, two, three!" And at that word there burst upon that ship a blast of such unutterable hideousness, as it has seldom been the lot of any man to hear. This was continued with unflagging energy for several minutes, each performer blowing, scraping, beating, clashing his loudest in delirious enjoyment of the appalling uproar, until sentries, quarter-masters, and bluejackets of every grade came hammering at the mess door to roar, in the hope of being heard above the din of the "concert," the fact that "the Commander wished to speak to the young gentlemen on the quarter-deck."

All at once one of our number "thought he heard somebody speaking outside," and the cessation of noise that followed allowed the Commander's message to trickle into our unwilling ears. Well, well, there was no hope for it; go we must. We had had our enjoyment; we considered it well worth anything we might be called upon to suffer for it; but we paid dearly for our devotion to the Muses, by the stoppage of all our leave for a considerable time after.

Now that we had got our mess into more decent trim we began to turn our thoughts to hospitable cares, and we "entertained" friends from the shore, who must, I have since thought, have been entertained in more ways than one by the reception which we gave them. Foreigners, too, dined with us—French midshipmen, who sang us strange Republican songs, which they were not permitted to sing in those days of the Empire, and who danced the "can-can" for us to the strains of our band, the real band I mean, not the organophonic one; and Italian midshipmen, with some of whom we struck up a great friendship, and who excited our admiration by the courtesy of their manners, by their wonderful proficiency in our language, and by other literary and artistic attainments far in advance of our own.

Our chums ashore were mostly English, but occasionally one or other of us struck up an acquaintance with a black-browed, thin-waisted, heavily moustached Peruvian or Chileno, and we aired our execrable Spanish at him with immense self-importance in the presence of those who were more miserably ignorant of the language than ourselves. One such individual was picked up by one of our number who knew absolutely nothing of the language, but who was full of pride in the possession of so distinguished-looking a friend. His name in his native tongue was Anibal Herguinigot, but Forold was incapable of mastering the intricacies of Spanish pronunciation. He called him Allyballybillygoat in one sonorous and majestic word, and it was quite a treat to see him come into the mess with his foreign friend, look round with honest pride in his eye, and then say heartily and familiarly, "come in, old Allyballybillygoat, and make yourself at home! Beighton, Flemynge, Hamilton, let me introduce you to my friend Seenyor Allyballybillygoat, come off to see the ship," etc. etc. As far as I can recollect, he turned out to be an adventurer of the lowest order.

Our amusements ashore were very limited. Few of us had any superfluity of money, neither had we sufficient acquaintance ashore to put us in the way of seeing that which was interesting. Cricket we played when we could—on ground as hard as a brick and nearly as devoid of herbage—but our principal and indeed standard amusement was bathing. Wherever we went we bathed, sometimes from the ship's side, sometimes from a

launch made fast astern, but more usually from the shore. If we went out for a walk, that walk was sure to include a bathe; and, considering the very meagre accommodation for washing with which we were supplied on board ship, the bath was a most necessary, enjoyable, and desirable thing. When bathing from the ship's side in harbour we generally undressed below, and then rushed upon deck draped in a long bath-towel or a waterproof, bolted down the lofty side of the ship by the companion-ladder, and dived off the highest step which we dared to essay—the lowest of all was good enough for me, I remember. Some few went from the hammock nettings, thirty or forty feet above the water-line, but as a rule we were modest, and contented ourselves with flopping in from the foot of the companion-ladder.

At Callao we had one particular walk which ended invariably in a bathe, in fact, it was taken with that object. It was a walk through thick, bushy country, by a sort of by-road, to a point some two miles inland, where, by turning off from the hardly defined track, we suddenly came upon the little river Rimac, which gives its name to the lovely city of Lima, the words being really identical, and commemorating, in the Quichua language, the existence of a celebrated oracle in Inca times—Rimac meaning "he who speaks."

Here there was a deep pool in the stream, which in most places we could wade across without getting much over our ankles, which pool we had found and hailed as a real godsend. We never reached the bottom of it, so deep was it, and day after day everyone who could get leave strolled off to this spot and plunged, and shouted, and swam to his heart's content; and here it was that Flemynge had his great adventure. He had gone off with one of the wardroom officers for a "happy day" at the Rimac, taking some lunch with them, and unsuspecting of any danger. They bathed, they lunched, they sat down upon the shady side of the bank beneath the bushes and smoked the calumet of peace, when they were suddenly aware of the presence of two strangers on the scene—two totally undesirable strangers—two strangers armed with the largest-sized revolvers, which, without awaiting the ceremony of an introduction, they incontinently poked into the faces of the two dreamers, demanding "dinero," with many strange curses, and threatening them with "muerte" if they

did not pay up. Those were the only two words which they could distinguish, but they were enough.

Flemynge's companion took in the situation in a moment; he merely remarked: "What the devil will we do now?" and gave himself up to be robbed. Flemynge followed suit; they were unarmed, and resistance was hopeless. But the investigation produced little result—a couple of silver watches, perhaps five dollars a-piece, and nothing more. This did not satisfy the gentlemen of the road, so they made Flemynge and his chum hand overcoats, waistcoats, and hats, and it is a mercy that they did not demand their trousers as well. The two victims said afterwards that they had resolved to draw the line there, and had such a requisition been made they would have contested it; but they were spared that necessity, and slowly and sadly they wended their way homeward, bare-headed and in their shirt-sleeves, to lay their case before the British Consul.

On their way they met a poor native, a labourer who had fallen a prey to the same precious pair, who had robbed him of twenty dollars. He was in tears, and they administered such consolation as they could, which was not much, under the circumstances. They never saw those coats, those hats, those dollars and watches again. The authorities were powerless, the country in a terribly disordered state, robbery was frequent, murder not uncommon. Revolution was the one engrossing pursuit of the inhabitants. But the adventure afforded us some amusement of a mild sort, and earnest enquiries as to the time of day by his watch were frequently put to one or other of the sufferers, while two extra places were occasionally laid at the mess-table on guest-nights in the ward-room, it being an article of faith among his messmates that Flemynge's chum, despairing of his life, had, as a last resource, invited his two persecutors to come off and dine with him. There was, of course, a great stir in the mess when Flemynge came off and related his wrongs; and, fired with a righteous indignation and a thirst for glory, Grimshaw and I started off the next morning in keen pursuit of these rascals, armed to the teeth. At least we thought we were armed to the teeth, but it turned out afterwards that Grimshaw's revolver was so clogged with oil and dirt that it took about half-an-hour to get each chamber to go off, and we judged that the robbers, if we caught them, would have

got tired of waiting long before that and would have fired first. However, we set off in high spirits, it never occurring to us that two youngsters hardly escaped from school would be no match for two ruffians of full age, who were probably already well skilled in their trade. We searched each bush and found nothing; we were disappointed; we wanted to fight; but I shall never forget how my heart beat when a native stepped suddenly into view close to us from behind a thick bush. We went on; we got to the Rimac, we bathed—one at a time, with the other keeping watch with revolver full cocked and ready. We ate our provisions, we waited long, nobody appeared, and at last, as evening was coming on apace, we determined that we must go back.

The walk back was not so pleasant; the sun was no longer bright overhead, the mists were rising; it seemed to me to be mysteriously quiet. I don't think we talked much, but we walked along with our weapons in our hands and our eyes peering anxiously around us. The thick bush would have easily afforded concealment to a whole gang of thieves without our being likely to find it out, and I think that that fact was slowly trickling into our minds. Nevertheless, we walked on, our pace insensibly quickening, and had got about halfway home when there was a savage rustle behind a bush close to us—a shout—and my heart turned to ice-water, and seemed to stop entirely as I felt a gigantic grasp fixed upon the back of my neck! My time had come. I struggled frantically against the stupendous grip of the hand that held me, and managed to catch one glimpse of my cruel assailant.

It was Cubitt, our chief engineer! He had come out with his pet "Penang lawyer" to catch that gang and kill them all by himself. How relieved I was! and what a comfort it was to walk beside Cubitt all the way home and feel that if those robbers came now Cubitt could easily settle them without even our assistance, for he was an immense man, of extraordinary strength, great height, and enormous reach, and his "Penang lawyer" would very nearly have made a topgallant mast for a line-of-battle ship! He was the most good-natured and unsuspecting man in the world, and I don't think that even to this day he knows that when he used to walk the quarter-deck at sea for exercise of an evening, all the youngsters used to turn out and walk in a long string behind him, imitating as best they

could the forward poke of his head (he was very near-sighted), the odd swing of his shoulders, and the enormous parabola described by his legs as he flung them from him after the manner of a pair of compasses. Any way, had he known it he wouldn't have minded; indeed, he would have enjoyed it as much as anybody.

We had wonderful yarns about him in the berth—how, for instance, on one occasion, on the China station, he had been sitting quietly smoking a pipe and drinking a glass of grog at the first-floor window of a hotel, and how a Yankee merchant skipper had come in slightly primed with whisky and very quarrelsome; how he tried his best to pick a quarrel with Cubitt by insolent remarks about England, then about British naval officers, and lastly, about Cubitt himself, who bore it all with admirable patience and good temper until, having knocked the ashes out of his pipe and emptied his glass of grog, he suddenly got up, took his traducer by the "scruff" of his neck and the rear of his trousers and threw him out of the open window! And when I recall all that I know of Cubitt I can well believe this story.

Besides our stock amusement of bathing we were also, though in a less degree, devoted to boating. We would get permission from the Commander to have the first launch, and, stocking her with provisions, would set sail and run away down the coast after flamingoes which we hardly ever got, or shooting pelicans and sometimes sea-lions. The latter were very useful, as they produced quantities of oil, which we used for cleaning the ship's copper. These expeditions were not unattended with danger, not only from the fact of so many guns and rifles being crowded together in the hands of so many inexperienced youngsters, but also from exterior causes. I shall never forget the shock it gave me one afternoon to see the launch, which had left in the forenoon full of a laughing, joyous crowd, coming back long before she was expected with her ensign half-mast high. She had lost a man. They were sea-lion shooting, and were wishing to land on a barren rock which we knew as Sea-lion Island. The surf was considerable, or rather, perhaps the swell I should say; the launch could not go in close to the rock on account of her size, so they tried to land in the dingy, which they took for such emergencies. Numbers got into her; she

reached the rock in safety, disembarked her people and returned for more; again she reached the rock, touched it, and the next sea capsized her. There was a shout of laughter from all hands. Every fellow scrambled out; no one dreamed of danger; when, in the midst of the noise and fun, there rang out a wild shriek of agony, and before they could tell who it was a man was drowned in their very midst, swept off the rock on which he had been securely standing and sucked under in a moment by the rapid current, the very existence of which was unsuspected. His body was never found.

Boat-sailing, too, was our Commander's great hobby, and it was his delight to man and arm every boat in the ship, and send them away, while he from the ship itself put them through all sorts of sailing tactics by means of a set of boat signals, of which he was the inventor. The first launch would lead, followed by the second launch, the barge, the pinnace, the two cutters, etc., etc., and very pretty they all looked under sail on a fine morning, their twenty-pounders and other arms glittering in the sun, their sails white as snow, and their little signal flags fluttering with a brave show of colour.

But the Commander was by no means pleased if his signals were disregarded or misinterpreted, and that was an event which not unfrequently took place. Beighton was midshipman of the first launch, and was very fond of these manœuvres; but they did not always come off as they ought, and sometimes involved him in trouble and often exposed him to much chaff. He was a great, good-humoured youngster at this time, full of happy carelessness, and utterly thoughtless even of the immediate future. He would embark with perfect self-confidence on any undertaking, however difficult or impossible, without a quail of misgiving, without a shadow of mistrust, and only recognised at last the existence of the impossibility, when brought right on top of it.

He once boarded a French man-of-war with a complimentary message from our Captain, which he was to convey in his neatest phrase to the French skipper. His sole stock of French consisted of the elementary remark: "Parlez-vous français?" Yet, armed with this, he set off undismayed. He got alongside; was piped with much ceremony up the companion-ladder; was met in the gangway by the French officer of the watch, cap in hand.

Beighton looked at him, hesitated a second, opened his mouth, and then out it came: "Parlez-vous français?" He was assured that such was naturally the case: the assurance was couched in excellent French—that floored him; he seemed to have expected an indignant negative. He could go no farther, so, seizing the astonished officer by the arm, he said: "Well, look here, old chap, I'm afraid I can't, so we'd better talk English."

But it was boat-sailing that made me think of Beighton. When he took up a subject he took it up thoroughly, and forgot everything else for the time; and this was the case when he began to study gunnery. He was going in for his examination for "acting" sub-lieutenant, and he was very anxious about this subject. He pored over it night and day; he studied "time-fuses" and "percussion-fuses"; he learned up the "bursting-charge" of every shell in the magazine; he was careful to "insert his cartridge, seam sideways and bottom first, to the full extent of the arm," in the words of the gunnery-book, and he "rammed home," as directed, "with a wad."

Now it happened one afternoon, while Beighton was in this state, that the Commander ordered the boats out sailing as usual, and with them there started a little Yankee pleasure-boat, all canvas and centre-keel, which wanted to try conclusions with our big boats. The Yankee craft was ahead, but Beighton was not to be outdone by a Yankee; he crowded sail after him, he overtook him, and would have passed him as close as he could steer, but his bumpkin caught in the leech of the Yankee's mainsail, and before he could say "knife" the little craft had capsized. Everybody was picked up, however, and but little harm was done; but the commander had witnessed the evolution from the upper deck of the ship, and was by no means gratified at it. He signalled the first launch to return to the ship; it did so. Beighton brought his boat alongside and mounted the companion-ladder; at the top in the gangway he encountered the Commander, who was regarding him with a dangerous smile. Beighton touched his cap.

"Mr. Beighton," said the Commander with acid emphasis, "you have been sailing your boat seam sideways and bottom first the entire afternoon!"

"Yes, sir;" and Beighton's face lit up as he recognised the familiar language of the gunnery-book, "yes, sir, to the full extent of the arm."

No Commander in the world could have kept his countenance at such a reply, and Beighton trotted down the hatchway in a state of complacent happiness. The Commander couldn't floor him in his gunnery.

These were, as I have said, troublesome times on the coasts of Chili and Peru; the two countries were at war with Spain, and Peru, if she got a short respite from external war, always indulged herself in internal dissension. Consequently the ports were kept in a constant state of anxious expectation of bombardment either by a Spanish fleet or by a revolutionary gunboat or merchant steamer dignified by that name. Among other precautions which they always took, a guard-boat watched about the harbours all night, on the watch for any vessel or boat which might seem by its movements to invite suspicion. This was our opportunity: we had a fast gig; we used to get permission to go out for a row in the evening. We manned the boat with the most powerful youngsters that the mess could produce, and then we shoved off to give that guard-boat a pleasant evening.

The gig would creep inshore, hugging the shadows until the evening was sufficiently dark for the purpose. Then it would begin its game; it would shoot swiftly round a corner, appear for a moment, then disappear in the gloom; presently it would attract the attention of the guard-boat, and this latter would soon begin to suspect something; it would row gently and silently in the direction in which the suspicious boat had been noticed; it would be allowed to approach near enough for its suspicions to be confirmed, then it would hail, and at the sound the gig would go away at a rattling pace, the guard-boat would at once follow, and the business of the evening would commence. Our youngsters, in capital wind and practice, and with a fast boat under them, could run away from the guard-boat whenever they liked, so they would spurt away for a few moments, and then they would again wait in the shadow. After them would come the heavy guard-boat, its crew breathing loudly, its coxswain exhorting his men to give way, its officers threatening vengeance all round. Presently the dim shadow of the chase would suddenly be seen paddling gently ahead.

"Alza los remos!" (oars) the officer of the guard-boat would sing out.

The oars would stop—dead silence. Then came the regulation hail:

"Que bote?"

"Bote de madera!" (wooden boat) our wits would reply; and simultaneously the oars in both boats would strike the water, and for five minutes or so each boat would rush through the darkness as hard as their respective crews could drive them. Sometimes a bullet would be sent whistling over our heads, to our intense satisfaction; but we generally regarded that as an intimation that we had gone far enough, and the gig would return to the ship, its crew delighted with their expedition, and enjoying the conviction that they of the guard-boat were puffing, panting, perspiring, and swearing after their fruitless pursuit, but would not fail to allow themselves to be befooled in a precisely similar manner the next night, and so would continue to afford us sport. But, after a week or so of this, the guard-boat began to smell a rat, and allowed us to row about as we liked.

The authorities certainly had much to complain of with regard to the English midshipmen, for they were no more secure on shore than they were afloat, and no vigilante or police-soldier ever went asleep on a doorstep without waking up to find one, if not both, of his red worsted epaulettes, cut off and carried away as trophies to adorn the mess of some British man-of-war; while I have known a native sentry bound hand and foot and gagged with his own bayonet, after which he was placed in a recumbent position inside his overturned sentry-box, there to await his relief. What a commotion there would be should a party of young French or German officers attempt such enterprises in an English port!

SAINT AUGUSTINE.

SAINT AUGUSTINE is, after Plymouth Rock, the most respectable plot of earth on the North American continent. Indeed, it has a strong claim to be venerated even more than the rude rock whereon the "Mayflower" discharged her pilgrims, for, without doubt, here European civilisation first set up its flag. Fully three-and-a-half centuries ago a certain Spaniard, Juan Ponce de Leon, holding commission from King Ferdinand of Spain, as Governor of the "Island of Florida," landed in its neighbourhood. Him, however, an Indian arrow soon relieved of his ill-defined authority. And, unless historical tradition be a myth, in 1565

another distinguished Spaniard, Aviles de Melendez, founded the city which now, after a living torpor of two or three centuries, is becoming famous as the most delightful and salubrious seaside winter resort west of the Atlantic. Not that the Spaniards were allowed to "settle up" Saint Augustine in perfect peace. They were ousted alternately by French and English freebooters. British Drake, sailing by in 1586, sighted their guard station, and, having ordered out the pinnace for a reconnaissance, burned the city, and hunted the Spaniards into the pine-woods, which to this day press it closely on the landward side. And Drake, though the most eminent of its devastators, was neither the first nor the last. Nevertheless, until 1763, the Spaniards retained Saint Augustine and Florida successfully enough against all comers. And even now the city is distinctly Spanish in its antiquities; in a large number of its populace; in its street nomenclature; and in the spirit of laziness which, spite of mammoth hotels and Yankee boarding-houses, pervades it like an atmosphere.

A narrow line of railway, thirty-six miles long, goes from Jacksonville, the largest city of Florida, to St. Augustine, the most historical. From first to last you are in the forest—shapely pines, tinted cypress, towering live oaks, palm trees, and palmettos make the journey a procession down a stupendous avenue—and when the train stops at its southern terminus, we are still in the forest, though a long, white, sandy road hard by, and a distant view of scarlet and grey roofs and cupolas against the blue Floridian sky, are eloquent of human life and civilisation. We are but one among two hundred tourists brought to St. Augustine on the round trip by the one train of the day; and our companions, young and old, face this dreary, hot stretch of sand with the gleeful good-humour which marks pleasure-seekers in the early stage of their pleasure all the world over.

The population of Saint Augustine in 1880 was two thousand two hundred and ninety-three. Five or six thousand is not an excessive computation now, to which, from November until April, two or three thousand visitors may be added. These latter are lodged in brand-new boarding-houses; in the quaint bulging and balconied houses, hung with festoons of climbers and creepers, which still stand in the older parts of the city; and in the huge, six-storeyed, quadrangular buildings which offer accom-

modation, and all the luxuries of civilisation besides, to hundreds of guests.

Certain other of St. Augustine's hotels are almost Byzantine in their splendour. They are magnificent to the eye in particular coloured turrets of eccentric outline, tortuous verandahs, and the princely groves of well-trained orange-trees which hide their basements from common view. Of course one cannot live in such palaces, under such a sky, in winter, for a trifle; but, when all is considered, the Florida hotels, at three to five dollars a day, are not exorbitant; and it is possible for the tourist to satiate himself with toothsome and nourishing food enough, for a day, at a charge of thirty-five cents, with red napkins and diligent attendance included.

Continuing along the hot, sandy road, we pass numerous neat white-and-green wooden houses, so compact and tiny that one involuntarily thinks of the ease with which they might be transported elsewhere. Each house has its simple piazza, and encloses, within a careful fence, its territorial estate—enough to support the half-dozen or ten orange-trees which with their fruit brighten the place, and perhaps a clump of prickly pear. With one additional appurtenance, these Arcadian establishments may be termed complete: each house has its well of indifferent water.

But soon the attention is diverted from these domestic pictures by the chief curiosity of St. Augustine—the Spanish Fort. This time-worn and battered erection, with its grassy buttresses, its decipherable bastions and half-moons, its ruined towers, and its strong walls, still keeps watch seawards. The approach is yet guarded by a drawbridge, though the moat is dry, and over the portcullis is an elaborate heraldic device, bearing date 1756, which, as one of the American soldiery explained it, tells of the time when "it had to do with Spain." The building stands on the margin of the Matanzas River, as the long strip of inland sea which runs parallel with the coast, is called; and, from its ramparts, the blue waters of the Atlantic, a mile east, may be seen tumbling upon the sandy quay (rich in turtles) which forms the other boundary of the Matanzas River.

The precincts of St. Augustine are entered under a black old arch of stone which spans the road. Over the doors and windows of the houses we see such significantly hybrid names as Nicolas Rogers, Mary Ponce, and others; while it

is quite evident that Hippolyta Street was not christened by one of the stock of the "Mayflower." George Street somewhat recalls old York city, with its bow windows almost kissing each other over the heads of pedestrians; but it is by no means so interesting architecturally. We pass shop after shop offering for sale the elegant and useless trifles which seem to form the bulk of the merchandise of most health resorts. Here they consist of shells; orange-tree canes; pins, brooches, and studs of alligator teeth; baby alligators in pickle or stuffed; birds of gorgeous plumage; and bits of sea-coral. From upper verandahs olive-complexioned ladies, with dark eyes, gently swaying themselves in hammocks or rocking-chairs, glance lazily into the street, or what of it they can see; and their charms are graciously emphasised by the crimson and purple and white flowers which drape the jalousies.

In contrast with these swarthy natives of St. Augustine, are the "rose and lily" faces of some of the fair and fragile daughters of millionaire Americans, wintering here for their health. Indeed most shades of complexion-colouring may be seen at St. Augustine in winter-time, and among the most curious examples are the "Turnbull niggers," or Minorcans, who, as a family, live almost exclusively in this old city. These people are the descendants of the shiploads of inhabitants of Minorca and Southern Spain, which were sent out to Florida by Mr. Turnbull, the British Minister at Madrid, during the twenty years of our British occupation of Florida from 1763 to 1783. By intermarriage with the pure negroes, they have degenerated. They are, moreover, a class apart; sympathy or liking between them and the pure Spaniard, the active Yankee, the Southerner, or even the negroes themselves, there is none. No wonder, if in this isolation, their temper has also degenerated. They are said to be as rancorous and vindictive as the worst of Corsicans, and phenomenally quick at whipping out their knives. To call one of them a Minorcan is a "casus belli," though, in truth, they have no other appellation.

Even in winter the sun strikes so hotly in St. Augustine, that the trees of its Plaza are welcomed for their shade, and its fountains for their refreshing sound. It was Plaza de la Constitucion in 1813, after one of those popular risings of which Napoleon was prime cause. Eight years later, however, the cession of Florida to the

came under Anglo-Saxon influences. On the seaward side of the square is a heavy classical stone building, nowadays remarkable for its apparent uselessness. This was the old slave market, and by its massive pillars the families of negroes stood to be viewed and valued like bees. Like most Southern cities, St. Augustine, at the end of the civil war, had to mourn for many of its citizens; these are commemorated by a pillar, also in its Plaza. But the object which ought to hold the attention supremely is the old Spanish Cathedral on the north side of the Square. We say "ought" advisedly, for, in truth, it is as barren of real interest as the most naked "Ebenezer" of our own country. Neither externally nor inside has it anything in common with the entrancing cathedrals east of the Atlantic. It is of cold brick, a parallelogram in shape, and garnished with pews. High upon one wall of the church, however, is a picture which is worth a look, not for its art, but for its subject. It bears this inscription: "First Mass in St. Augustine, Sept. 8, A.D. 1565;" and, for aught we know, may be the daub of one of Melendez's soldiery represented on the canvas. It is a rude but effective conglomerate of Indians in war-paint and feathers, Spanish soldiers in armour kneeling before the officiating priest, and miscellaneous fruits and other products of the country. If the Spaniards of St. Augustine have little else to be thankful for, they may be proud of the picturesque and epic origin of their birthplace.

Oneside of the Plaza is bounded by St. Augustine's chief promenade—a solid low wall of concrete, overlooking the Matanzas River. The river is here little better than a lagoon of sluggish, ill-looking water, which leaves a residuum of thick brown mud at the base of the wall. There are plenty of oysters in the mud as some set-off to its ugliness, and little bare-legged boys may be seen opening and swallowing the bivalves with astonishing speed until they are crammed. Some big, demure buzzards may also be seen huddled up on the rails of one of the piers like tame turkeys. They look as lazy as the St. Augustine natives, but a vestige of carrion anywhere within a wide radius of them would soon bring them from their perch. One might imagine that this mud and almost stagnant water were prejudicial to health, but an Augustine man would resent the imputation as a personal insult, and summon incontestable statistics to his aid. And it is true that the Atlantic

winds blow over it on their way to the slave market.

This sea-wall, or promenade, defines the eastern length of the city, and by following it we soon come to the grand old Fort itself. Several score of lively Northerners, of both sexes, are viewing it from the vantage ground of the drawbridge, and, if their adjectives are to be accepted, they anticipate seeing nothing more sublime as long as they live. But we fear they are very prone to "gush."

Entering by the drawbridge, under a covered way in good preservation, we are at once in the quadrangle of the Fort, from all four sides of which are doors and archways leading into the different chambers in past or present use. Nine-tenths of these half-underground spaces are now unoccupied, and the roofs and floors of them are touched with lichen and damp, or scored with the initials of hundreds of ambitious tourists. The other rooms are given up to the guard, and store purposes. In one corner of the Square is the great well of the Fort; to this day its soldiery are dependent on it for their water supply.

We proceed, by an inclined way, from the courtyard to the battlements of the Fort, beneath which are the grassy ramparts, and a few obsolete guns mounted and dismantled, pointing in all directions. Here our friends of the Jacksonville train are in ecstasies of admiration, gulping the ozone like fishes. They have the white-crested sea before them, and the tumult of it on the strand reaches their ears. And, looking elsewhere, the fantastic and painted roofs of St. Augustine's hotels; groves of symmetrical orange trees studded with fruit; and the illimitable lines and mass of pines, all contrasting with the bluest of blue skies; meet their gaze.

Leaning idly against the parapet are certain of the States' soldiery, gay as jays in their holiday dress—blue tunics, with red-striped breeches and peaked caps. They are not a bumptious class of men. Indeed, by their mild, retiring demeanour, they seem as it were apologetic to their compatriots for the indignity they are doing their nation by contenting themselves with so impeccunious and unproductive a profession as that of arms.

In olden times there were four watch-towers to the Fort, one at each corner. But now only one is left entire—that commanding the widest outlook towards the sea. And, one by one, the lady tourists climbed the ladder to this sentry-box,

whence, maybe, Drake's ships were discerned in the offing, and descended palpitating with rapture.

"A real fine old place this!" they said; and, with their backs to the taciturn and motionless guardians of the Fort, they chipped off chunks of material from its walls and pocketed them as relicæ. On the landward side of the fortifications we saw a pretty sight, eloquent of the times. Half-a-dozen little nigger children were playing about the grassy slopes and ditch below the ramparts. One was astride a wide-mouthed gun, and the others in succession rolled themselves down the hillock, with wild echoing screams of laughter.

But it was time for us to return to the Augustine dépôt, a mile away. The sun sets at about five o'clock throughout the winter in Florida; and, though the chances of collision with the train on this single line were absolutely nil, other contingencies were possible, such as cattle on the way, or a gigantic pine new fallen, which made daylight travelling almost essential. We thought to see the old Spanish graveyard of St. Augustine, with its grey mossy stones covering the dust of as brave a band of soldiers and roguish adventurers as the world could show, but, instead, we found our way to the modern cemetery of the place.

Things were not in the best of order here. Grass was high or low, according to the richness of the soil; tropical weeds embraced the topmost bars and plinths of family vaults and marble monuments; many a once fine pillar lay prostrate, broken in twain; while the weather had quietly rubbed out or choked with luxuriant moss half the inscriptions thus temptingly abandoned to it. Certain of the vaults had yawned, and the little boys of St. Augustine had filled their gaping throats with bricks, stones, broken beer-bottles, and aught else which Providence, careful of the pleasure of little boys all over the world, had put within their reach. As a final incongruity, a black man and a black maid were seated hand-in-hand on the grave of a dead citizen, evidently engaged in courting. They looked in each other's dark eyes, guffawed, and looked away. But anon, they kissed each other with an enthusiasm and unanimity that, considering the place they had chosen, was singularly ill-timed.

A stroll into the forest from the dépôt ends our day's visit to St. Augustine. Heaps of oyster-shells, bones, meat-tins,

and cabbage-stalks, each surrounded by an ox's skull, horns, and all, serve as guide marks. On both sides of us are scrub oak, tall pines, bushes trellised with wild vines and brambles with thorns like sharks' teeth, while, under our feet at every yard, extending themselves from the hot, yellow, sandy soil, are the serpentine and involved roots of the settler's dreaded opponent, the dwarf palmetto.

In twenty minutes we seem as remote from human influences as if we were in the heart of Brazil. Then we come to a placid lagoon shining like a mirror, bordered with rushes and flowers, nurtured by the rich black mud of its banks. Some white cranes are standing, still as statues, out of the green rushes higher up. There is no movement anywhere, nor any sound. Five minutes' contemplation of such a scene of beautiful quietude would send one to sleep inevitably. But we are saved the risks of a night in the forest by the sudden crack of a rifle-shot. The cranes do not stir, but a swarm of ducks, hitherto invisible, hurtle by and drop into the middle of the lagoon, agitating its surface from shore to shore; and we return with the sportsmen just in time to clamber into the hindmost car of the starting train.

It will be remembered in England, and long in St. Augustine herself, that in this old city died Randolph Caldecott, one of our best loved, latter-day artists, and a true genius in his own peculiar department of art.

RUE.

DEAR, it is twilight time, the time of rest ;
 Ah! cease that weary pacing to and fro ;
 Sit down beside me in this cushioned nest,
 Warm with the brightness of our ingle-glow.
 Dear, thou art troubled. Let me share thy lot
 Of shadow, as I shared thy sunshine hours.
 I am no child, though childhood, half-forgot,
 Lies close behind me, with its toys and flowers.
 I am a woman, waked by happy love
 To keep home's sacred altar-fire alight!
 Thou hast elected me to stand above
 All others in thine heart. I claim my right.
 Not wife alone, but mate, and comrade true ;
 I shared thy roses, let me share thy rue !

Bitter? I know it. God hath made it so,
 But from His hand shall we take good alone,
 And evil never? Let the world's wealth go,
 Life hath no loss which love cannot atone.
 Show me the new hard path that we must tread,
 I shall not faint, nor falter by the way ;
 And, be there cloud or sunshine overhead,
 I shall not fail thee to my dying day.
 But love me, love me, let our hearts and lips
 Cling closer in our sorrow than in joy ;
 Let faith outshine our fortunes in eclipse,
 And love deem wealth a lost and broken toy.
 Joy made us glad, let sorrow find us true ;
 (God blessed our roses. He will bless our rue !

"FINDING IS KEEPING."

A COMPLETE STORY.

CHAPTER I.

"HULLO!" cried a boy who was sprawling on a nursery floor. "Findin's keepin's! Here's the mater's sixpence she lost a week ago."

"You are vulgar," was the rejoinder made to this by a very small girl.

She, Maud, was in her rightful domain, the nursery. Harry was an interloper, and the terror of the methodical nurse who would have the children in exact order. She had given up Harry three years ago, and now he was thirteen, and, as she declared, he had "grown quite rampageous, and he do upset the children so!"

The Boyle children were three, headed by Maud; above her was a vacant space of three years, when Harry showed his "rampageous" self; above him came two girls. There is the family list, headed by father and mother.

There was not a more charmingly common-place, more pleasantly successful family in the three kingdoms. They lived in a London suburb, and they had plenty of friends and comforts.

"You are vulgar!" Maud had cried.

"So'd you be if you got such a find. Hooray! I say, where's the mater?"

"Gone out, Master Harry," Nurse answered.

"What a bore! Now mind, Nurse, that's my sixpence. Just you keep it safe. If I hadn't to play in that match this afternoon I'd hang about till mother was back."

"Do they want you very much?"

This was an infantine remark of small Davy's.

"Don't you make any mistake." Harry was grand. "Should I be in Plummer's Eleven if I wasn't something? Just see me bat, that's all."

"I'd like to see you."

"I don't doubt you; but we can't have kids on our ground."

At which Davy subsided, and Harry took himself off to don his crickety flannels.

When he had gone, the nursery inmates looked at his sixpence, and each child handled it as if there were some magic in it.

"What did Harry mean when he called out that long word, 'findinskeepins?'" asked Maud.

"Bless you, Miss Maud! He only meant 'cos he'd had the 'finding' he'd have a right to the 'keeping.'"

An accent on each word did not make the good woman's explanation clear to the child.

Nurse went on mending socks, and the children returned to their play. Maud kept silence; not a common circumstance, to pass unremarked. All at once she spoke this:

"Do you mean, Nurse, that if I picked up hundreds of thousands of gold sovereigns they would all be mine?"

Her eyes were alight, and quite a rosy colour was flushing her round face.

"Nonsense, Miss Maud! What should you be wanting gold sovereigns for?"

"But, if I found them?"

"Ay, 'if!' You're not likely to find them. I never did. They don't lie about nursery floors, not they."

"Ah, but outside somewhere!" And the child made a gesture, as if with her round arms she would encircle the great, vague world.

Years went by, and the Boyle nursery had become an almost forgotten thing. Nurse had come to lord it over another nursery a good many degrees higher in the monetary, if not in the social scale, and she, when "her family" was in town, brought a little lady now and again to see the grown-up children who once had been her babies. But even to this there came an end—a temporary end—for things happened to the Boyles which carried them out of "Nurse's" radius altogether.

Misfortune had seized the Boyles, and they were at their worst when, some ten years later, we meet them again in a third-rate street at New Cross.

Five years had been sunny, prosperous years, then Mr. Boyle was stricken by a dire malady, and had to leave business. He was a stockbroker, but in the year when illness made it necessary that his City affairs should be wound up there was panic upon panic, there were wars and rumours of wars, and loss followed loss in rapid succession.

On the eve of his father's failure, Harry had sailed for Canada. He had bought a plot of Government land, and he was going to reclaim it, and—so they all hoped—dig a fortune out of it.

But a moderate family can live on a small income if, as the saying is, they "cut their coat according to their cloth."

Mrs. Boyle was a wise woman, and she moved to a cheaper house. Daisy (or Margaret) Boyle was married; Katherine was useful; Maud, now nineteen, might, if need showed itself, find work; but Davy and Dick must still go to school.

Yes, a cycle of misfortune had begun, the five plentiful years were over, and the beginning of another five had come—years of trouble upon trouble. Mr. Boyle died, unwitting of the calamitous times; another, and then a third move had to be made, each one carrying the family a step downwards.

How did Mrs. Boyle's blood rebel when the day came for her to take little Dick to Seacroft's School, where he was to be taught and fed and clothed for so many years free of expense to her. Millionaires have been known to grow out of boys brought up at Seacroft's School, but what cheer is there in that thought to the poor mother, who sees her little son arrayed in the school garb, and who sees the gay summer sun glinting down from the tears in his blue eyes to the fine new brass buttons of his jacket?

But Dick became quite a happy lad there, and he did not know much of the home troubles; he got his holidays, and he saw two more new homes, but things were not said to him. He had come to be fourteen, they were keeping him on at school because he was so clever.

Harry had not made his fortune in the five years, not that many details were known about him, for he did not often write home. Davy was seventeen, a nice bright lad, in a merchant's office.

Maud, for three years, had taught as a daily governess. It would have been wiser had she gone away and into a family, but a mistake was made, and the girl only gave lessons in the neighbourhood. Katherine was the domestic mainstay of the house, and the house, during the past year, had had to admit a lodger.

This lodger had been a silent, nervous old gentleman, who gave no trouble whatever; a perfect godsend of a lodger, in fact. He was order itself. None of his belongings were ever allowed to litter his rooms. He read a good deal, but his books had their places orderly on their shelves, and were read and re-read, annotated and digested. When the reading was laid aside, the old gentleman would amuse himself by making pen-and-ink sketches of subjects which the old authors treated of. There would be the presentment of a

Greek poem; or, sticking out from the rough edges of an antique volume of strange Eastern lore, there would be the fantastic drawing showing how the strange hieroglyphics told their story.

Dick on holidays, and Maud, when the silent Mr. Harbutt came upon her in her dustings, were the two who were shown these things. Why, no one knew; he never honoured them with any other mark of favouritism.

But his residence with them came to an end, for certain relatives came home to live in England, after a long absence in India, and he was persuaded to go and end his days with them.

His due payments, and a handsome present he made the girls, set the household on a very easy, comfortable footing for several weeks, weeks in which search was made for a new lodger.

Many applied, but none were quite of the right sort, after the kind, orderly, quaint old gentleman.

The money filtered away, and it was clear that the Boyles must accept another lodger or be very pinched indeed. They at last accepted two sisters, of the most tiresome and exacting characters. Kate and Maud slaved for them, but service was wearisome, as it must be, when dry, thankless hearts claimed it.

"If only Mr. Harbutt were back!" sighed Maud. "Dear! how funny he was!" was the laughing echo to her sigh. Maud was a bright-souled being, and always ready to make the best of their troubles.

"I wonder whether he is as happy with those grand folks as he was here? He had all his things just as he chose;" and Kate, with a duster in her hand—the ladies were out for the day—looked round on a chaos. Where should she begin to straighten?

"Strange that he never writes," Maud mused.

"Did he ever write, dear?" Kate said, "write letters, I mean. He composed, and he imagined, and he ruminated, but, until those nephews looked him up, I don't believe he received as much as one letter a month; certainly he never wrote one."

"No, I suppose not. Where was that one letter from that he sent when he left?"

"Durham—but that's nothing; he only went there to see somebody who had some rare manuscripts. He said that in the letter; he was going to see this nephew at Edinburgh, and then when the people

found a place to take he was going to settle down with them. A wild-goose chase for such a man as he!"

"Yes," again Maud spoke musingly; "I wish he had stayed here until they had found the place."

The very next day Maud saw this in the obituary of "The Times":

"On the 29th, at The Invercauld Arms, Rosslyn, while travelling, James Harbutt, aged 71."

Monotony, wearisome monotony, followed. The tiresome ladies stayed on until they had been with the Boyles for just a year; then they thought they would like a change, and they left.

They left a small debt unpaid and they gave no address.

As girls do, even girls who have too close an acquaintanceship with the rough side of life, the two Boyles made a grand glory in the departure of the Miss Paynes.

"We may get someone even worse, though," said Kate practically.

"Never mind what may be, we are free now," Maud rejoined, being, as we have said, always more light of heart than her sister was.

On that half-holiday, the girls being so gay over their freedom walked with Dick to the station, saw him off, and then went for a summer evening saunter amongst the fields. Yes, if you strike boldly off from the dreary bricks and mortar of New Cross, and walk with the elasticity of young, healthful limbs, you may, sooner than you may think, be amongst the sweet-smelling hayfields.

It was June, and if the hedgerows were rather dusty there were fields beyond them. Maud's young soul drank in the fresh summer gladness, and she talked on of every possible subject. Past, present, and future, all drew something from her; perhaps the past touched her the least, for she had been so young in the days of their good things, that though she said she remembered everything, those old days had, nevertheless, but a visionary hold upon her.

"I have made a mistake, Kate, I see," she said as they walked homewards. "I should have gone away to teach—I should have made more money, and——"

"And you would have held a better position." Kate always nailed a point decisively. "One drudge in a family is enough."

"I hate you to speak like that, Kate." Maud had a warm temper; such a posses-

sion is usually the companion of a warm heart. "If you drudge—horrid word!—I drudge. If I got more money, would not mother have it?"

"Don't be angry. I've a genius for domestic management; for goodness sake let me exercise it. But, I agree with you about going away, you would be far better off in a family. Why should you not be as Miss Marsden used to be with us?"

"She was a swell governess."

"Not any more than you can be. I remember better than you do."

"Dear, how I should love those days of glory! Are they ever likely to come back? What can we do? Shall I hoard? Will Harry suddenly come home a millionaire? Will Davy's master pray him to become a partner at his tender age?"

"Maud!"

"Kate, why should not these things be?"

"Why should they be? You might as well say you expect to find a bag of gold when the next rainbow shines."

"I always do expect that—I have done ever since I was a baby."

By-and-by Maud's wild humour subsided, and she talked again about business. Yes, these girls had so long been accustomed to hard experiences that they fell naturally into talk of pros and cons in a dry business way. By the time they reached home they had settled that Maud should go away.

Their mother was told at once; she saw it was wise, and a little more planning was done as they sat over their simple supper. "The Times" should be had every day for the sake of the advertisements, and the Vicar and the Doctor should be asked to help.

All this was set in train the next morning; also the next day Kate commanded a thorough turn-out of the rooms, so as to be in readiness for a new comer.

The evening post brought a letter from Harry, dated "San Francisco." He had not written for nearly a year, and this was the news: he had found farming in Canada no good for him, and he had gone to San Francisco, meaning, if ill-luck followed him then, never to write home again. Good luck came instead, and he was doing well.

"I manage a store," he said, "and two years ago my boss was worse off than I was when I came here. I won't say more, but I'll make this pay. Perhaps I'll be sending you some bank-notes home before the year is out."

"Poor Harry!" exclaimed his mother. She smiled, and yet her eyes were moist.

"Kate"—Maud tucked her hand under her sister's arm as they went up to bed that night—"the days of glory are coming again! Now! you see!"

Kate laughed; she was very glad about Harry.

"I see," she said, "that you must put clean paper in those drawers to-morrow."

Maud made a little grimace.

The morrow came, and she was doing it.

CHAPTER II.

MAUD had opened the two drawing-room windows, and let down the Venetians over them, so that the room should be cool and shady. How cool and summery it all looked! Ladies' fingers can so easily give simple decorations an air of grace and refinement. Then she left that room, and went into the one behind; these two had been dear old Mr. Harbutt's rooms, and also those of the tiresome Miss Paynes. This back room was shady, and at once the blind was drawn up to the top, and the window thrown open as high as it would go.

There was in the room an old chest of drawers, the piece of furniture that Mr. Harbutt had once said was worth more than all else the room contained put together.

It was beautifully made, the dark old oak was of the finest grain, and how delicately were the joinings and the corners fitted! A reeded line was carved or turned at the frontage of each drawer; on its top too making an artistic border or finish to its level polish, there was the same reeded decoration running four-square. Each drawer had two pendant and triangular brass handles. They copy these old things nowadays, but this was a veritable antique.

Five drawers in all, and in the top and most shallow one a key protruded from its keyhole. Maud remembered the whole thing as long as she remembered anything, for in olden days it had stood in the nursery. In those days the top shallow drawer was just as exactly level as the other drawers had been; fancy methodical Nurse allowing that right-hand corner to project in that unsightly way! If the piece of furniture had not been so seasoned by age, one might have supposed that the wood had warped at that one corner.

Maud was bent upon straightening it. All the four lower drawers were provided with their fresh white paper lining, and now somehow, someone had locked this top drawer, had forced the lock and bent the key.

"We'll have you straight," was Maud's cry to herself, as she worried the old key.

Never a bit would it move, except indeed to fix itself more firmly within the intricacies of the lock.

"I'll physic you!" Maud cried.

A moment's run downstairs for some oil, and "physic" was used. Some few more wriggings and turnings, and hey, presto!—the magic is done, the lock is loosened, the drawer is opened!

However, opened does not mean a simultaneous cure of its uneven corner. Oh! no. Pushing and dainty humouring are neither of any avail, the drawer simply will not work to its pristine level.

But Maud had a strong will, and a mind that probed to the reasons of things. In a trice she had the rebellious drawer out of its groove and ignominiously laid at her feet, while a supple white arm was bared to the elbow, and went on a search within the shallow space. From end to end arm and fingers went seeking—then, the sinner was captured! The girl's pretty fingers, all covered with dust and flue, met the crisp crackle of firm paper.

"Ah!" was Maud's quick little cry.

The paper was out before the light of the summer sun. Thin, grey-hued paper, tightly pressed once, but now, by some inherent strength surely, loosening from its pressure and elastically unfolding itself.

One fold—some printed words and figures. Bah! How dusty it was! Another fold undone—some foreign words quite clear. "D'Italia." What was it?

Had the thing really some magic in it? Maud's face became scarlet; then all the colour fled from it, and, leaving drawer and dust, and white paper in confusion on the floor, the girl ran to the stair-head and called:

"Mother! Kate! Come, quick!"

Both were busy, but such a voice of alarm—yes, Maud really was terrified—was not to be disregarded. They were upstairs in a few seconds.

"I've opened the drawer," she said.

"So we perceive. Have you found a dead mouse behind it?"

Kate, seeing Maud unharmed, was naturally a bit ruffled at having been unnecessarily excited by the cry.

"No; I have found this."

Now Maud was preternaturally still. She held out the strange paper, by this time yet more unrolled.

As Kate took it, it resolved itself into not one paper only, but four papers, of which the corners shook themselves apart. One had had square bits cut out—yes, decidedly cut out.

"Bonds mother!" Kate gasped.

"Don't talk nonsense, child!"

Kate was not listening. She had had to become acquainted with many business matters, but she had never seen quite such papers as these. She looked at them, and fingered them.

"Two hundred and fifty lire; seven hundred and fifty lire," she deciphered. "What are lire?"

"I know," Maud put in. "A lira is the same as a franc—Italian money."

"These are money, mother." And again Kate was reduced to a gasping condition.

"Whose are they? They are not ours, I'm sure." Poor Mrs. Boyle pressed her hands together. How glad she would have been to think they were hers! "Let me look at them, Kate."

"Finding is keeping!" cried Maud. "I shall appropriate them."

"Maud!" And Kate came back from her tremor to face the actual. "They are simply Mr. Harbutt's. The Miss Paynes, you may be sure, never left anything so valuable behind them."

"Perhaps it will pay their debt." Maud by this time had lost her terror; she had passed it on to her mother and sister, and she herself only saw the amusement of the thing. "My energy has done some good this time, at any rate."

"It must be hundreds of pounds, mother."

Kate was standing, with her hands in the pockets of her holland apron, and was watching her mother look at the discovery.

Mrs. Boyle's pale face had grown graver by some few degrees.

"They are bonds, but what of I do not know. I know so little of the look of these things," she mused. "Whose are they? Whose?"

"Perhaps ours, mother." And Maud poked her hand consolingly within her mother's arm.

"That chest of drawers belongs to the days of our glory. There! Did I not say last night, when Harry's letter came, that our good times were coming again?"

"Perhaps they are." And Mrs. Boyle gave a little convulsive hug to Maud's comforting hand. "We'll hasten dinner, girls, and one of you shall go with me to John Bryant's. He, at least, will say whether the things are of value or not."

"You'll not give them up to him, mother?—Give up my find?"

"Maud, do not act the infant," Kate cried. "Go with mother, and learn what has to be learnt."

It was as Kate had supposed. The four papers together represented the sum of two thousand pounds, and were Italian Government bonds.

But whose were they? They bore no man's name.

CHAPTER III.

THE treasure had to lie in John Bryant's strong-room.

John Bryant was a stockbroker, as Mr. Boyle had been, and was, in truth, a man whose friendship to the Boyles had lasted on from the old days of their prosperity. He was an upright man, and he guarded the interests of the Boyles as well as if they were his own.

He locked the strange Italian bonds, which were Maud's "finds," in his strong-room. There they must lie while enquiries were made as to their ownership.

"They are yours, Miss Maud, until someone can prove a better claim," he said, as he shook hands at the door of his outer office. "I hope no one will claim them," and, with a kindly pomposity he owned, he made a little flourish in the air with one hand. "Now, I should like to speculate a little with it for you—double it—treble it—"

"Or—lose it?"

"That is cruel. No; speculation should never meddle with it. I was only talking empty nonsense."

"Speculate for my governessing, Mr. Bryant," the girl said, as the three stood on the landing of the staircase outside. "That would be a real kindness, now."

"Yes, I will." Here gravity and purpose came and settled on John Bryant's face, to the exclusion of any such things as merriment or the excitement of speculation. "I will," he said again.

Then the two ladies went away, and the man went back to his office to puzzle his head over Maud's governessing. In his masculine mind—one step behind the

present age of woman's independence—he saw an unfitness in the child of his old friend going out to earn her bread amongst strangers.

Maud, a stranger, went to strangers; new claims came upon her days; a wider, new life, came circling about her; time each week seemed to her to be growing more full, more rich; in a while she grew to look upon herself in the New Cross life as a dim possibility, so surely was she absorbing all the influences of the pleasant, kindly, luxurious home where she taught two young girls.

The bonds still lay unowned; by dint of wisely-framed advertisements claimants came forward whose pretensions would not bear the sifting of lawyers' questions. The bonds were still Maud's, as John Bryant would have it, though a year had run by since the summer day when she had found them.

Maud's gay prophecy of good fortune coming to them was gradually being fulfilled. Harry had really sent over a good round sum to his mother; Davy got a rise in his office; a cousin of Mr. Boyle's came to live with them at New Cross, and brought a good addition to the family purse. Times were no longer "hard times."

Search was made for Mr. Harbutt's nephew, whom the old gentleman, they now remembered, had never spoken of by any other name than that of "Lewis." Now, was "Lewis" a Christian or a surname?

As pointedly as could be done advertisements went the round of the country concerning "unclaimed stock." The Boyles did, and always would, insist upon the belief that the Italian bonds belonged to Mr. Harbutt.

"Have an advertisement giving his name," said Maud in a letter home.

"Miss Maud is losing her business head," was John Bryant's answer when they told him what she had said.

"The things are a nightmare to me!" Mrs. Boyle said.

"Then, my good lady, we will have the advertisements printed at once. Shall the first Harbutt who comes have them?"

Her adviser was a bit testy.

It was a September evening, and the scene was a luxurious drawing-room in a Yorkshire country house. It was the house in which Maud Boyle was governess. Work was over for the day, and she, with

Cicely and Nan Simpson, were as usual passing the evening with the rest of the family. The two girls were fourteen and fifteen years of age; they were "the children" of the household. A step-brother, young Lewis Simpson, was a man of twenty-five; he, too, was in the room. The mother was there, also the grandmother, the mother of the present Mr. Simpson.

Across the Yorkshire moors a September wind had been blowing all day, and a winter-like fire burned in the wide grate. But it was evening, and the three girls wore pretty light garments. The two Simpsons were in white; Maud, though the material of her gown was no more than muslin, was sombre-looking; its colour was of the darkest crimson, and, seeing no lamps were lit, the flickering gleam of firelight left her just a warm-toned shadow, she being a brown-hued maiden herself.

The bell had just been rung, and as the lamps were brought in there also came the big brother, a tall man and very fair, as his father and Cicely were. He lounged in as young men do lounge in amongst a home company of womenkind. He threw himself on a seat by Mrs. Simpson, and he threw one newspaper across to the old lady whom he called "Granny," but who of course was no grandmother to him.

"Have you read this advertisement?—you are advertised for, Lewis," said Granny.

"I? Never! Who wants me? Is someone leaving me a fortune?"

Young Simpson pretended he was fatigued, and lazily threw himself on the couch by the old lady.

"You have had that happen once—that is more than most men get. There—read!"

The old lady gave him the newspaper, and pointed with her spectacles, which she had just taken from her nose.

He read.

His fair face flushed.

Then he read aloud. "Listen," he said, "it's me!" What was grammar at such a moment?

"HARBUTT.—To any of the name, or claiming under a will made by a person of that name. Unclaimed stock found. Apply first by letter, to Reeves and Lever, Solicitors, Old Broad Street, London."

"That's my advertisement!"

The cry was from Maud.

"You? Yours?"

Everyone seemed to be echoing her cry.

"I'll tell you," Maud said, in her clear, business-like way. "I found some bonds once, and so the other day I advised their advertising for the name 'Harbutt.'"

"That was my old uncle's name, you know"—Simpson here drew a chair to Maud's side—"my mother's uncle, an eccentric old man; we hunted him up when we came home last year."

"Our Mr. Harbutt!—our dear old Mr. Harbutt!"

Maud clasped her hands, this time with very real excitement:

"Yours? Were you——?"

"He lived with us—lodged with us." Maud's face flushed with a certain pride.

"But I am very glad—and you are the 'Lewis' he talked about!"

They talked a little more over it, and presently Mr. Simpson, the father, came in, and had to be told the whole history over again.

"Strange!" old Mr. Simpson mused; "Strange that no enquiry found you before, Lewis. The papers bear Harbutt's name, Miss Boyle!"

"No; no name at all."

"No name at all!" he echoed. "Then why are they his? Five hundred people may have used that drawer."

"Oh, no!" Maud said quietly. "Only he used it, except ourselves."

"Then they may be yours!"

"No, my father never had business papers like that at home."

"They were not down in the list of securities uncle showed me," said Lewis Simpson. Then, suddenly dropping his acute business manner, he pretended once more an immense laziness. "It is all a snare and a delusion, Miss Boyle. I shan't go in for the money. How can I prove it's mine? It is your 'find,' and 'finding is keeping' all the world over."

"Oh! no, it isn't." And Maud was strangely quiet and firm.

Nothing more was ever proved.

There never will be any more proof as to whose the bonds were. In the end, Maud had to let John Bryant cut off some of the coupons and cash them for her, but, at the present moment, she has nothing to do with them, as they have joined the rest of old Mr. Harbutt's property, and Lewis Simpson has them.

Can you understand how what is hers is also his?

LOST IN THE VALLEY.

By the Author of "Driven of the Wind," etc.

A STORY IN SIXTEEN CHAPTERS.

CHAPTER II.

MAURICE WILDE had inherited one great gift from his mother, a singing voice of remarkable beauty and sweetness.

The present Mrs. Wilde was his father's second wife, as stolid and unimaginative as his father himself, or as his two tall, angular step-sisters who were just emerging from their "teens." But Maurice's mother had been a little singing-mistress with romantic ideas, a lovely face, and an exquisite voice; and at five-and-twenty, Maurice's father, being under the mistaken impression that he could be taught to sing, had engaged the services of the little lady, a poor curate's daughter, to teach him.

He made but little progress in the art, but seemed devoted to his lessons, and by-and-by he asked his instructress to marry him. He was master of a pretty house, a considerable amount of land, and a sure income, so that the honour of such an alliance might have seemed great to the penniless girl. But she did not consider it so at all. She had ideas, aims, aspirations; she wished to be a concert singer, a prima donna, but she ended by becoming the wife of a simple-minded country gentleman, and dying at nineteen, just after the birth of her only child.

To him she left her blue eyes, her sweet voice, and a worship for all that is artistic and beautiful, not at all characteristic of the rest of his family, who thought an oleograph nearly as good as an oil painting, and a photograph much better.

But father, mother, and sisters, all combined to alternately humour and tease Maurice, and, in truth, loved him dearly. A great deal of money had been spent on the cultivation of this voice, which his family regarded as a thing "of their own growth," and in which they took a great personal pride.

Maurice's fancy ran much in the direction of love-songs, because they suited his low notes, and the whole morning after his arrival in Paris he sat at the piano, sweetly warbling passionate words in a melodious and passionless manner.

His piano was near the open window, and the lady on the floor below came out on to her balcony to listen to him.

"That man has the voice of an angel, or rather of a 'boy,'" she said to herself. "But when he sings of love, he does not know what it means. I wish I did not."

In the full daylight, standing there in a morning wrap of white cashmere and awansdown, with knots of coral-coloured ribbon, Eveline Douglas looked very beautiful still, but considerably older than by gaslight. She was seven-and-twenty, and she looked it fully at this moment, as she leaned against the railing of the balcony, with the sunlight falling on her shining hair, her fair, pale face, and the tired lines round her sad brown eyes.

A woman of perfect grace and infinite charm, but whose every attitude showed listlessness, a weariness of life.

"What is the gentleman like who sings like that, Hélène?" she enquired presently.

Hélène, pretty, bright, dark-eyed, and garrulous, appeared at the window.

"Ah, Madame, it is the head of an artist! But he is enchantingly handsome! If Madame could but see him!"

"I detest handsome men!" said Madame with a little shudder, and Hélène's exuberance was checked.

But Maurice was as determined to meet his fair neighbour as she was indifferent on the subject, and by Saturday he had thought out a plan by which to accomplish his object.

One of his introductory letters was to an English doctor living in Paris, and the day after his arrival he went straight to this gentleman's house.

"Dr. Grantley has lived in Paris many years," he said to himself, "so has Dr. Shaw. They are sure at least to know something of each other. Since Dr. Grantley seems an intimate friend of the lady with the beautiful voice, perhaps Dr. Shaw will know her too; or, at least, he may introduce me to some of Dr. Grantley's set, and there I may meet her."

He had never been so much interested in any woman before. There was such pathos in her face, such music in her voice, and she dressed in such exquisite taste. Those Frenchmen, too! He should like to be able to show her that a man's admiration of her beauty could be as pure and frank as a woman's.

Dr. Shaw was out, but his son and partner had a long talk with Maurice, who deftly led the talk on to the subject of Dr. Grantley.

"A clever man, but odd," young Shaw said, "and his oddness pays quite as well

as his cleverness. All the fashionable beauties over here make a pet of him, simply because he's so awfully rude to them. If you would like to meet him again I can take you some Sunday to the house of an Irish lady, where he very often goes—a Mrs. O'Hara and her daughters, very artistic people—too clever for me, so I don't often go, but I should think they would just suit you," he added, with all a big ugly young man's appreciation for Maurice's more poetic appearance.

"If Mrs. O'Hara is the Irish lady my Countess goes to see every Sunday, and if I go with Shaw and meet her, she won't look at me beside this huge, good-natured donkey," was Maurice's reflection. But he persuaded young Shaw to take him on the following Sunday, and had the satisfaction of finding that he himself was far more in keeping with Mrs. O'Hara's rooms and Mrs. O'Hara's "set" than his more massive companion.

It was much easier to be elegant cheaply in France than in England, he decided, as he looked round the cool, lightly-furnished room, where a small square of worn carpet and a fur rug ornamented an infinite amount of shining, polished floor; and half-a-dozen water-colour paintings, hung low, adorned the high white and gold walls.

Mrs. O'Hara and her daughters all appeared to be of the same age, and all spoke in precisely the same voice, through long association, very low, with a winning Irish accent. They moved quietly, and they listened perfectly, and they were all deep in a discussion concerning the merits of a new work on spiritualism with a French lady-novelist, whose family was as old as her plots; a little fair French artist of jerky manners; a distinguished electrician, whose discoveries were astounding Paris, but whose manners and appearance suggested nothing but fat and immoveable stupidity, and a gentleman with long hair and vague manners, who was a musician and a poet, and several other things, and had so much talent in every direction that he could never make up his mind exactly what he should be.

A great tapestry screen shaded the occupant of a rocking-chair from the draught of the long windows; but as Maurice entered the room he caught a glimpse of a long, blue velvet train, and a faint scent of otto of roses that instantly suggested the presence of the beautiful Countess.

"You say nothing, Madame Douglas," the artist was saying.

"I?" said the sweet voice Maurice remembered well. "Oh, I always agree with Doctor Grantley; and, you see, he isn't here."

Maurice was introduced to Mrs. O'Hara and her daughters at this moment, and was presently forming one of the party round the little tea-table, drinking tea from tiny, delicate old cups, relics handed down in the O'Hara family.

He could see Mrs. Douglas plainly from where he sat, though, beyond slowly raising her eyelids when they joined the circle, she took no further notice of either him or Mr. Shaw. She looked dreamily lovely in the fading light, leaning back in her chair, half-hidden by the tall screen, and speaking very seldom.

He learnt later that it was one of her characteristics to seat herself in the most secluded part of a room, to efface herself behind a screen, or tall tropical plant, and then to silently listen to the conversation going on around her. Presently the red-haired Miss O'Hara crossed over to her.

"We are to have an unexpected treat to-night, Eveline," she said. "Or, at least, I hope so. Mr. Shaw tells me Mr. Wilde sings most beautifully. If it is not too exacting to ask you, on your very first visit, will you sing to us presently, Mr. Wilde? We are all passionately fond of music, especially Mrs. Douglas. Are you not, Eveline?"

"Yes; I am, indeed. But I have a tenor of my own now. I have not told you, Norah, the floor above me seems to have been taken lately by a young man with a voice I could listen to all day."

"And you have never taken the trouble to find out who he is? That is like you, Eveline."

"Why should I? I only heard him for the first time three days ago, and I have never seen him, nor do I wish to. I should be certainly disillusionised. You know what all tenors are like. Hélène says he has 'the head of an artist,' which probably means he is short and fat, with frizzy, black hair, and a waxed moustache. But he has a delightful voice, and it would be still sweeter to listen to if he felt what he was singing."

Maurice made no remark; but presently, being again asked to sing, he broke into "Absent yet Present," and threw into it all the feeling he could, being piqued at Mrs. Douglas's criticisms.

When he returned to the circle by the tea-table, she moved the train of her pale blue velvet gown to make room for him on a small seat by her side. As she did not

speak, but only fixed her soft, brown eyes upon him with evident interest, he said, as he slipped into the place she indicated :

"Was that better?"

"How did you know I was speaking of you?" she asked softly, blushing very slightly.

"I saw you at the station when Dr. Grantley was seeing me off," he said; "and I met you on the stairs the same evening." A look of uneasiness, almost of suspicion, crossed her face.

"Have you known Dr. Grantley long?" she asked.

"I only met him for the first time last Monday; but I like him immensely."

"Yes," she said, "he is a good man." She was silent a few moments, then she turned to him with a smile that lit her whole face with a tender radiance. "You must forgive me for what I said just now," she said; "indeed, the pleasure your singing gives me ought in itself to silence criticism. I only meant that the tone of one who has felt and suffered was absent from your singing, and now that I see how young you are that want is explained."

"I don't expect I am nearly as young as you think," said Maurice, smiling, "but I was only singing love-songs."

"And love means suffering," she added, so softly, so sadly, that she seemed sighing rather than speaking.

No one was listening to their talk. Maurice watched the beautiful drooping head with sympathy in his blue eyes.

"Are your parents with you in Paris?" she asked suddenly.

"She evidently thinks I am eighteen," was Maurice's mental comment.

He was right. Eveline Douglas thought him a beautiful, sweet-voiced boy, and in consequence dropped the reserve with which she usually shielded herself, and presently, when she heard he was living alone, and as yet knew scarcely anyone but young Shaw, she invited him to come and see her.

"And when you come I will give you some bon-bons," she added, as he took his leave.

"The Countess seemed to take quite a fancy to you," said Shaw; "I've seen her at Mrs. O'Hara's once before. She's good-looking, but there's something about her that makes me creep—looks sly, don't you think?"

"Sly!" echoed Maurice with sovereign contempt. Then he remembered that Shaw was a good fellow, and had been

very kind to him. "Why do you call her 'the Countess'?" he asked.

"Oh, I don't know! Grantley said she was a Countess. Her first husband was a foreigner, and then she married a Mr. Douglas, I believe."

"And where is he?"

"Really, my dear boy, you'd better ask her!" said young Shaw, laughing uproariously at his own humour in a manner that Maurice considered idiotic and ill-timed.

Mrs. Douglas had told him to call at about half-past four, and, for half-an-hour before, he was employed, as might be expected, trying on his coats, his collars, and his ties, to see which was most likely to create a favourable impression in the Countess's mind.

Maurice always deeply regretted the days of pink-satin coats, embroidered waistcoats, silk stockings, and paste shoe-buckles, and, could he have dared to indulge the fancy, would have startled the world by wearing a sombrero and a crimson sash in daily life. Nature had, however, done so much for him that he could look poetic and interesting in a chimney-pot hat, and Hélène beamed upon him in affectionate admiration as she opened the door of the Countess's apartments and informed him that Madame was within.

The door had not closed upon him when there was another ring, and the young Frenchman, who had spoken to Mrs. Douglas the night before, presented his card, and asked the man-servant, who opened the door, whether his mistress could see him.

Hélène was showing Maurice into the salon, and from it he could plainly hear the discussion in the hall. Pierre, Mrs. Douglas's man, was informing the Marquis de Villars that Madame was out, and he could not say when she would return.

"He must certainly have seen the girl let me in, and as he's a member of a club that meets in this house, he will probably wait for me on the stairs and kill me," thought Maurice.

He was waiting for his hostess in a little salon hung with blue-grey silk draperies, the ceiling painted in a delicate florid style with roses, Cupids, and clouds. A few beautiful water-colour landscapes were placed on gilded easels draped with embroidered silk; dainty marble statuettes peeped from clouds of ferns; the fireplace was filled with pots of blush roses; Dresden china cups and figures were placed about on the tables

and mantel-piece, and when Eveline Douglas appeared at the doorway of an inner room, holding aside the soft silk curtains—herself a Titian-like figure, in old-gold velvet and creamy India muslin—Maurice felt that he was forming part of an Arabian Nights' entertainment, and inclined to rub his eyes to make sure he was awake.

She led him to a room which he liked even better, because it was cosier. There was a piano in it, and there were a harp and violin, and, in the centre, was a fountain throwing up sprays of perfumed water from a mosaic bowl. The draperies were of Oriental needlework, rich, but subdued in tone. The room was filled with cut roses, and lighted by costly antique lamps of crimson glass, suspended from the ceiling by chains of filagree-work.

She made him sing to her, and she made him talk, saying little herself, but leaning back in her chair, listening to him, and presently giving him the most perfect coffee he had ever tasted, and the most wonderful Eastern sweetmeats, choosing them from a jewelled box with a dainty pair of gold tongs.

Maurice was by nature rather reserved, but by the time he left her, Eveline Douglas knew more about himself, his home, and his early life, than he had ever confided to any but his most intimate friends.

"And they are very particular, your parents, I suppose?" she asked, watching him with her long, soft eyes, as she leaned back among the cushions of her low easy-chair, playing with a rose.

"Oh, yes," he answered laughing, "we are all particular at the Grange. If any of the people living round about us are in the least degree unlike ourselves, we always say they are mad."

"And you write home long letters every day, I suppose," she said, "telling them everything?"

"Not everything. There is a good deal that would not interest and might shock them, because they would not understand it, —blue silk wall-paper, and scented fountains, for instance," was his mental addition.

"And you," she asked, "are you easily shocked?"

"Not so easily; only by what is evil, or coarse, or cruel. Never by what is good and beautiful."

"Goodness and beauty are very different things," she said. "Now sing me some more of your pretty love-songs."

So he sang to her in the fading light, in the air heavily perfumed with the fresh

roses, and the scented water of the fountain that made a rippling accompaniment to his voice, and turning, he saw her leaning back watching him, once with tears shining in her great eyes, always with her beautiful red mouth curving into a smile, as she thanked him in the voice that was her greatest charm.

So on one pretext or another he saw her every day, sometimes to bring her a book or to borrow one; sometimes with flowers; generally to stay and sing to her. She was so near: he had to pass her rooms on his way to and from his own, and it was so little trouble just to call and ask how she was, such pleasure to spend an hour in the luxurious comfort of her little sanctuary, talking to her, looking at her. She was always the same—gentle, sympathetic, silent, and at the end of a week he knew no more about her personal history than on the first day he met her. The only persons he ever saw in her rooms were the Misses O'Hara and the little faded lady he had seen with her before.

All these friends seemed very fond of her, and the last, a Miss McIntyre, once when left alone with him, broke into enthusiastic praises of Mrs. Douglas's generosity and kindness. He could see that she was intensely charitable. Although she liked him to call and see her every day, and treated him in a tender, playful, semi-motherly fashion, she never asked him to accompany her on her daily drives or to the theatre, but went alone with Miss McIntyre as before.

The Marquis de Villars called again one afternoon, presenting himself at the door at the same moment as Maurice, whom he regarded with a stare of frigid insolence. Pierre showed the young Englishman in as usual, and took in the Marquis's card, returning with a message.

"Madame was sorry, but her health prevented her from receiving any but her intimate friends; she, therefore, regretted that she could not see M. de Villars."

M. de Villars turned very white as he descended to his club. The fortnight would be up in two days more. He did not wish to lose Paragon, and he did not wish to lose Madame. He muttered angrily that Mrs. Douglas should receive him the next day, "or I am not Henri de Villars."

"Why do you never go out into society, Madame?" inquired Maurice. "You would be simply adored, and you could go anywhere."

"You are wrong," she said, "I could not go anywhere; scarcely anyone in Paris would receive me. I mean," she added hastily, as she saw his look of surprise, "that I have no friends in Paris, and am shy of making any. I dread strangers, with their coldly critical eyes; I like to see always just the faces I know. The poor people whom I visit in the mornings have suffered too much to be cold, and suffer too much now to be critical—then I have my books for companions, and my pretty things, and my thoughts (though the last are sad company enough sometimes) and just half-a-dozen friends—Dr. Grantley, the O'Haras, Miss McIntyre—and you. I should like to have you for a friend, too," she said, stretching out a slim white hand to Maurice.

He took it and kissed it.

"I am your friend," he said.

"Ah!" she sighed. "How can you be? Those four—the O'Haras and the Doctor, at least—have known me all my life. They like me as they know me—as I am. For what can you like me, who know nothing?"

"I like you because you are sweet, and kind, and beautiful, and good," he said.

She withdrew her hand almost impatiently.

"Then you like me for what I am not, so your friendship is not worth having," she said, rising, and restlessly moving about the room.

Her voice sounded hard. Maurice was suddenly chilled. But in a moment she returned, and, leaning over his chair, looked tenderly into his face.

"Forgive me my bad temper," she said. "But when I see the lives of really good people I feel how unworthy I am, surrounded by selfish comforts, to be ranked among them."

Maurice did not quite agree with her. He liked the selfish comforts. But he thought it a beautiful answer, and admired her more than ever.

On the second Sunday of his stay in Paris he went again to Mrs. O'Hara's, meeting Mrs. Douglas there.

The same æsthetic circle was gathered round the tea-table, and Eveline was rather annoying Maurice by the sympathetic attention she gave to the rhapsodies of the vague, universal genius, when the door opened, and the servant announced:

"Miss Janet Douglas."

The O'Haras grew suddenly silent. Eve-

line half-rose from her seat, then sank back into it, white as death. Maurice noticed her excitement, and turned with interest to its object.

Miss Douglas was a tall, good-looking, if somewhat hard-featured Scotchwoman, of about forty, well-dressed, and imposing-looking. She evidently knew the O'Haras well, for, as they advanced to meet her, she kissed them affectionately.

"I couldn't resist coming to see you," she said. "I only arrived yesterday, and it was by a mere chance I remembered your address. You see, it is my first visit, and I didn't know my way about at all."

She did not notice the evident constraint of her hostesses. Maurice, seated by Eveline, saw her give one helpless glance at the door, then draw her chair farther within the shadow of the screen. He could see that the hand she laid on the arm of her chair was trembling.

Miss Douglas advanced to the table, still talking volubly. But a sudden movement on her part made her aware of the presence of the slight, shrinking figure behind the screen. She stopped short in her talk, turned very red, then deliberately walked round the table and peered into Mrs. Douglas's averted face.

"It is she!" she exclaimed.

Eveline rose.

"Janet Douglas!" she faltered.

"Don't dare to speak to me," cried the other, drawing away her dress as if afraid of contamination. "Kathleen! Norah! and your mother, too! I am ashamed of you! I should never have thought of coming here had I known I should be insulted by the presence of this infamous woman, who presumes to pass herself off under the name of my family!"

"Miss Douglas," said Kathleen quietly.

"We did not invite you, and you must not insult the friends we have invited. If you do not approve of them you are at liberty to go. Shall I tell Marie to order you a cab?"

Miss Douglas looked at her in stony indignation.

"So you turn me out for the sake of that wicked creature," she said. "Kathleen, you will be very sorry for this some day. You are sheltering a viper, and it will turn and sting you sooner or later." With which direful warning, and a parting look of hatred and disgust at the object of her wrath, Miss Janet Douglas swept past Miss O'Hara and left the room.

"THE STORY OF OUR LIVES FROM YEAR TO YEAR"

ALL THE YEAR ROUND

A Weekly Journal
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A DATELESS BARGAIN.

By C. L. PIRKIS,

Author of "Lady Lovelace," etc.

CHAPTER XII.

MAB, with three-quarters of her senses absorbed by her books, only got at what went on around her in glimpses and whispers. Those books appeared to have an altogether magnetic attraction for her. Morning, noon, and night found her shut up in their company.

Joyce—accustomed to her spasmodically enthusiastic fashion of following now one pursuit, now another—was in no wise surprised at her sudden, eager passion for study at a time when most young girls would have thrown themselves heart and soul into the preparations for the approaching wedding-day. Perhaps if she had chanced to follow her sister into her room, and had noted the method of her study, she might have found food for astonishment. She would have seen Mab first carefully lock her door, to secure herself from intruders, take invariably one book from her shelves, fling herself on the hearthrug, open her book, read one or two lines, then sit motionless with clasped hands gazing into the fire for hours, until, in fact, the clanging of the dinner-bell or the summons of her maid aroused her to the consciousness of the common-place routine of life.

And had Joyce taken up the book lying open on Mab's knee, she would have seen that it was the autobiography of Marie St. Clair, the Boston seer, and that the name of George Ritchie Buckingham figured on the title-page.

The book was a small cheap edition of one that had appeared in America in more

the form of a diary, and bore distinct marks of abridgment, and a not too artistic editing. The early days of the girl, her home surroundings, and term of service in the draper's shop, were told in curt, bald language, but with a straightforward simplicity that vouched for the truth of the narrative. The latter portion of the story, that dealing with her public career as a professional clairvoyante, had a touch of artificiality in it, a straining for effect, and expanded here and there into transports which fell little short of hysteria. A critical eye would have detected in this portion of the narrative distinct marks of interpolation by another and a coarser pen.

Mab's eye, however, was not critical, but illuminating. It transformed hysterical flights of fancy into a high-souled enthusiasm, supplied links to shallow logic, filled in misty outlines with grand truths born of her own spirituality.

One page had a strange fascination for her. The book opened at it with a touch now. It recounted the manner in which Marie St. Clair had had what she believed to be the secret of clairvoyante trance revealed to her.

It was a weird and fantastic story, told in evident good faith, of a certain luminous appearance seen by her, which she hastily, but honestly, concluded to be that of a girl-friend asleep in her bed at the time.

"Astral doubles" were not talked about at that time, or at any rate were unheard of by Marie St. Clair. She christened her apparition "a luminous replica," and honestly believed she had struck the keynote of a great truth by starting the theory that every human body owned to a "luminous replica" of itself, possessing similar but more finely developed senses and powers of motion. She followed up this theory

"I," the "me," had the prerogative of dwelling either in the material or in the spiritual body, making use of the senses of that body, provided that, for the time being, the senses of the body out of use were sealed either in sleep or trance; but furthermore that this prerogative could not be exercised at will until after a long course of training in self-mesmerism had been gone through.

At this point the writer broke off from her narrative to give many and minute instructions as to the system of training to be adopted by the aspirant to honours in clairvoyance.

These were the pages on which, day after day, Mab's eyes were rivetted.

Away from the solid earth, over the mountain tops into cloudland, they carried her; men and women, with their trivial everyday round of occupation, seeming to grow remote and dwindle in the distance.

Fancy a born musician shut up in some wilderness, knowing nothing of music save what the birds' notes gave him, and totally ignorant of all mechanical mediums for harmony. Imagine him suddenly transported to a concert-room where the violin is being played by a master's hand; imagine the instrument transferred to him with the message that by dint of study and practice he might create these sweet sounds for himself!

Mab felt herself in much such a case as she sat there beside her fire with Marie St. Clair's book upon her knee.

"Claim your birthright," had been Captain Buckingham's counsel to her. The words seemed to have a deeper and larger meaning in them now. She coupled with them another sentence of his: "through want of knowledge one may burn oil in an Aladdin's lamp." In it she seemed to read the record of her past life, her struggles against the ideal, the spiritual; her snatchings at the common-place, the actual, which somehow had always managed sooner or later to slip through her fingers.

CHAPTER XIII.

JOYCE, returning home with her mother and Miss Buckingham from a tedious afternoon's shopping, was met by a circumstance which startled and pained her.

She was getting through a prodigious amount of shopping just then. Naturally enough she would have liked Mab's opinion on the yards of Valenciennes lace and cambric she was buying. Mab, however,

had cried off, and retreated to her solitude and her books.

Failing Mab, Joyce had begged her mother to make the circuit of Piccadilly, Bond Street, and Regent Street with her. Mrs. Shenstone jumped at the idea, shook her little fluffy poodle out of her lap, and rang the bell at once to order the carriage.

"I'm wanting everything myself, I'm almost destitute of evening dresses," she said; "and you know, Joyce, I'm so glad to get your opinion whenever I can. I'm such a goose about choosing things for myself."

This was like the sunshiny old days, before the Buckinghams had set up a prickly hedge between the mother and daughter. Joyce at once expanded into cheerfulness and animation. She as speedily relapsed into silence and gloom, when she descended the stairs to find Mrs. Shenstone and Sylvia seated side by side in the carriage awaiting her.

"Sylvia is kindly going to show me where I can buy some lovely walking-boots; boots are always such a trouble to me," murmured Mrs. Shenstone, insinuating an apology.

"Boots always must be a trouble to anyone with such a tiny ankle and high instep as you have," murmured Sylvia, insinuating a compliment.

Joyce sank back in the carriage, registering a vow that next time she went shopping, if she could not tear Mab away from her books she would choose her Valenciennes lace and cambric muslin alone.

So she sat confronted with Sylvia's flaxen head in her violet velvet bonnet, her steely blue eyes, her semi-satirical conversation or semi-satirical silence for the space of three solid hours, and returned home in a state of mind in which a grasshopper would have been a burden, and was met by an annoyance by many ounces heavier than a grasshopper.

This was nothing less than the sight of Mab and Captain Buckingham coming side by side round the corner of the square.

"I must have this carriage re-lined. Everybody has drab lining, or myrtle-green, or navy-blue. I want something distinctive, quite out of the common," Mrs. Shenstone was saying as the carriage drove up to the door.

Joyce, with her eyes fixed on Mab and her companion advancing towards them, made no attempt at a reply.

"An apricot velvet or satin lining would be something quite out of the common, and

very becoming to a fair complexion," suggested Sylvia, with never a glimmer of fun in her eyes.

"The very thing! Backgrounds should always be most carefully selected," said Mrs. Shenstone enthusiastically.

Captain Buckingham's hand opened the carriage door and assisted the lady to alight.

"We live in an age when backgrounds are very wisely accentuated. A generation back such things were left to chance. We in these latter days have discovered the importance of the minutæ of daily life," he said didactically, ready as usual to lay down the law at a moment's notice.

"Mother," said Joyce, jumping out of the carriage without even a glance at Buckingham's still outstretched hand, "when people are as handsome as you and I are they can afford to despise even backgrounds." Then she caught at Mab's arm. 'Mab, dear, how is this? Why are you out walking alone? I should have been glad and thankful for your company this morning."

Mab's face was the colour of a flamingo's wing. "I had a headache," she began, stammering over her words.

"I came in to see Mrs. Shenstone, found Miss Mab alone, and looking so white that I persuaded her to come out for some fresh air," said Captain Buckingham over all their bonnets.

Joyce did not so much as turn her head towards him. She held Mab's arm tightly all the way up the stairs right into her room. Then she shut the door and stood facing her.

"Now, dear, what is it? What does it mean? How came you to be walking out alone with this man about whom we know next to nothing?"

Mab was not one to tell Joyce that really she was old enough to look after herself; that assuredly it was no affair of a younger sister's whoever she might choose to go out walking with.

She stood in front of Joyce nervously unbuttoning her gloves, her eyes downcast, her hands trembling.

"I scarcely know how it happened, Joyce," she began in jerky sentences; "I was in the drawing-room when Captain Buckingham came in——"

"He ought not to have come in when mother was out. Who did he expect to see?"

"I suppose they told him I was in; I don't know. I hadn't been a minute in

the room before he came in; I only went down because my room was icy-cold—and—and—my head ached—I felt half dazed," Mab went on still more nervously and apologetically.

"Icy-cold with that fire!" cried Joyce, pointing to the grate, where the flames made merry with the piled-up logs.

It really seemed as though Mab, who had a fine reputation for truth-telling, were bent on annihilating it in a moment by minute and pitiful fibs.

Her confusion was painful to witness.

"I don't know how to make you understand, dear; I can't explain—it is impossible to explain," she said helplessly.

Joyce felt bewildered. She looked all round the room as though for some solution to the mystery. Had her eye chanced upon the autobiography of Marie St. Clair she might have got nearer to the heart of Mab's secret. That book, however, with one or two others, had been returned to Captain Buckingham that very afternoon. The only thing in the room that attracted her attention was an easy-chair with a pillow in it and a footstool in front, as though someone had been reclining there. It had been pushed into the darkest corner of the room, away from the firelight or the wintry twilight that crept in through the panes.

She got an idea from this chair.

"Had you been asleep, dear?" she asked eagerly; "one often wakes up shivering after a nap."

Mab gave a deep sigh.

"You might call it sleeping, Joyce; 'I'm not sure whether I slept or not. I only know——" then she broke off again.

Joyce grew alarmed.

"Did you faint, Mab? Really, I think you ought to see a doctor. You must have felt weak even to get into that chair at this time in the day," she said, speaking out of the fulness of her own vigorous health.

Mab walked away towards the fire.

"Do, do let me alone, Joyce," she pleaded; "I can't explain, you couldn't understand if I did." And then she sighed again.

Joyce followed.

"Darling, you know I always did hate mysteries!" she said, putting her arm lovingly round Mab's waist. "I wish you would tell me all your thoughts, no matter whether I can understand them or not: but an'how, tell me just this:

why, if you must go out, did you let Captain Buckingham go with you?—better by far have gone alone."

"He is a friend of mother's. Why should he not go out with me?"

"Mab, darling!" this in a voice full of pain. "If father were alive, do you think he would have allowed any of us to call such a man as that, friend?"

Mab's answer struck her dumb on the spot.

"Yes, I do, Joyce," she said, steadying her nerves and looking her sister full in the face; "I think if father were alive now, Captain Buckingham is the man he would choose before anyone else in the world to be his own friend, and mother's, and yours, and mine."

Then, evidently to end a discussion for which she had no inclination, she freed herself from Joyce's arm and left the room.

Joyce followed, speechless, bewildered, feeling that another brick had been added to the wall that was gradually being built up between Mab and herself.

CHAPTER XIV.

JOYCE had made a hasty resolve that she would take Frank as little as possible into her confidence concerning the Buckingham's, fearing lest a declaration of open war between the two men might be the result.

On the day after her bewildering talk with Mab she broke this resolve, telling Frank fully all that had passed.

It was the night of one of Mrs. Shennstone's receptions. Frank had endured the atmosphere of the drawing-room for a dreary quarter of an hour, then had fled for an ecstatic ten minutes to the deserted dining-room, whither Joyce had somehow managed to find her way before him.

"One thing is clear," she said, speaking with a fine air of decision, but nevertheless quaking in her black satin slippers at her own temerity. "Our wedding-day must be put off. I can't go away with you thinking only of my own happiness, and leave Mab here to the mercy of a pair of adventurers."

Frank's answer did not surprise her.

"No," he said, and not a doubt he meant it, "I'll stake my life we won't do that. I tried that game once, we won't start it again. I'll undertake to say our marriage will come off on the 21st, not a day later."

"But, Frank, be reasonable. What is

to be done? We must do something. What are we to do?"

"Give me time to think, dear. I confess I was not prepared for such a thing as this. Your mother, you see, is sufficiently protected by your father's will; but Mab unless we can take care of her, is at the mercy of any fortune-hunter who comes along."

Joyce's conscience here asked the unpleasant question, what if it were thanks to her plain-speaking on the matter of her father's will that Captain Buckingham's attentions had been transferred from her mother to Mab?

"I will talk to Mab again," she said; "she is difficult to manage in some things. In small matters she always lets me rule her, but on some things she won't listen even to a suggestion, and of late her manner has puzzled me more than I can say. I'll talk to my mother too, and tell her she must—must drop those people, and at once——"

"Talk to whom you please, dear, but never again speak a word about putting off our wedding by so much as an hour," interrupted Frank vigorously.

"And I'll talk to Sylvia, and tell her she must prevent her brother coming to the house. And I'll talk to the brother and tell him——"

"Wha—at!"

"I mean it. I'll tell him he must consider himself on strictly formal terms with us, and not presume to put himself upon the footing of a friend."

"You'll do nothing of the sort. If there's any talking to be done to that man, you'll leave me to do it, please."

"Ah, but you'll do it unpleasantly, and there'll be a scene."

"I'm bound to do it unpleasantly sooner or later, and I'd as soon do it to-morrow as any other day, if any good could come of it. But it would do more mischief than anything else just now. Between your mother and me the present condition of things is an armed truce, nothing more. If it came to a question between me and that man, she'd side with him, not a doubt, and forbid me the house."

"Mab, too, isn't a log—she will have something to say if it comes to open war."

"You might talk to your mother to-night, Joyce, when all the people have gone—I've heard you speak very effectively to her more than once," said Frank after a

moment's pause; "and you can write to Uncle Archie, telling him that he must come up at once, and that he must take Mab back with him into Gloucestershire while we are away in Paris. When we return, of course she'll be with us, and we can shut our door upon all undesirable intimacies."

There could be no mistaking the under-note of pride in his voice, as the young man alluded to their joint possession of a front door.

Joyce's fun-loving ear detected it.

"Ah! with what an air of authority we will draw the bolts against the dubious!" she said mischievously.

"Won't we! and I'll back up your letter to Uncle Archie with one by the next post; but in any case leave the Buckinghams to me, I'll speak to the man before long, but I will choose the moment for speaking, and not allow him to do so."

There came the sound of doors opening, and movement along the hall outside.

Joyce gave a start: "I must go back to the drawing-room at once. How dreadful! I've been talking here with you for half an hour instead of ten minutes—that was all the time I promised you—"

"Oh! these good-byes," groaned Frank, taking his farewell—a long, slow, sweet one, "thank Heaven they are nearly at an end now."

Joyce went with him to the front door, and picked out his hat from forty or fifty others of all sorts and sizes: "Ah! the heads those hats represent," she said with a lively recollection of the platitudes, bombast, and trivialities which had been doing duty for conversation upstairs during the greater part of the evening.

The night was pitch-dark. A man leaning against the railings of a darkened doorway, higher up the square, came forward, as Frank left Mrs. Shenstone's door-step, and accosted him in a voice slightly above a whisper with the words:

"What time is it, friend?"

Frank stared at him for a moment, but the November fog conspired with the high coat-collar and hat which the man wore low over his brows, to hide his features effectually. Frank could only make out that he was a tall, powerfully-built man; and his Irish accent was unmistakable.

"I haven't the remotest notion—time for idlers to be in bed at any rate," was his reply in brusque tones, for somehow, he scarcely knew why, his suspicions were aroused.

The man, with never a word, drew back to his former position against the railings.

Strange to say, at the farther corner of the square, the circumstance, with a slight difference, was repeated. A man—a fine, stalwart, soldier-like fellow—came along with rapid strides, and in a louder voice than the other had used, asked the question:

"What time is it, friend?"

Frank laid his hand on the man's shoulder. The voice was one easy to identify.

"Why, Ned Donovan," he asked, "what pranks are you up to now? What on earth has come to you, that you are dodging about the streets in this way, asking mysterious questions as to the time of night?"

Donovan shook off Frank's hand hurriedly.

"I beg your pardon, sir, I mistook you for someone else," he answered; and before Frank could say another word he was gone.

Frank got to his rooms without further hindrance, let himself in with his latch-key, turned up the gas, took off his hat, and was about to hang it on its peg, when, to his surprise, on the inside lining, on a scrap of card, he saw inscribed the name, "George Ritchie Buckingham."

For a moment or two he stood silently scrutinising the hat. It bore a certain resemblance to his own hat, sufficiently, at least, to justify Joyce's mistake in handing it to him, and his own—with his mind seriously pre-occupied—in putting it on. But it was indubitably American, of a broader brim and rougher in make than one is accustomed to see in London streets.

He put it on again, walked to the looking-glass, and stood there taking stock of his personal characteristics. He discovered that he was close upon Captain Buckingham's height, that his shoulders were about the same in breadth, that he carried his head in a manner that to a casual observer on a dark, foggy night might suggest Buckingham.

These points of resemblance, slight though they were, struck a vein of thought in his mind and suggested a possible solution of the mystery of these unexpected midnight greetings.

RECOLLECTIONS OF A MIDSHIPMAN'S MESS.

IN FOUR PARTS. PART IV.

OF course we all looked down upon all other navies—French, Spanish, Italian, Russian, Yankee; indeed, the only navy

which we regarded with any real respect was that of Russia, and this was only for the quaint reason that we understood that a Russian midshipman was empowered to give any man of his watch one dozen lashes at his own discretion. This appeared to us an immense stride in the right direction; but the gilt was very much taken off the gingerbread when we learned afterwards that the midshipman was also liable to one dozen himself from the officer of the watch.

Mingled with our contempt for the U.S. navy with its fantastic-looking war-vessels, and its crews half consisting of niggers, or "mokes" as they used to be called, there was a kind of grudging admiration for their free-and-easy style; their utter regardlessness of all naval etiquette ashore; their bewildering statements as to the speed and powers of their ships; their outlandish phrases; their extraordinary costume. They talked to their Captain on shore with the same easy familiarity which we used to each other in the berth; they announced the speed of their gunboats and monitors—never under fifteen knots—with an easy confidence which almost made one believe them; they let off incredible yarns of "the war" with as little fuss as if they were well-known proverbs; they drank "sherry white wine," and invariably went ashore, not like ourselves in "plain clothes," but in "citizens' dress, sir!" which usually consisted of navy blue "pants," a light checked shooting-coat, and a uniform cap. Their Captains seemed to treat their Admiralty—I beg pardon, I mean their Naval Bureau—in the same off-hand manner in which the junior officers treated them, and one of their skippers who commanded what they termed a "sloop-of-war," but which was really a frigate little smaller than ourselves, indulged some of our senior officers, when on a visit to his ship, with a sight of his letter-book, containing copies of his correspondence with that important body. He had been in command of a gunboat—let us call her the "Ohio," I don't recollect her real name—and he had got her ashore in the "West Passage," wherever that was, and had in consequence been favoured with a letter from "our Naval Bureau," demanding to know his reasons in writing for such an accident. According to his own showing, and the evidence of his letter-book, his answer ran thus: "Gentlemen—In reply to your letter of such a date requiring

to know for what reason the U.S. Gunboat 'Ohio,' under my command, ran ashore in the West Passage on such a date, I have to inform you that the U.S. Gunboat 'Ohio,' under my command, draws exactly one foot and a half more water than there is in that particular spot, and am, Gentlemen, your obedient servant, D——" And nothing happened to him! Another Yankee Captain, in whom we took great interest, was a man of the astounding name of Colvocoressas. He was said to have been picked up as a child at sea in an open boat, and that no one knew who or what he was. Where he got his name from I don't know; even his own men and officers found it too much for them—they called him "Calico trousers." Our Skipper went on board his ship once to see him, and was very much interested in a sort of closed sentry-box, painted black and with a few holes bored in it on various sides, which stood in the full blaze of the tropical sun on the quarter-deck.

"May I ask what that is!" said our Skipper, his curiosity at length getting the better of him.

"Why, cert'nly, sir!" replied Captain Calico trousers; "that, sir, is a refractory Dutchman, sir, and by the time he's been a four-hours' watch in that sweating-box he'll be one of the mildest Dutchmen yew ever sot eyes on!" and he added that the sentry had orders to turn him every half-hour. They don't flog in the American navy, they go in for humanity.

But to return to my proper subject. I have told how in various ways we lost numerous members of our mess; how we grieved over the loss of some and rejoiced over that of others; but we were now to lose a messmate whom all of us could not but like in many ways most thoroughly, and yet who was perpetually in such danger from his besetting sin that we never knew when the final catastrophe might not arrive. This was old Peregrine. He had had the most hairbreadth escapes from Courts-martial that could be imagined; he had run the gauntlet of Captain and Commander again and again; he had attended on the upper deck when the Captain was seeing "defaulters," himself far more than fit to be entered in the defaulters' book; but he was such a seasoned vessel, and moreover so firm on his feet, and had such command over his voice, that it required a very practised eye and ear to detect him. If he could only

have kept himself in and repressed his insane desire to say absurd things on the most serious occasions, he might have weathered the whole commission.

Danger after danger he successfully encountered, till immunity from disaster made him utterly careless, and it was impossible but that he must be wrecked at last. Disaster came at length on this wise. The men were paid then in quarterly payments, the lists for which required much time and care to make out and check, and this was Peregrine's particular duty. The actual paying of the men took place in the Captain's fore-cabin, in the presence of the Captain and Paymaster, and, seeing that there were some five hundred men to pay, and that they had to be mustered and marched off, each then passing through the cabin to receive his pay, it was a somewhat important and grave function. Fully a fortnight before the payment Peregrine had been informed by the Paymaster of the day on which it would take place, and had been desired to get the necessary papers ready; but it was one of his inspired periods, and not a stroke of work had he done. Most of us in the berth were aware of this, and were wondering how on earth Peregrine, clever and cunning though he was, could manage to escape this time.

The day came, and we noted that Peregrine had been drinking steadily all the morning. The men were piped to muster on the main deck for payment, and the Captain and Paymaster took their places in the fore-cabin. Presently Peregrine appeared. He had a large book, used in mustering the men, and known as the "Open List," under one arm, and those carefully prepared Pay Lists, whereby five hundred men were to be paid after the various deductions for fines, clothing, and remittances to wives and families had been made, were represented by a quire and a half of blue foolscap in all its maiden purity under the other arm—absolutely nothing more. He wore a large pair of old carpet slippers, which I don't think either the Captain or the Paymaster observed at the time, but otherwise he was properly attired in uniform, and seemed quite composed and ready for anything.

The Paymaster looked at him in some anxiety, but Peregrine gave no sign, and sat down in his place, arranging his blank sheets of foolscap carefully in front of him as if he considered them of the utmost importance. Then he opened his big book and waited for orders.

The officer in charge of the men reported everything ready for the payment, the Captain gave the order to begin, and to my utter astonishment Peregrine began to muster and pay the men, simply out of his own head, by a gigantic effort of memory! And what is more, he got over the first twenty names or so without a serious calamity. But now a hitch occurred—a man came forward whom Peregrine affirmed to be a leading seaman with a large family, to whom most of his pay therefore went, while the man asserted himself to be a petty officer, and moreover unmarried. Then came out the deadly peculiarity of Peregrine's disposition when he was under the influence of liquor. He was as obstinate as a pig; had he been only content to give in, all might still have been well, but he insisted on arguing the case with the man, who of course stuck stoutly to his assertion. Neither would yield, and at last the Captain, who had already begun to smell a rat, burst in angrily and authoritatively with, "Mr. Peregrine, what is this man's number?" When your Captain speaks authoritatively on board ship it is time for everyone to mind his p's and q's and obey, instantly and with extreme deference. What, then, was our horror and astonishment to hear Peregrine, in a peculiar kind of half-snarl, half-sneer, which he sometimes used to adopt when he wanted to be particularly nasty, reply in measured and emphatic tones: "The number—on his knapsack—is number thirty-nine—as—he—goes—marching round!" You might indeed have heard a pin drop. The Captain stared at Peregrine with his mouth open; he could not believe his ears; but after the lapse of a minute he spoke, his voice husky with anger. "Mr. Peregrine, you will go on the quarter-deck, and remain there until the medical officer has examined you and reported upon your present state."

"Oh, certainly, certainly, sir," replied Peregrine with exaggerated courtesy, as he rose from his chair and bowed with a peculiarly condescending manner to the Captain; then he put his cap on his head, and with his quire and a half of blue foolscap under his arm, he caracoled out of the cabin, the last view we had of him being the soles of his carpet slippers as they flapped contemptuously in the air. The payment was suspended until the lists could be prepared, and the senior medico was ordered to inspect and report upon poor Peregrine's state. But here the great

difficulty arose. Peregrine, half-drunk, was as steady as a rock and as cunning as a lunatic. He stood bolt upright on the quarter-deck, not even swaying to one side or the other, and gave the shortest, straightest, and surliest answers to the doctor's enquiries. This latter officer was a Scotchman, and possessed, in a very high degree, the marvellous instinct of caution, which is the birthright of his race. He would not commit himself in any way, and his report to the Captain was a perfect model of cautious utterance. He reported that "he had exaameened Meester Peregrine as to his present staate, but that Meester Peregrine was so much more sober-r-r when he was drrunk than when he was sober-r-r, and on the other-r-r haand so much more drrunk when he was sober-r-r than when he was drrunk, that he could not rightly venture an opeenion as to whether he was drrunk or sober-r-r."

Peregrine was triumphant; he had defeated the medico: he spoke of the whole affair as a shameful plot on the part of the Captain and Paymaster to get him into trouble; but the Skipper was not to be done. Peregrine's hour was come, and he was put under arrest for insubordination and gross neglect of duty. That very night, alas! he celebrated his triumph over the medical department by getting blind drunk, and at nine p. m. he was sent for by the Commander. There was no escape this time, and he was ordered to be tried by Court-martial.

Long, however, before we met the two other ships, the Captains of which were necessary to form a Court, poor Peregrine had gone still further. Delirium tremens seized him, and his fate was, of course, sealed. He was tried, and dismissed his ship some months afterwards, and thus we lost a messmate who, but for one terrible failing, would have been a delightful companion and most faithful friend, and whose only enemy in the ship was himself. He was the last survivor of the disturbing element in the mess, and though we regretted him in many ways, still, I must say, we got on better without him.

We had really settled down by this time into something like proper form, though I am afraid we were exceptionally noisy and rowdy to the last. Our peculiar instincts, too, had begun to show themselves, and each took a pride in excelling in something—the very best preventive against vicious habits that could be found. Some sketched, and one or two enterprising artists actually had the pluck

to send their sketches to "The Illustrated London News," and got them put in too—often so transfigured that they could hardly recognise them again; but, still, there they were, with the name of the artist in the letter-press which accompanied them, to the great glory of the latter, and to the delight of his friends at home. Some studied entomology, and raced over the wild stretches of sunburnt hill or barren plain with a green butterfly net, which stray niggers would sometimes find suddenly clapped down over their heads with a wild burst of unexpected laughter. These enthusiasts occasionally brought huge, furry tarantulas on board, cautiously tied to a long string, and towed behind after the manner of a lap-dog. One of these tarantulas would clear the mess quicker than a hundred-and-fifty-pound shell. Some fished, and some shot, and some rode, and some few even developed a taste for reading, and studied Spanish, French, and even deeper subjects. One messmate of ours had decided opinions on what he called the "Doctrine of Metempsychosis;" and another, in consequence of one inspired effort of memory on his part, became our great authority on matters of English history.

The mails had just come in from England, and we were doing our best to read up all that had been going on in the last six weeks or so—no light matter, by-the-way—when somebody who had come across Lord Malmesbury's name in the paper, and who desired to know the name of the family to which that title belonged, said suddenly:

"I say, you fellows, does anybody know who Malmesbury is?"

The historian looked up, stared at the speaker for a moment in supreme contempt, and then blurted out: "Malmesbury, Malmesbury! I should have thought any fool knew who he was. Why, he was drowned in a bucket of lampreys!"

After that effort, any vexed question in English history was always referred to him.

This reminds me of one of the few genuine Irish bulls I have ever heard, and which I can vouch for as having been made in entire innocence by a most genuine Irishman. We had a warrant officer on board who claimed descent from the Kings of Munster, or Ulster, or whichever it was, and who was never tired of letting us know it. He used to spin the most impossible yarns under the simple belief that we were ac-

cepting every word of his as Divine truth, and quite unconscious of the fact that we were "drawing" him. But one summer day, at Callao, at about ten minutes before noon, we were all looking over the taffrail, waiting to see a function which was to be enacted in the bay; for at noon precisely a treaty of peace was to be signed between the Kingdom of Spain and the Republic of Peru, and exactly at that hour the flag-ships of the two fleets were to hoist each other's ensigns and salute them with one hundred guns. "Now they tell me," said O'Connell, as he stared in the direction of the Spanish flag-ship which, as well as that of the Peruvian Admiral, was showing signs of preparation for the important moment, "now they tell me that the two flag-ships are goin' to foire a simultaneous salute—*fairst wan and thin the ather!*"

But our three years were now nearly up, and we were looking forward eagerly to our relief. How glad we should be to get back to dear old England, and rest our eyes on that which we had never seen since we left our native land—a bonâ fide green field! And what heroes we would be to our own families, and how we would excite their admiration with our nautical manners and phrases! The ship that was to take our place arrived, we hailed her, like that other ship in the Bay of Biscay, with three cheers. The yeoman of signals and his mates were very busy about that homeward-bound pendant of ours. We were ordered to sail on a certain day.

It came; steam was up to take us clear of the bay; the messenger was brought to the capstan, and all was ready to heave up our anchor and be off, when—where on earth was the chief engineer? Cubitt was gone. We made enquiry all over the ship, and learned that he had gone on shore the evening before to say good-bye to his many friends, and that nothing had been seen of him since. Dismay reigned in the ship; we could not sail without him; where could he be? Orders were at once given for an organised search to be made, and the Captain of Marines, by reason of his speaking Spanish, was sent off in full gig to call on the Intendente of the port and make full enquiries. Meanwhile we waited in the greatest anxiety, all longing to be off, yet not wishing to sail without Cubitt.

An hour or more elapsed, and then it was announced by those with glasses that the Captain of Marines was coming off again in the gig, and that there was some one with him.

"It's Cubitt!" "No, it isn't!" "Yes, it is! Yes! yes! it's old Cubitt! He's all right. Hurrah!" and in a few minutes Cubitt himself stood once more upon the quarter-deck of the "Bruisewater."

But what a change! His clothes were hanging in rags down his back; his cap was gone; his whiskers had been torn out in handfuls; his face was bruised, scratched, and skinned all over; his watch and chain were probably where he had left the greater part of his waistcoat; and, worse than all, his hand no longer grasped his trusty Penang lawyer; but he was in fine spirits all the same, and said cheerfully that he did not wear those honourable scars for nothing. By-and-by the story all came out. He had gone ashore, as I said, to say good-bye to his many friends, and took, of course, his beloved Penang lawyer with him.

He went from house to house, everywhere welcomed, for he was very popular; and later on was proceeding towards the Mole to get a passage off to the ship, when—how it happened, he never could thoroughly explain—he found himself surrounded by an infuriated and insolent mob of Celadores, or native police soldiers, rascals enough to commit any atrocity if they saw their way to it without much danger, some of whom assaulted the lonely Englishman.

But they did not know with whom they had to deal.

Cubitt never hesitated for a moment; he got his back against the wall, moistened his hands, took a firm grip of the smaller end of his Penang lawyer, and at once commenced operations. Each sweep of that terrible stick was like that of the scythe of death. His assailants could not get near enough to grip him, and the first who attempted it demonstrated by his fate the danger of the enterprise. Again and again the enemy attempted to rush him, but again and again the lawyer gained the day, and they found the costs very heavy.

There was one thing in Cubitt's favour—he was in uniform—and they dared not fire, else their carbines would have made short work of our gallant engineer. Four of their number were now lying insensible in the street, and they had not accomplished anything. They drew off and consulted together; then once more they came on with loud cries of vengeance. Crack, crack, argued the lawyer, and two more victims measured their length upon the stones, but at the same time, to Cubitt's

horror, one of his great long legs shot out suddenly straight in front of him, as if by magic, and he perforce followed it on the other. They had lassoed him; and, clapping on to the slack of the lasso, they ran away with it down the street, unwillingly pursued by poor Cubitt, hopping in gigantic strides upon his remaining limb, and flourishing his dread weapon round his head as he denounced them in no measured language.

Of course he fell, and of course, with the magnanimous spirit of the inhabitants of the South American Republics, they jumped on his prostrate body; they tore his hair and whiskers out; they kicked, battered, and bruised him; they prodded him with gun-barrels, and beat him with the butt-ends of their carbines; they robbed him of his watch and chain, and of every dollar he possessed, and took his Penang lawyer from him, and then carried him off to the Calabozo and stuck him, battered and bleeding as he was, in the stocks. All night long he remained there, getting, as may be supposed, little or no rest for his aching limbs, and in the morning, the Captain of the Celadores, a gaudy, but dirty little Peruvian, in a huge moustache and stays, came to personally inspect the "Loco Ingles," whom his men had captured the night before. Cubitt was ordered to get up, and was further admonished thereto by a dig in the ribs from the brass-scabbarded sword of the gallant Captain, who, in an unlucky moment, seeing that the stocks prevented his obeying, ordered his men to release him. But no sooner did the enraged Cubitt, still smarting from that insulting dig in the ribs, feel himself free, than he rose to his full height, and shot his great fist with such irresistible force into the Peruvian's face, that that officer was propelled clean out of the cell like a stone from a catapult, and exhibited no desire to enter it again.

Oh, but they were glad to get rid of him! as the Intendente said to our Captain of Marines almost with tears in his eyes.

Well was it for us that Cubitt was restored to us ere we sailed, for his services were soon to be required in a very serious emergency in which, had it not been for his pluck and enterprise, we might all have met a watery end. No sooner had we cleared the bay than as usual the "steam jib," as we used to say, "was hauled down," and we "proceeded under sail," in the monotonous language of the log-book.

All went well: the wind was light, it is true, and not by any means equal to driving the good old ship along at the pace which our impatience desired; but it was tolerably fair—our relief had come, and when we had looked in to Valparaiso for a refit, we should leave our station really and truly homeward-bound, and the delight wrapped up in those two words no landsman can conceive. But one morning there was some little stir in the ship, for the carpenter reported that on sounding the well he had found a much larger quantity of water than usual, much more in fact than he could in any way account for, and the water still seemed to be coming in. Nobody could make out what was the matter; the ship had always been very staunch below, though her decks leaked abominably, but that amount of water could not have come in through her decks. The carpenter was ordered to sound again in another half-hour; he did so—the water was increasing fast. The pumps were now rigged and the water was got under, not, however, without some trouble, and moreover the cause of the mischief was still undiscovered.

I think it was Cubitt himself who found out the mystery; the plug of the discharge-pipe had worked loose with the straining of the ship and had gone altogether. I need only say that the discharge-pipe is a large pipe belonging to the engineers' department; that it leads out of the ship's side about six feet under water; and that it was closed by a plug from the outside. This had worked out, and the water was pouring into the ship in a steady stream, which could only be stopped by the replacing of the plug. But there were great difficulties in the way of this: had we been in harbour a diver could have done it easily, but we were at sea, and could not reach the pipe, for it was fully six feet under water when the ship was on an even keel, and of course, when she rolled to port, the pipe being on the port side, she plunged it fathoms deep.

The Captain consulted with Cubitt as to what was to be done. There was a little sort of step or guard formed of curved bar-iron, projecting from the ship's side at the place where the discharge-pipe came out, and Cubitt suggested that if a man were lowered carefully on to this with a new plug in one hand and a hammer in the other he might possibly manage to insert the plug and drive it partially in before the roll came which would infallibly plunge

him far beneath the waves, and, at the pace at which the ship was travelling, would sweep him wildly astern at the same time. For it was evident that the ship must be kept under sufficient sail to heave the mouth of the discharge-pipe well out of water, and this could not be done with so heavy a ship at a speed of much less than eight knots.

But it was a difficult and dangerous undertaking; indeed, it might well be that a man attempting it would be drowned in the very first plunge, which would have the effect of forcing him under the side of the ship as she rolled heavily and slowly. It was not a case in which the Captain would take it on himself to give an order to any individual man to perform such a duty, it was decided to call for volunteers. Accordingly, the word was passed along the ship's company for any man who would volunteer for such a service, but there was no response; it was quite a new and unforeseen difficulty, and the men were shy of undertaking that which none of them thoroughly understood.

It must be remembered that these were the days of sailors, and that this was an engine-room matter. Whatever the reason was, nobody would come forward, and here was the water pouring steadily into the ship all the time.

Cubitt threw himself, with his usual impetuiveness, into the breach. "He would do it himself," he declared; and, having made that announcement, he prepared without further hesitation to carry it into effect. He rushed down to his cabin, and presently emerged armed for the encounter. He was stripped to his drawers and a thick flannel shirt; in one hand he held a new plug, in the other a favourite copper hammer, only second in his affections to his lamented Penang lawyer. He put himself in the hands of the "sailor-men," and they made a strong line fast under his arms, with a bowline knot, and with many a turn of flannel served round it to try as much as possible to reduce the inevitable chafing when the strain came on it. We were already on the port tack, so that, except when the ship rolled heavily to windward—and she was a fine roller—the mouth of the pipe was just out of water.

All hands crowded on deck to see the gallant attempt made, for everybody fully recognised the pluck and the danger of the man who was thus exposing himself for the safety of his shipmates. Carefully and cautiously, none venturing to speak except

the officer who directed the movements of the men, they lowered him on to the iron guard—his foot touched it—the strain was taken off the line—he bent down to try and insert the plug—the ship gave a tremendous roll to windward. Cubitt disappeared entirely as the water surged up almost to the main-deck ports—a savage pluck came on the rope which held him.

"Pay out! pay out handsomely!" sang out the Commander; the line flew through the men's fingers, and there, right astern, at the end of twenty fathoms or so of line, suddenly emerged from the foam Cubitt—spluttering, puffing, snorting, coughing, roaring out all sorts of orders which we could not hear; the water seething and tearing round him as we towed him, like a huge sea-monster, after us, flourishing his copper hammer over his head with one hand while he tried to check the strain of the rope on his body with the other.

Full of danger to him as the whole affair was, and greatly as we admired and respected his pluck, there was something so ludicrous in his appearance when he came to the surface, that there was not a man in the ship who could help laughing; but that did not interfere with our solicitude for his safety. He was hauled in again, and once more lowered on to the guard, for his first attempt had been a failure. Once more he bent over the pipe, once more he was swept away astern of us, half drowned and smothered with the tearing water, but this time the plug was in, and only required some more blows with the copper hammer to make it secure.

Nearly each of these blows, however, necessitated his going through the same terrible ordeal by water, as before; and when at length the plug was driven well home, and we finally hauled him on board with loud cries of: "Well done! Cubitt; well done! old chap," he was well-nigh exhausted, and what was worse, his back and sides were cut to pieces with the chafing of the rope. Not one whit for that cared Cubitt; but one sorrow he had, in which we could hardly sympathise with him—in that we knew not the full depth of it—he had lost his copper hammer!

But, thanks to his gallantry, the ship was out of all danger, and ere long we reached Valparaiso, to refit for that passage home round the Horn which generally tries every plank, strains every rope, and springs every spar in the ship. Thence one morning we sailed, our hearts as full

of expectation as they had been three years and more before when leaving Plymouth outward-bound, but that expectation more surely founded, and unmingled with any deep regret at our departure.

One more incident, worthy of so original and talented a collection of young gentlemen, will serve to end these recollections, and illustrate how, to the very last, our particular genius reigned triumphant. We were going up Channel, we had sighted and passed the Lizard; we were full of eagerness to see dear old Plymouth once more, the more so as we were burning spare spars for fuel, and our supply of provisions was nearly exhausted. We turned in on Saturday night convinced that Sunday morning would find us at anchor in Plymouth Sound.

We woke up the following morning with a dreamy notion that our sleep had been disturbed by the clank of cables and other unusual sounds; the ship was quite steady—not a movement in her, absolutely no heel—we must be at anchor. We swung ourselves out of our hammocks, huddled on a few clothes, and rushed up on the main-deck, there to feast our eyes out of the nearest port upon Mount Edgumbe and Mount Batten, upon the Breakwater and the Hoe, upon the Mewstone and the Cattewater, every object which we knew so well and loved so deeply. There they all were spread out before us in all the misty brilliancy of a lovely autumn morning.

We yearned for the shore, for the meeting with dear relations and well-known friends, for the indescribable sensation of "Home" permeating one's whole system, through eye and ear, and nostril, and even the very pores of one's skin; but, amidst all this hunger of the soul for home we were sensible of another most powerful but more material feeling—the hunger of the body, for it was already past breakfast time.

We rushed down into the berth: "Here, Steward! Breakfast! breakfast!! breakfast!!!"

There wasn't any! The midshipmen of the middle and morning watches had got into the steward's pantry, and had eaten every scrap of food in the mess!

WILL SHE?

A COMPLETE STORY.

"QUITE an absurdity, isn't it? and very unpleasant for you and Mr. Horniblow, I'm sure. I said so when I first heard

what old Josh Brooke was contemplating. 'Well, Hugo,' I said, 'I don't envy the new Rector of Ashleigh and his wife, to have the old Rector's daughter perpetuated in the parish as village schoolmistress.' Of course it's very awkward, isn't it now?"

Mrs. Fortescue, who was tall, and plump, and forcible, in figure, manner, and voice, looked into the somewhat insignificant face of the new Rector's wife, as she put the last query confidentially.

"Well, you see, Mrs. Fortescue," she answered, unsealing her thin, compressed lips, "as new-comers we are not obliged to take antecedents into consideration. To us, Miss—what is her name? Oh, yes, thank you—Miss Bartlemy need merely be the village schoolmistress, unless we chose to have it otherwise, so that, you see, for us there is no awkwardness at all. But I am really glad to know your feeling about her, for we had heard, no doubt, quite a false report that your son had——"

Mrs. Fortescue let her say no more.

"Ah, indeed, so you heard of that! How things do fly! Oh, yes, indeed, and it was almost true! He was quite fascinated. Poor dear Hugo! Such an eye for beauty as the boy has."

"Boy!" echoed Mrs. Horniblow, "I mean your son, the Curate of Flaxton."

"So do I—my only son—my Hugo," replied Mrs. Fortescue; "but he is only a boy where a pretty face is concerned. Fell in love at first sight with Miss Bartlemy. She is very pretty, you know—quite a beauty in fact, and very taking too. Poor Hugo! But then that was in her best days, before it was discovered that her father had lost all his property. The income from Ashleigh of course died with him, and he had saved nothing. Fortunately, dear Hugo was not too deeply implicated; he was on the verge, but he had not proposed, and, of course now it is all over; still, I may confess to you in private, dear Mrs. Horniblow, that I should greatly have preferred the young woman's being located elsewhere."

"Ah, to be sure, I dare say!" replied Mrs. Horniblow, and pressed her thin lips together. "And this Mr. Brooke, I suppose, is a relative of the young woman—your person's, I suppose."

"No, only her godfather. He was old Bartlemy's pupil—a lad of nineteen when she was born, and he stood godfather to her, but it's the most ridiculous idea his settling her down here. If he wanted to

provide for them—she has a paralytic mother, quite helpless and childish, poor thing!—he might have done so elsewhere; but he's most eccentric in his ways—mad you might call him—and if he takes a thing into his head, do it he will. They call him 'Old Josh Brooke' in the neighbourhood, not that he is so very old, but so crotchety."

"Well, if he must make her school-mistress, he need not have made her organist. I have always expected my governess to play, and this salary would have been a great help towards her own; besides which, I play a little myself—not much certainly, but I used to sometimes in the holidays, when Miss Makin was away, and I suppose this girl plays so well that I couldn't play after her. Yes, the organ business is a nuisance certainly."

"Yes, no doubt very awkward indeed," agreed Mrs. Fortescue, glad to find the Rector's wife had a grievance after all as well as herself, and she felt well satisfied with her afternoon's work.

Meanwhile "Old Josh Brooke" is standing in the shady little two-seated porch of Ashleigh School Cottage, talking to the "young wom—young person," who bends her head, and does not smile in answer to her godfather's half-anxious, half-playful:

"Well, Mary, feeling reconciled yet?"

She looks up at his kindly face; rather a large, plain face, with a bald head, that gives him almost a venerable appearance, in spite of his having only just turned forty; but she does not smile, and she speaks gravely, almost sadly.

"I wish I had never consented to stay in Ashleigh, Mr. Brooke," she says.

"But why?" he asks, and his pleasant mouth puts on a vexed expression. "Why should you wish such a thing? Tell me your reasons, Mary."

"I've told you so many times, Mr. Brooke," she says quickly, "but you never will listen or believe me; it's no use repeating them;" and the least little glimmer of a smile shone out over her face at the remembrance of his determined incredulity.

"I'm glad that you can still smile, Mary; I was afraid that it was something serious. Come, at least tell me your new reasons for being sorry I persuaded you to remain in Ashleigh."

"I've no new reasons," she answers; "and I know I ought not to have any old

ones. Dear mother is quite happy; she doesn't miss the rectory now that her room is so like the old one, and that is all your goodness, Mr. Brooke, as well as all the rest; but I can't help feeling sorry that I am here instead of elsewhere."

"Thank you, Miss Mary, for the implied compliment. I am sorry—truth forbids my returning it, for I am very glad your mother and you are so near that I can at least watch over you both a little. You shouldn't begrudge me that little pleasure, to say nothing of my having stood up for you as a deeply-aggrieved infant. Your mother was my first friend long before I was Squire at Ashleigh; I am vain enough to think she would miss me."

"Oh, she would indeed; I think you are the only one she knows now, besides old Margaret and me! And I should miss you too, Mr. Brooke; I should, indeed. You are the only friend we have in the world now. It is only that I know—I can't help feeling—that they——"

"What? Who?" he asks sharply.

"The new people. The Rector and his wife will think me incapable. Indeed, I know they do; they have said so. They would rather have a conventional, proper mistress."

"Incapable! Nonsense, child, you are over-sensitive. Everyone knows how clever you are. Weren't you Gold Medallist at that—what do you call 'em place? Incapable, indeed! Who has been putting that into your head, Mary?"

"Nobody has put it in, Mr. Brooke," she answers, smiling at his warmth; "it came of itself, but I know what people think."

"Who has said anything?" he asked indignantly.

"No one—at least not to my face. But I can see what they think without being told in so many words. Everybody looks down upon me here, because I once was rich, and now I'm poor."

"Hear the young woman appraise herself," laughed Mr. Brooke. "And do you think, Miss Bartlemy, that you'd be worth as much to strangers as you are to us here, who know and love you and your mother?"

"Oh, no; I know I shouldn't; but they wouldn't look down upon me—as—as—some do here."

"Some! Who, Mary? Have you—? You haven't been out of the village, I know, since I saw you last. Who has wounded you?"

He speaks angrily, and looks as he speaks, and Mary hastens to try and remove his anger.

"Oh, never mind, please! Pray forget what I have said," she begs earnestly, whilst her cheeks flush painfully; "I am silly, and—and over-sensitive, as you say, and—and I'm not used to my new life yet. I wish I hadn't said anything to you. It was very foolish. I really don't mind—at least, not much."

"Yes, you look as if you didn't mind—not much," he says—almost contemptuously she thinks. "I think I have never seen you so thoroughly vexed before, Mary. Yes, it is silly to be wounded because a— a puppy like that—I beg your pardon, Mary," he says, checking himself sharply. "Perhaps you like—still like the fellow, I mean; but there, I won't say anything against him. Don't cry, you silly girl; upon my soul! I know what I should like uncommonly."

"Oh! Mr. Brooke," says Mary, obediently drying her eyes, "if it is anything I could do for you—"

"No, no, child; you're the very last person who would give me my own way in that matter;" and Mr. Brooke takes the little basket, in which he had brought the poor, paralysed mother an offering of fruit and flowers, from her daughter's hand. "Good afternoon, dear, and try a little to grow better pleased with your work and your new home here. Your mother is happy; why should not you be so too?"

There is a world of quiet reproof, and, as she fancies, of reproach also, in his voice, as he turns rather abruptly to leave her. This reflection brings Mary to her senses at once. How ungrateful she had shewn herself for all his kindness!

"Let me at least know what it is you would like," she says, ready to cry again at his reproof, though she feels she had deserved it.

"I should like to collar dear Hugo, and horsewhip him," he answers bluntly, looking her full in the face; then turns away and leaves her, and does not once look back as he rides away.

She was a little angry with him now. Why need he remind her that the man who, a little while ago, was her devoted follower, had, since her father's death and the discovery of his insolvency, never once been near her? Mary blushed hotly as she recalled her old friend's words. Yet she knew right well that if she had still been the only child of the Rector, Mr.

Fortescue would probably have declared himself weeks before, and poor Mary felt herself as completely jilted as if they had really come to an understanding and he had broken faith with her.

Mary remembered that Mr. Brooke had never seemed happy in "dear Hugo's" society, but she had never known him angry with her before on his account, and it vexed her strangely. How much she owed him! Were not she and her poor helpless mother indebted to his thoughtful kindness and liberality for house, furniture—including the careful selection of all Mrs. Bartlemy's familiar household gods—and income?

Mary well knew that she could never have earned the eighty pounds it pleased Squire Brooke she should call her salary as mistress, anywhere else, with so much done to lighten her labour, and so little exacted from her in return. Then, the sixty pounds he insisted on her taking as organist was quite an unnecessary gift out of his own free will. She would gladly have played the organ and trained the village choir for nothing, had he wished her to do so, and she was not blind to the fact that all he wanted was to secure to her mother and herself at least a competency.

She went indoors, and gave her mother a bunch of the hot-house grapes he had brought with him, placed the flowers that had covered them in a vase close beside the invalid's chair, and untied the parcel of books Mr. Brooke had selected from his own latest supply.

"How good! how true and unfailingly kind he had been to them!" thought she, and blamed herself again severely for so selfishly considering her own wounded pride, when he was trying his best to make up to her for what she had lost.

She read to her mother till the invalid dropped asleep, declaring the hero of the tale to be "almost as kind and good as dear Joshua Brooke himself." Mary could not refrain from tears at the unwitting reproach thus conveyed to her, and when she saw Mr. Brooke riding by in the cool of the evening, she threw down her work and ran out to stop him.

"I want to speak to you—to tell you something," she cried breathlessly; "do stop a minute—that is—if you have time," she added, blushing at her own confusion and the haste in which she had forgotten her hat.

"What is it, Mary?" he asked, dismounting, and looping the reins of the

little garden gate. "More complaints? Are you going to tell me that you cannot possibly be mistress in Ashleigh any longer? I am a poor ignoramus; till to-day I always thought that pride felt no pain."

"That isn't true," returned Mary, bending her head shamefacedly as she made her confession. "I am proud, and I did feel it, but I should be much more grieved if you—if my mother's one friend were angry with me. Please, Mr. Brooke, please, god-father, forgive me for thinking more of my own trivial, selfish troubles, than of your kindness and goodness."

"I don't want you to think of what you're pleased to call my kindness," said he rather gruffly, she thought, and pulled at Bayard's rein till the horse startled restlessly; and Mary, penitently aware that she was indirectly the cause of the Squire's very unusual roughness with his four-footed friend, immediately took the horse's head between her hands and began to caress him.

"I beg your pardon for my silliness," she went on; "I don't know what we should have done if it had not been for you. Oh, please don't be angry; you have quite frightened Bayard, and me too! I think I can bear everything else patiently, if only you will not be angry with me."

"I am not angry with you, silly child; but I'm not very fond of gratitude, and it's quite a misplaced term between us. You oblige me by being mistress of my own school, and organist of my own organ in my own church. I think I have a right, as I built both church and school, and endowed both, to select a mistress and an organist."

"Oh yes!" said Mary, who, still afraid of his anger, was ready to agree to anything, "but I am so——"

"You cannot make yourself the fitter for either post by depreciating yourself, Mary," he said, interrupting her; "and remember that, if even you succeeded, you depreciate my judgment in selecting you. If, as you say, you are really grateful, and don't wish me to be downright angry, pray say no more about it. You will thank me best by trying to be happy here."

"I will—I will, indeed!" she answered eagerly, and looked up at him with earnest eyes to see if he were growing more like his old self, but a sudden glow of colour overspread her face as she met the astonished gaze of the two ladies, who, a little while before, so thoroughly discussed her present and her past.

Mrs. Horniblow bowed distantly to Mr. Brooke, as if she could not be quite sure of his identity in such a place and with such a companion, and he returned her salutation in like manner, whilst to Mrs. Fortescue's clearly attempted one-sided greeting of himself, whilst she ignored the young schoolmistress altogether, he paid no attention. The lady repeated her one-sided salute, and Mr. Brooke repeated his significant ignoring of any attempt on her part to greet him, as apart from the girl who stood at his side.

But Mary could not so repress her indignation, and, as the two ladies disappeared round the corner, she exclaimed, with flushed cheeks:

"Now, Mr. Brooke, you see for yourself that it is no imagination on my part. The Rector's wife does not consider herself bound by common politeness to salute me—and—and——"

"Comfort yourself with the thought that in such matters you are the better instructed," replied Mr. Brooke, who had been gazing vacantly down the road, and now turned abruptly, looked at Mary earnestly, and she thought enquiringly, then again down the road, twisted his pleasant mouth all awry, and finally loosing Bayard, leaped into his saddle, waved his hand, lifted his hat, and was gone.

Mary was amazed at this abrupt departure. Never before had her old friend left her in such a fashion, and for a moment youthful and wounded vanity had the uppermost place in her mind.

"Does he mean to slight me too?" she asked herself with an indignant curl of her lip, and looked after him with tears in her eyes. If he forsook them—if he neglected them, they should be lonely indeed.

But the colour rushed to her face, and her heart beat fast as her eye followed Mr. Brooke's horse walking leisurely along the grass by the roadside.

Always careful of the beast he rode, he seemed now to be doubly so, assiduously choosing out the softest and greenest track for Bayard's iron shoes. Nor did he abate an iota of his care for his horse, patting his shiny neck, stroking the glossy skin that Mary had so fondled a minute before, when a rather languid voice hailed him in drawling accents from the back of a thin-limbed nag, more suited to a lady than the athletic-looking young parson who bestrode it, still a few paces distant.

"Charming day this, Squire."

Not a look did the Squire of Ashleigh

grant in answer to this remark, which was repeated a little more vigorously.

"Charming day, I say, Squire."

Mr. Brooke rode on steadily until he was abreast of the young man, never raising his eyes till they were almost side by side, then with a glance of the most perfect indifference, he looked Hugo Fortescue over, calmly turned his gaze before him again, and rode slowly on at the same pace.

"The cut direct, by Jove!" muttered the clergyman, slashing at his guiltless steed, who having a second previously been ordered to halt, was now peremptorily hidden to "go on, you brute." Not another word did the young man utter till he asked old Margaret at the school cottage if her mistress was at home.

"Deed yes, sir, for she never stirs out," replied she, "but the mistress sees no strangers, sir."

"Ah, to be sure—yes; but I fancied I might venture to call, as I saw the Squire's horse here just now," said Mr. Fortescue.

"So you did, sir, but Mr. Brooke's a friend of the family."

Margaret put on her most dignified air to accompany this little rebuff, and succeeded in overawing the young clergyman, whom in her heart she was accusing as a base delinquent in re her young mistress.

"Will you kindly take my card in to Miss Bartlemy, and say that I—I beg she will grant me a few words with her."

Margaret received the card not very graciously, and departed.

"The young mistress is obliged, but she sees no strangers," she returned to say.

"Beg her to grant me one moment," he entreated; and as he spoke, Mary came from the little sitting-room, stood in Margaret's quickly vacated position, and said quietly, with only a very slight additional colour:

"I cannot ask you to come in, Mr. Fortescue; my mother is an invalid, we have only one sitting-room, and we do not receive visitors."

"Nevertheless, Miss Bartlemy, I have just passed Mr. Brooke, who has been calling here."

"Mr. Brooke is our one exception," returned Mary reddening, though she kept her voice steady; "he is a very old friend."

"Then you do not consider me a friend?" said the young curate in a chagrined voice. "You have put the past behind you—you discard—you dismiss me?"

"I think, Mr. Fortescue," Mary answered, with a stiff smile on her lip, "that with all due regard to facts, you may be said to have dismissed yourself."

"Oh! Miss Bartlemy," Mr. Fortescue said in a low, impassioned, whispering voice, for he was not sure that Mrs. Bartlemy was too complete a wreck to be able to overhear their conversation, and he suspected that old Margaret might not be devoid of the failing usually laid upon her sex; "oh! Miss Bartlemy, cannot you, who know me so well, who know my dependence upon my mother—my honoured, but peculiar mother—you do, you must know how prejudiced she is in some things—how especially prejudiced in favour of a rich marriage for her only son. Surely, oh! surely, you could understand—you could feel for my difficulties; oh! surely—!"

"I am not at all sure that I understand you as you wish to be understood, Mr. Fortescue," said Mary. Then, as he again began to protest vehemently, she stopped him with a little eager gesture of her hand, peremptory, too: "Let me speak, Mr. Fortescue. I think I do understand your meaning—at least, what you meant to say just now, or you would not have come at all. You say Mrs. Fortescue is prejudiced in favour of a rich marriage for her only son. As you are that only son, and as I am only a poor schoolmistress, there is no need to go any further into the matter. I should not fulfil your mother's expectations; and, pardon me, if, as a concession to my own pride, I tell you that under no circumstances would I condescend to—to—"

She struggled bravely, but she could not finish her sentence; the thoughts more than the words choked her; she grew scarlet, and was obliged to look down to hide the tears of vexation that stood in her eyes.

He thought she was relenting.

"And you will not listen to me?" he asked, in so tragically despairing a voice, that its comicality struck her and restored her to calmness.

"No," she answered, "I will not—decidedly not," and, bowing coldly, she retreated into the little sitting-room, leaving her rejected suitor to ride away, only half sorry at this untoward result of his visit to the school cottage.

"After all, she's right," he remarked to himself, giving his horse an angry cut over the ears, in spite of this conclusion: "I didn't behave well to her, and

though I tried to make up to her by proposing, I'm half glad she has refused me; though she's a very nice girl still, and wonderfully pretty, but there would have been a precious row with the mater, and as it is, I needn't say a word about it."

Two or three days after, as Mary was watering the geraniums and other plants with which the Squire's gardener had filled her little garden, the smart page from the rectory put his face just above the garden gate, and asked if this was the schoolmistress's cottage.

"It is," answered she; "and I am the schoolmistress. Do you wish to be entered on the registers, my little lad?"

This was a gratuitous insult on Mary's part, but she felt angry, and she vented her anger on this poor little fledgling-footman, who became respectful directly she snubbed him.

"If you please, 'm, I've brought a note from mistress," and, opening the gate, he took an envelope from his tight little pocket, and handed it over with one hand, whilst with the forefinger of the other he made a feint to cleave his little skull open.

The new Rector's wife having so instructed her domestic to make his obeisance to ladies, little Jack Tom, being snubbed, at once concluded that, albeit a schoolmistress, Miss Bartlemy belonged to the class to be saluted.

Mary took the note unwillingly. The same writing had already conveyed sundry peremptory orders as to "needlework for the rectory," and asked, with a vague foreboding that it would contain something unpleasant, if not insulting:

"Is any answer required, do you know?"

"Mistress didn't say, 'm," replied Buttons; "I can wait till you see, 'm."

Mary turned a little away from little Buttons's curious eyes, and opened the letter, read it, and turning sharply round upon the little messenger, said:

"There is no answer," in such a tone as sent him quickly about his business, more than ever persuaded that Miss Bartlemy was "a lady, and no mistake."

And this was what the letter contained. To say what it conveyed would be impossible. "Everything gratuitously insulting and abominable," Mary told herself as she read it again when the boy was gone.

"The Rectory, Ashlegh.

"DR. MISS BARTLEMY,—My husband agrees with me in thinking it inad-

visable that so young a woman as yourself your mother's condition precluding the possibility of her being considered a sufficient protection, should receive the visits of single gentlemen. There is great danger of scandal to the school, in consequence of Mr. Joshua Brooke's and Mr. Fortescue's visits at your cottage. Mr. Brooke's age by no means warrants your receiving him under your present circumstances, which demand great circumspection. Mr. Fortescue's still less so.

"I am, yours truly,

"JANE HORNIBLOW."

Mary's cheeks reddened with anger as she read Mrs. Horniblow's communication. "Horrid woman!" was her inward comment, growing hotter and hotter as she realised that even their old friend, Mr. Brooke, was to be forbidden to visit them. And why?—because Mr. and Mrs. Horniblow chose to consider his age on a par with Hugo Fortescue's.

"How supremely ridiculous!" Mary said, and laughed scornfully at the idea. "An old man like that! A man who carried me about as a baby. My godfather, too. Mr. Fortescue, now, is another matter. But his visits are not likely to be repeated, I should fancy. I am sure that his dear mother will see that he keeps clear of the school cottage. But what care I? I snap my fingers at both of them!"

"Who are you snapping your fingers at, my lady?" asked "Old Josh," opening the tabooed garden-gate in all innocence.

"The Rev. Hugo and Mrs. Fortescue, and the Rev. Henry Horniblow and lady," answered Mary promptly. "But, Mr. Brooke, go back again, please—don't put your foot inside that gate;" and, with the old familiar freedom of her childhood, she put both hands on his arms, and playfully backed him out again, shut the gate, and stood on the inside facing him. "I don't know whether even so much is allowed," she added, holding her head doubtfully on one side.

"Allowed? What do you mean, Mary? What new whim is this, you pert child? Have you small-pox in the cottage?"

"Whim, indeed! You may well ask; but you must go elsewhere for an explanation. There are orders from head-quarters just arrived, that Mr. Joshua Brooke—that's you, isn't it?"

She paused a moment, and looked saucily at him.

"I suppose so," said the Squire, think-

ing to himself how pretty Mary looked under this sudden flow of spirits.

"Well, then, orders are issued that Mr. Joshua Brooke and the Rev. Hugo Fortescue are not to be admitted at the school cottage."

"Mary, you are joking, you naughty girl; but whether or no, don't couple me with that pup," he remonstrated.

"I'm not joking at all, Mr. Brooke," Mary replied with heightened colour, and angry eyes. "It is a fact. You and his reverence are forbidden to call at the school cottage."

"And pray, do you forbid it, you imperious one? and if so, why so? I say nothing of that—ahem!—of his reverence. But why do you forbid my calling here, Mary? Has your last interview with that—I humbly beg his pardon—his reverence, anything to do with this new arrangement?" and the Squire on the other side of the gate looked fierce also.

"Nothing at all. It is not my doing in any way. I certainly might taboo his reverence, but I shouldn't wish to turn away the only friend poor mother and I have."

Mary's lip shook like that of a fretful child about to break forth and weep, but she resolutely repressed the inclination; and when she looked at him her eyes had only a very soft and becoming moisture.

"No, it is not I; I have received orders from the Rector, through his wife, to taboo both you and——"

She would have cried had she tried to say another word, and his wide-open eyes bespoke his astonishment at the Rector's audacity.

"Mary!" he exclaimed, "you don't mean it—I can't believe it. He—she—they would never venture to——"

To remove his eyes from her half-crying face, she took the obnoxious note from her waistband and handed it to him.

"There, that will explain. It's really too good a joke!" And she coloured and laughed uneasily, watching his face as he read it. "Now do you believe it?" she said as she saw he had come to the signature.

"I scarcely can," he muttered in a voice of suppressed passion. "The vulgar donkeys! And he thinks, does he, that because you are schoolmistress in Ashleigh he is not to treat you as a lady? Impertinent idiots! What have you said, Mary? What have you done?"

"Nothing," said Mary, trying to appear

indifferent. When she saw her godfather so angry she felt inclined to show herself calm. "I am only an underling, you know. Of course, I must submit—I must obey my orders."

"Of course, you must do nothing of the kind!" cried Joshua Brooke. "Do you think I'm going to be ordered out by such a——"

"But surely, Mr. Brooke, you wouldn't wish to cause a scandal in Ashleigh!" suggested Mary satirically.

"Rubbish!" growled the Squire. "I say, Mary, I'm not going to stand here any longer. I want to speak to you. I've something that must be settled to-night, and this twaddle of those folk down there only makes it the more imperative. Let's go in." He led the way, and Mary followed; but at the little porch he stopped. "Let's sit here," he said. "Mary," he went on, when she had seated herself on one side and he on the other, "are you really vexed about this, or are you only amused?"

She bit her lips to keep back the tears, but they would come, so she turned her head away to hide them.

"Do you think a schoolmistress can feel, Mr. Brooke?" she asked ironically. "Of course, I don't care a bit. I thoroughly enjoy the insult; I thoroughly appreciate the delicacy and tact with which the Rector's wife has acquitted herself. Of course, I take it as a compliment; I am really only amused."

The bitter tone in which she spoke showed him plainly how much she felt it. Bitterness and irony were foreign to her nature, he well knew, and it grieved him sorely.

"I am as vexed as you can be, Mary," he said; "and more so, for this is all really my fault. I have brought this indignity—this abominable rudeness—upon you through my own folly—my own selfishness."

"Your folly? Your selfishness? Oh, Mr. Brooke!" Mary exclaimed sorrowfully; "don't make fun of me. I know I've been foolish and selfish, but I mean to be wiser. Please don't make fun of me!" And Mary, who had restrained her feelings as long as she could, burst into tears and hid her face in her hands.

The Squire's face grew still more pained at this double proof of how deeply she had been cut by Mrs. Horniblow's insinuations. He knit his sharply-outlined eye-brows till they met, with a doubtful, troubled expres-

sion, and finally leaned forward as if to say something consolatory or sympathising, but did not, and sat up again silent and considering.

Mary, however, soon put an end to her tears. She was too brave and too proud to give way for long; she suddenly uncovered her face and looked at him all smiles, sprinkled only with the remains of her tears.

"Now, if you'll be good, I will," she said archly, drying her eyes energetically. "I'm not going to worry myself about Mrs. Horniblow's imaginations any more."

"But what shall you do, Mary?" he asked gravely.

"Do! What about? My orders? Obey them, of course, or I shall be cashiered," Mary replied.

"I think not, Mary; if they did that, I should put one of my own men in the school cottage, and leave Mr. Horniblow to pay the next schoolmistress himself, and find her lodgings as well. No! I don't think they would be unwise enough to do that; it would cost too much."

"Let's say no more about it," said Mary; "I am getting quite bad-tempered over it. Pray, come in to mother and let us forget all about it."

"But you must decide upon some course, Mary," replied the Squire.

"I have quite decided," replied Mary. "Of course you mustn't come any more. It's very ridiculous, but it's not my doing." And her lips quivered.

"Yes; I mustn't come any more," said Mr. Brooke. "But how about the other—that pup?" he asked.

"Mr. Fortescue? Oh, he won't come again," Mary answered decidedly, but colouring and stammering. "I—I—he—I told him that; but there is no use in going over it all again, Mr. Brooke; and it isn't fair to him."

"Oh!" ejaculated the Squire, with a sigh of content. "I suppose, then—well, Mary—if you don't wish it, I won't say a word more about that—that poor young fellow. I can afford to pity him now. And yet, Mary, my child, you would have taken him if you had gone on living at the rectory, and he had gone on courting you, eh?" He asked it softly and tenderly.

Mary blushed.

"I don't quite know. I can't be sure. I feel now as if I never could have cared for him. I felt very angry and contemptuous when he came. I was too angry to listen to him patiently."

"But then?—in the old days, I mean,

Mary—you loved him?" suggested the Squire.

"I don't know. No—I think not. I don't think, godfather, that it could have been real love, or I should love him still. And I am quite sure about that," answered Mary, growing very hot over this confession.

"Are you sure, do you think, Mary? Or is it pride that makes you hide your love, or fancy you don't feel it? You are proud, you know, and a little quick-tempered. You were put out with your old godfather just now, remember. If you had still been wealthy Miss Bartlemy, how would it have been with you then, think you?"

Mary bent her head consideringly for a few serious moments.

"No," she said, lifting it briskly, as if she had come to a clear and definite conclusion; "I can't find any love for him in my heart at all now. If there ever was any, it has left no trace. No; I am sure I never loved Hugo Fortescue. I think I liked him to admire me and flatter me; but, no, I'm sure I never loved him, and I don't believe he ever really loved me."

"Mary," said the Squire, in so hesitating a voice that she looked up at him in surprise, "have you ever wondered that—that—I have never married? Perhaps, though," he added, after a moment's disappointment at her apparent unconcern, "it never occurred to you to think about it?"

"I don't think it ever did," she said simply. "I don't know why it never should have occurred to me. Now you ask me, it seems odd that you haven't married before getting so—I mean, before getting as old as you are." She felt that she was treading on dangerous ground, as she saw an unwonted cloud on his face. "Of course you seem old to me; I have known you so long. I was a baby when you first saw me, Mr. Brooke, you know," she went on, trying to atone for her maladroitness.

"I was only nineteen then, Mary," he said; "and I am only forty now."

"No, oh no!" she agreed eagerly, for she saw there was something unusual in his voice and manner, and feared she had unconsciously vexed him. "But then, you see, I am only just twenty-one. It has always seemed to me that you were ever so much older than me. But, have I vexed you? Why do you look so troubled? I didn't know you minded being old. People so often call you 'Old Josh Brooke,'" she said naively.

"Do they? I don't think I mind being thought old, Mary, except, perhaps, when it reminds me of one thing."

He paused, and his usually hearty sounding voice had so sad and tender an echo in it, that Mary was certain he had a sorrowful story to tell her.

"I am quite sure, godfather," she exclaimed, "that you are in love; that you are meaning and talking of some particular, real person; and it is a young girl, now, isn't it? Do tell me! I think you ought to tell me, because I guessed it myself. Ever since you came in here, and began to talk about why you never married, I felt sure you had a story to tell me. Do tell me, please!"

And Mary settled herself in her seat, smoothed her muslin apron, and folded her hands in demure waiting, with great interest in her attentive eyes, but a little curl of pleased amusement on her sweet lips.

"A story, Mary?" he repeated, smiling at her. "Yes, I have, indeed; but I am 'so old,' you know, Mary, and you—you are 'so young' that I am almost ashamed, almost afraid, to tell you. It is the 'old, old story,' Mary."

He spoke so hesitatingly, so timidly and sadly, that she tried at once to reassure him.

"Never mind," she said, "I like the old ones best, like the old songs. Go on; please tell me."

"You will laugh at me, Mary. You think me old, yet my heart is green still, and I love a girl nineteen years younger than myself."

He stopped abruptly, and she counted up rapidly on her fingers.

"Forty—nineteen. Then she is twenty-one—just my own age. Oh, I shall love her dearly, I am sure, Mr. Brooke, for I love you so. Do tell me her name, and all about her! When shall I see her?"

He hesitated, looking into her eager, unconscious face, the colour rising to his own, and fading again. Then, in a low, earnest voice, he said:

"Her name is—Mary Bartlemy."

LOST IN THE VALLEY.

By the Author of "Driven of the Wind," etc.

A STORY IN SIXTEEN CHAPTERS.

CHAPTER III.

FOR a few seconds after Miss Douglas's departure there was an embarrassed pause. Then Mrs. O'Hara crossed to Eveline

and laid her hand affectionately on her shoulder.

"I am afraid that crazy Scotchwoman worried you, dear," she said; "but we all know what Janet Douglas is like when she takes a prejudice against anyone, and you must not let her rudeness distress you."

"No, I do not," Mrs. Douglas answered. She was not looking at her hostess, but at Maurice, curiously, as if to watch what effect the foregoing scene had had upon him. In truth, he was in a state of puzzled indignation, utterly certain that Eveline Douglas was cruelly slandered, and wondering what so sweet a woman could ever have done to awaken such hostile feelings in the mind of another woman—wondering, too, a little at her calmness now. For, except that she was a shade paler than before, she seemed by this time quite undisturbed, and bore the effect of such insults almost—the thought would suggest itself—as if she were used to them. It was either Christian forbearance or marvellous tact, he supposed, that enabled her now to turn to the universal genius and apologise sweetly for her relative's unseemly behaviour, then presently to lead the conversation on to the subject of Scotch character and Scotch prejudices generally. She talked a little more than usual, but not in any unduly excited fashion, and stayed about half an hour longer.

As Maurice was saying good-bye to her she held out her hand and detained his fingers a moment within hers, as she said low and eagerly:

"You will come to see me to-morrow!"

"Of course," he answered smiling, "if you will let me."

He was curious to know whether she would allude to yesterday's scene when he called the next day, or whether, with her customary reserve, she would be silent on the subject.

He had not long to speculate. Almost as soon as he was ushered into the salon Eveline appeared at the door of the smaller room. She was wearing again the long pale blue velvet gown in which he had seen her before, and at her throat was a spray of lilies fastened by a diamond arrow. Her cheeks were flushed, her eyes sparkling; some unwonted excitement made her look younger than she had ever seemed before. She took his hand and drew him into the smaller room.

"How well you look!" he exclaimed.

"Do I?" she said; "I'm so glad to see you. I almost thought—almost feared—that you would not come."

"Why?" he asked, surprised.

"After yesterday. After the cruel things you heard said to me."

"What difference could they make," he asked, "when I know they are undeserved?"

"You know—you know," she repeated, looking intently into his face; "come, sit down here." She gently pushed him into an arm-chair, then sank into another, as usual with her back to the light. Taking a little white kitten, that was playing at her feet, on to her knee, she began to restlessly twine her fingers in and out of its hair as she talked.

"I want to explain it all to you," she said.

"But I don't require an explanation. Don't you think it would be wiser not to allude to a scene that pained me and must certainly have pained you still more; at least just yet?"

"I would rather that you should know," she said, "and for that you must let me bore you with a little personal history. Douglas was the name of my step-father, a very wealthy Scotch mill-owner. He was an eccentric man, and not very kind to me. It was during my holidays when I was home from school, that he took my mother and me for a tour in Europe, on which I met my husband."

She spoke the last words very slowly, and then paused for a moment as if the recollection was too painful for her.

"My step-father did not wish me to marry him; but my mother rather encouraged me, and, with her knowledge, I ran away from school and married at seventeen. Ten years ago! It seems even longer," she added to herself, a dreamy absent look stealing over her face.

"Your husband is an Italian, is he not?" asked Maurice.

"Is?" she repeated, raising her head and looking at him in a bewildered manner. "Did you not know?—surely you knew—my husband is dead."

"No, indeed," said Maurice truthfully, "I had no idea of it."

She did not speak for a moment. Her eyes, fixed on his face, looked half-wondering, half-vexed. Then she gave a little low laugh.

"It seems so strange to me," she said, "that you should never have even taken the trouble——" she stopped.

"To make enquiries on the subject," he answered calmly; "well, I did; but no one seemed able to tell me more than you did

"And now that you do know," she asked, an instinct of coquetry imparting an enticing charm to her voice and smile, "are you glad or sorry?"

"Why should I be glad or sorry?"

"Ah, I only thought you—you—might regret not being able to make my husband's acquaintance," she said, a little impatiently.

Maurice was not quite so calm and immoveable as his manner suggested; but his reserve and a habit of caution that was part of his temperament, were counterbalancing safeguards against his ignorance of the world and his naturally affectionate disposition. Also, the strongest depths of his nature had as yet never been touched, and his mind was so perfectly calm and pure that the announcement that Eveline Douglas, the most fascinating woman he had ever met, was not the wife of another man, but free for him or any other to make love to, brought to him at this moment only a feeling of pity for her lonely condition.

To Eveline, accustomed to the sight of passions that weary and destroy, this state of mind in a young and handsome man, who evidently sought her society, was inexplicable. She was too undoubtedly beautiful to be very vain, and too sweet-tempered to be permanently annoyed by this phenomenal indifference to her charms. So, after indulging in a momentary sentiment of pique and surprise at his coldness, she reflected that all the misery of her own life had been brought there by an exactly opposite quality, and her mood changed as she looked kindly across into his fair, boyish face, and frank blue eyes.

"You look about twelve to-day, Mr. Wilde," she said, smiling at him.

"Do you know you will be overwhelmed when I tell you how old I really am," he said.

"I think I can guess. Just the age I was when I married."

"A few days more," he said, laughing.

And Eveline Douglas, whose thoughts at this moment were more with the past than the present, believed him, and resumed her story.

"I went abroad after my marriage, and I only saw my mother again once before her death. She was with me in Italy when my child died of the fever there. So, three years ago, I found myself utterly alone; mother, husband, child, all were dead, and I was penniless among strangers

—worse, among enemies. Then, suddenly my step-father died, leaving a large fortune. All his relations had been hovering about him in his last illness in their careful Scotch fashion, thinking to find themselves provided for. Janet Douglas was his sister. But he was an eccentric, unreasonable man, and to spite them all—for it could have been for no other reason—he left the whole of his fortune unreservedly to me. His family tried vainly to upset the will, and no words can describe their hatred of me ever since. Indeed," she added, while her eyes became filled with tears and a hopeless look crept over her face, "I am so much disliked that it is only the very poor who will even take my money, so I have to spend it on myself. I love beautiful things, and collecting them makes me happy. I travelled about when I was first a widow, but having constantly to meet fresh people frightened me. So, six months ago I settled here, to be near Dr. Grantley and the O'Haras, who were old friends of my mother—but Dr. Grantley is so wise and cold, and so severe in his judgments, and the O'Haras have each other. So lately I have wanted a friend for myself, and that I seem to have found in you, so you must let me be a sort of substitute for your mother while you are here," she said, smiling sweetly.

"You shall be just what you like," he answered; "you have been wonderfully good to me. But why do I call you Mrs. Douglas when that cannot be your name?"

"That is very simply explained. My step-father made a stipulation in his will that I should take his name, and I was very glad indeed to do so."

Maurice felt he could ask no more. He would have liked to have heard something of her husband, and of those seven years of married life to which she seemed so unwilling to refer, but which appeared inexpressively painful to her remembrance. He did not even know her real name, and wondered why she had been so glad to change it. What sad experiences, he asked himself, had brought those deep lines round her eyes; that timid, shrinking fear of strangers to her mind; that reserve, that dread of society? She seemed anxious to make the reason of yesterday's occurrence clear to him.

"So now you understand why Janet Douglas spoke to me in that way," she persisted.

"Yes. It was most cruel, most unjustifiable," he added warmly.

She looked at him very kindly.

"You will always take my part like that, will you not?" she asked. "Indeed you may. For any harm I have ever done I have suffered—suffered so bitterly that Heaven knows I cannot deserve much more punishment."

"I cannot believe in your ever doing any living creature wilful harm," he said. "You seem to me to be gentleness itself."

"Try to think so always," she said earnestly, "whatever you may hear."

She was more excited than he had ever seen her, though her words were spoken as low and as slowly as ever. By an impulse of sympathy he held out his hand. Hers, when she laid it in his, was cold as ice. Maurice felt excited too. There was something so gentle and appealing about this lovely woman, surrounded by everything that can make life beautiful and happy, and yet helplessly frightened at the thought of losing his friendship and esteem. He was still holding her hand when a knock at the door startled them both. It was Hélène, with a little note in a man's handwriting, directed to Madame Douglas.

Eveline opened it, and grew very white as she read it twice steadily through. Then she glanced at Maurice. He was turning over some music on the piano, so that he did not see her movement. She hesitated a moment, then turning to Hélène she said:

"That gentleman, M. de Villars, who has called twice lately, will be here in about twenty minutes. You are to show him into the salon and say I will receive him."

Hélène was too well trained to show more than a momentary look of astonishment at this order, and Maurice, turning quickly as he heard it, saw the look as she left the room.

"Mrs. Douglas," he said, advancing towards her, "I hope you won't think me impertinent; but if that man, M. de Villars, is not a friend of yours, do not let him become one. You called me your friend, and so I am taking advantage of my position to say this to you. I am sure Dr. Grantley would say the same. M. de Villars is the man I saw speak to you on the stairs the first day I came. I have met him since at the house of a friend of mine, who told me a good deal about him, and I am certain he is a scoundrel. He will only annoy you, and——"

"You are quite mistaken in thinking I

need make a friend of him," she said, interrupting him. "But he is always worrying me to see him, so will it not be better to get it over? And in this note—in this note he says he knows friends of mine, so that I cannot possibly refuse to see him, you understand."

"I beg your pardon," said Maurice stiffly. "Of course, you know best. I had no right to interfere. Now I must say good-bye."

"No," she said, coming close to him, and laying her soft hands upon his sleeve. "You are my friend, and you have a right to interfere. See, I want to ask a favour of you. Will you stay here until M. de Villars goes?"

"I am sorry I cannot," he answered, flushing hotly. "Why do you receive him at all?"

"I must see him," she said hopelessly. "And, since you will not stay, since I have no one I can ask to be here with me, no one I can trust to help me, I must receive him alone."

She withdrew her hands from his arm. Her face had grown ghastly pale. Maurice relented.

"I don't like doing it in the least," he said, "and I can't see why I should. But if you put it like that, there is nothing else I can do."

"Ah, that is right," she cried gladly. "Now, wait for me in the larger salon. I must get ready my society smile," she added, laughing, "to receive a stranger."

But when the door closed on Maurice her laugh died away. A helpless, hunted look came into her brown eyes, like that of some timid animal at bay. Taking the Marquis's letter from her pocket, she read it through again.

"Madame," it began, "need I tell you that for days and nights I have been waiting, watching, living for the chance of an interview with you, that I may meet you face to face, to tell you of my devotion, my adoration. My passion for you may, if not too severely crushed, cloud my memory, and make me forget the evening when, the happiest man for the moment in Florence, I waltzed at the Palazzo Ravelli with the beautiful Countess de Montecalvo. We are both older by five years now. She may have forgotten me, but in five—ten—years, in a lifetime even, one does not forget a face, a figure, like hers. I am happy to find that she is not altogether solitary; that she enjoys, in her lonely mo-

ments, the society of a charming English boy. But my love for her is such that I cannot peaceably allow a happiness to another which is altogether denied to me; and unless, in a quarter of an hour, I may also bask in the sunshine of her presence, and share her smiles, I shall feel compelled to wait for our young friend, and enlighten him on the subject of the former history of the lady whom we both adore. As the cousin of Jeanne de Mornay, I am in a position to speak fully; and, as the son of rigid English parents, he will no doubt be ready fully to forgive, and to remain, as I do, the humblest of your slaves.

"HENRI DE VILLARS."

"Cousin of Jeanne de Mornay!" Eveline repeated. "Good Heaven! when shall I have peace? How can I escape from this hideous past that seems to haunt my steps? If this boy knew everything—if this villain, whose insolent love-making I remember, were to tell him the story—he would not insult me as the others do, but he would shun me—leave me; and I should be alone again—always alone. Alone with terrible memories; alone with spectres of the dead!"

She shuddered from head to foot, and, burying her face in her hands, remained a few moments motionless; then, composing herself by an effort, she entered the salon just before the Marquis made his appearance. He was elaborately dressed in the ultra-fashionable style peculiar to him, and detestable to an English mind, and in his large black eyes shone a look of triumph. Persistent indulgence in every vice and dissipation congenial to him had already marred and coarsened an originally handsome face and figure. Such as he was, he was voted dangerous by French mammas, irresistible by French "ingénues," while to Maurice he appeared simply a repulsive animal.

He greeted Mrs. Douglas with effusion, and adopted the line of first ignoring Maurice altogether, and then endeavouring to make him appear absurd. He chose to suppose that the young Englishman was still of tender years, and asked if he was spending his holidays from school in Paris.

"Oh, no," Maurice answered. "I have left school, and finished my education, both of mind and—manners. Have you?"

Henri de Villars looked at him savagely for a moment; then he affected to laugh.

"But you are most entertaining, Mr.

Wilde. I must introduce you to some of my friends at the Cercle; they will be much amused at you. You shall sup with us to-night."

"Thank you, I am engaged," said Maurice coldly.

"Ah! the English mamma does not allow you to go out to supper," said the Marquis, laughing still more offensively. "But she shall not know."

"Thank you," said Maurice sweetly, "but my parents never interfere with my amusements. They know that when I want to go anywhere, I go. When I am not likely to enjoy myself, I find an excuse."

He was shaking a little with excitement at his own audacity. But it was a new and not unpleasant situation to be snubbing a Marquis and protecting a Countess, and he rather enjoyed it. He was encouraged, too, by the approving and amused smile directed to him by his hostess, and by his rival's evident discomfiture.

De Villars contented himself by laughing scornfully, and leaving him in peace after this last sally, concentrating his attentions upon Eveline.

Maurice grew hot with indignation at the covert insolence of his manner and the bold admiration in his eyes. He was not more witty and entertaining than most young Frenchmen in good society, but he had a certain glib raciness of speech that was amusing at first, and a partiality for risky little anecdotes and scandals, which disgusted Maurice, and which, had he known French better, would have disgusted him still more. As it was, he wondered how his beautiful, pure-minded friend could sit there, as immovable, as expressionless as a waxen figure, showing indeed but little interest in the Marquis's conversation, but showing on the other hand, no indignation.

A powerful longing to kick De Villars, or to punch his head in a straightforward English fashion, arose in Maurice's usually placid mind. It was an intolerable penance for him to remain in the room, but she had wished it; and De Villars, who had intended to outstay the other visitor, was at length forced to rise.

"Have you been in the Bois to-day yet, Madame?" he said, after elaborately expressing the delight he had felt at meeting her.

"Not yet, monsieur."

"May I be permitted to accompany you?"

She stared at him coldly a moment, and then said, in the direct tones her sweet voice could assume:

"Thank you, I always go alone."

"But if Madame would honour me to-day," said De Villars, speaking so low and rapidly that Maurice could not distinguish his words, "we could then converse about old times and compare notes concerning my cousin and your friend"—he emphasized the word strongly—"Jeanne de Mornay. You would like to hear about her, I am sure, Madame, and I should like to talk about her. But that is impossible before a stranger; unless you yourself do not mind whether this young gentleman hears our conversation?"

Eveline Douglas looked scared and irresolute. After a moment's hesitation she said, in a hard mechanical tone:

"I am only going round the lake, M. de Villars. You may accompany me if you like. The carriage must be here already."

"I will wait for you then, Madame," said the Marquis, looking with insolent triumph at Maurice, who was utterly bewildered and disgusted at Eveline's conduct. He would not see her appealing glance as he stiffly took his leave of her. He was very angry, and he meant her to see it. She looked hopelessly at his fair face, severe in its look of cold displeasure, then, with a little sigh, she left the room to dress for her drive. Maurice gave a frigid bow in response to the condescending affability of the Marquis's adieux, and a little later, leaning from his balcony, he saw the Countess's victoria drive away with herself and the Marquis inside it.

"Insufferable cad!" exclaimed the young Englishman. "What a fool I was to make a friend of any woman under forty! Women, when they are young, and especially when they are beautiful, are always the most incomprehensible, irrational, untrustworthy creatures, only fit to be looked at. I shan't look at this one much longer. In a week, Mrs. Douglas, you may get someone else to play propriety for you while you encourage insolent puppies; but you won't get Maurice Wilde."

But in this way the Marquis de Villars won his bet within the prescribed fortnight, and Paragon remained in his stables.

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

ALL THE YEAR ROUND

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A DATELESS BARGAIN.

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CHAPTER XV.

"MOTHER, dear, let me into your room to-night to act maid for you," cried Joyce, taking her mother's arm as she went out of the drawing-room that night on the heels of her departing guests. "Let me carry your train for you—so—up the stairs. I want to talk to you about the evening. What a number of people you managed to get together!—the rooms were packed from wall to wall. I never felt so near suffocation in my life before."

"Ah!" answered Mrs. Shenstone complacently, as she subsided into a comfortable easy-chair beside her dressing-room fire. "Lady Cranbury need not have been so terribly afraid of my worrying her for introductions; I have got on very well without them, haven't I?"

"Lady Cranbury was a goose," said Joyce, curling herself up on the opossum rug at her mother's feet. "Mother, who were those girls in green, with yellow complexions and pink mittens, who sang at the top of their voices about the 'far, far West; the land I love best'?"

"Oh, those were Americans—friends of Sylvia's—I've forgotten their name."

"And that nice-looking old gentleman who showed you so much attention?"

"Ah, did you notice it, Joyce?" said Mrs. Shenstone, looking pleased and flattered. "Sylvia said it was so. But I've such a horror of seeming vain or easily flattered that I told her it was all her imagination. That was old General Bullen."

Joyce stifled her annoyance by asking

another rapid question. "And that tall, thin man, bald and bearded, with eyes like a ferret's and ears like a bat's, who was he?"

"How you describe people, Joyce! He was another friend of Sylvia's, also an American. I've forgotten his name."

"And that beautiful girl all in blue, with a dove's eyes and the walk of a peacock?"

"I didn't see her, Joyce. To my way of thinking all the girls in the room to-night were remarkably plain, not to say ugly."

"Didn't see her! Why, I saw you write down her address and promise to call upon her."

"That woman! You call her a girl! Why, she looked years older than I do, and as for good looks——"

"Was she a friend of Sylvia's, and also an American?" interrupted Joyce, anxious to get to the subject she had at heart, and feeling she had introduced it very diplomatically.

"Yes, dear, she was. But as for beauty! Dear me, you couldn't have looked at her very closely to describe her in that fashion. She hadn't a good feature in her face."

"I daresay you're right, mother; I didn't study her much, I'll admit. But do you know, it seems to me there were a great deal too many Americans who were 'friends of Sylvia's' in the room to-night."

Mrs. Shenstone's reply to this for the moment made Joyce think she must be hearing with another person's ears, and after all did not understand her own mother tongue, so totally unprepared was she for the sentence.

"Well, dear, that is exactly what occurred to me, and, between ourselves, I'm beginning to think I've had nearly enough of Sylvia and her brother too."

Joyce felt as if she must jump up, clap her hands, and sing as loud as any skylark.

She answered, however, tranquilly enough, as though from its very beginning she had foreseen this satisfactory ending to the intimacy. "I felt sure, mother, you'd sooner or later get tired of the pair of them. Sylvia may be all very well for a day, but for two whole months—oh-h!"

And the shudder which accompanied her "oh-h" was suggestive of east winds and a black frost, at least.

"Well, between ourselves, Joyce," said Mrs. Shenstone, unclasping her bracelets and pulling off her gloves, "I think she has presumed a little on my kindness to her. It is true I gave her permission to invite one or two of her friends to my evenings, but I did not expect to find the room full of them."

"And the brother is every whit as bad as the sister," Joyce went on, waxing bold in her attack. "I'm sure, when you told him you'd be pleased to see him now and then, you didn't expect to have him morning, noon, and night in the house."

"Captain Buckingham has annoyed me once or twice lately, and I've spoken of it to Sylvia," here Mrs. Shenstone fell into a slightly aggrieved tone. "At one time he showed me marked and unmistakeable attention, but of late I have noticed he seems to have eyes and ears only for Mab."

The thought flashed through Joyce's mind that here lay the secret of Mrs. Shenstone's change of feeling towards her friends. Solicitude for Mab chased this thought away.

She caught her mother's hand in hers. "Mother, dear, how long have you noticed this? Tell me."

"I really can't. Two, or three, or four times I have remarked when you have been out with Frank, and Captain Buckingham has come in, that he has shown Mab a good deal of attention. Oh, Joyce, how red your hand looks, and how fat, too, beside mine!" Here Mrs. Shenstone spread out her small fingers beside Joyce's, which had caught a glow from the fire-heat.

"Mother, yours are the whitest and prettiest hands I have ever seen," cried Joyce, delighted to be able to pay a truthful compliment. Then she went back to the danger threatening Mab. "Of course, now you see so clearly what the man's intentions are, you'll end the intimacy at once, won't you?" she queried.

"Well, no, dear; I don't see how I can

very well. Mab is quite welcome to Captain Buckingham's attentions so far as I am concerned," she said, not intending sarcasm. "It's really time she thought of getting married. She's older than you, and when you are gone she'll be for ever moping in corners or breaking out into new eccentricities."

And if she had spoken out all the thoughts in her heart, Mrs. Shenstone would have added, "and with both my daughters married and gone, how delightfully free and unfettered my own movements will be!"

Joyce jumped up from the opossum rug horror-stricken. "You don't mean to say, mother, that anything would induce you to consent to Mab's marrying that man!" she cried. "An adventurer we know nothing at all about, except that his manners are domineering, and objectionable, and insufferable, and that there is nothing whatever of the gentleman about him."

"Well, Joyce, if you are going to lecture as usual, I shall go to bed; I'm dreadfully tired. I declare you never come in for a quiet talk but what you end it in a lecture."

But Joyce was not lecturing now, simply storming; walking hurriedly up and down the room meantime, just exactly as Uncle Archie did when things went crookedly and a fit of gout was coming on.

"I would sooner see her laid in the grave at once—a hundred thousand times sooner," she said in one corner of the room. "My dear, darling Mab to be sacrificed to a man of that sort!" she said in another.

"Mother, you must turn Sylvia out of the house to-morrow, and tell the brother we will none of us ever speak to him again," she said finally, going close to her mother, and taking her hands in hers once more.

"I can't very well, Joyce," said her mother, a little nervously. "I've asked Sylvia to stay on over your wedding-day, and I've asked Captain Buckingham to come to the evening party I intend to give the night before the wedding. You see they are great friends of the O'Hallorans and the Kearneys and ever so many other people I'm on pleasant terms with, and you can't expect me to quarrel all round."

"I'll quarrel all round for Mab's sake," said Joyce desperately. "I'll tell Captain Buckingham he shan't make love to Mab—he shan't even look at her. I'll tell Mab she shan't ever speak to him again. I'll tell Sylvia and 'the O'Hallorans and the Kearneys and ever so many other people'

that we don't want their friendship or their friends' friendship. Yes, mother, I will if you can't get your courage together to do it."

Mrs. Shenstone somehow managed to release herself from Joyce's tight fingers, and made straight for her bed-room door.

"Well, Joyce, tell anybody anything you like, so long as you don't expect me to do it and make myself ridiculous in the eyes of my friends. Dear me, what fiery tempers you two girls have!"

Then she got the other side of her bed-room door and made sure her retreat by bolting it.

Joyce felt the time had come for action.

CHAPTER XVI.

It was a relief when, two days after this, crusty Uncle Archie and placid Aunt Bell made their joint appearance in the family circle, bringing common-sense with them as a welcome third.

"Told you so," said the old gentleman, sitting in conclave with Joyce and Frank over the library fire. "From the first day that I heard of your plan of a year in London I prognosticated that mischief would come of it; and here's about as much mischief as three women with thirty idle fingers could manage to set going."

Mab had retired early to her room that night. Mrs. Shenstone, Sylvia, and Aunt Bell were at the play.

"Thirty idle fingers, that includes thumbs," said Joyce saucily, taking up the challenge thrown down. "In my young days elderly gentlemen used to express themselves with exactness, and knew the difference between fingers and thumbs." This in a manner fairly imitative of Uncle Archie in his aphoristic mood.

"In my young days," retorted Uncle Archie raspingly, "young women were accustomed to treat their elders with marked respect, not to say reverence."

"Ah, but what elders they were!" This said softly, by way of interjection.

"And let me tell you, young lady, and you too, young man," here he jerked a sideways nod at Frank, "that, instead of spending all your time making eyes at each other, I think you might have troubled yourselves to use your common-sense to look after those who had none."

"Poor Uncle Archie!" said Joyce, patting his hand soothingly; "everyone knows he doesn't mean half he says."

After this they fell to discussing "the situation" amicably and frankly.

"It's not mother I'm afraid of now," said Joyce, taking the lead in the talk; "she's bound sooner or later to get tired of the whole set—the O'Hallorans, and the Kearneys, and the Buckinghams, and all the rest. She always gets tired of people she sees much of. Then they quarrel and don't speak, and everything settles down all right. But it's Mab, my darling Mab, I'm trembling for. If once she falls in love with a man of that sort it'll be something awful; she is so true and steadfast in her likings."

"But things can't have gone so far as all that, surely! She doesn't see him on the sly, does she?" interrogated Uncle Archie sharply.

"Oh no; she has not exchanged two words with him since the day she went out walking with him. Whenever he comes in I jump up and sit next to her, put my arm round her waist, and when he speaks to her I answer him and—look at him. But that sort of thing can't last, you know."

"No, that can't last," assented Frank vigorously, thinking how near the 21st of December was.

"But it's she herself who troubles me most of all—her manner, her ways, her looks even. It was bad enough in the old days to have her doing housekeeping and district-visiting in that feverish, defiant sort of way, as if she did it to spite herself; it is far worse now to have her shut up in her own room for hours at a time, and then, when she is dragged out of it, to have no thoughts for anything about her."

"You told me she was growing into a student, and you were delighted at it."

"Yes, but I made a mistake; she isn't. There is not a single book to be seen in her room. I looked yesterday."

"She's scribbling, perhaps. One can expect any amount of eccentricity from a scribbler."

"No, nor that either. She has not a pen nor ink in her room. It is altogether inexplicable. I haven't an idea as to what she does with her time when she's shut up."

Here she looked enquiringly at Frank, as though to get at his idea.

But Frank, though he had an idea, and a strong one on the matter, did not choose to give it to her. Instead he said, "Will you mind, just as a matter of experiment, running upstairs and seeing what she is doing now, Joyce? It's exactly ten o'clock. She has been shut up in her own room for

an hour at least; something she must have been doing all that time, if she is not in bed."

Joyce departed.

Then Frank turned to Uncle Archie gravely enough. "I hardly dare ask the question," he said; "but will you mind telling me if there has ever been insanity in your family?"

The old gentleman began to fret and fume immediately. "Insanity!" he cried. "I don't know how you do dare to ask the question! Do you want to insult my nieces and me?"

Frank apologised profusely. "Insult them, no!" he protested. "I love Mab as though she were already my sister. You know I am a sort of alien from my own people; beyond Joyce and Mab I have no one in the world."

But Uncle Archie was not to be easily appeased.

"I ought to know something of my own family!" he said irritably. "Take my word for it, there has been nothing worse handed down from father to son or from mother to daughter than gout on one side and folly on the other."

Joyce came back quickly enough. "What an unusual combination!" she said, catching at the old gentleman's concluding words. "Gout and wisdom one can realise, or even gout and bad temper; but gout and folly! No; is such a thing possible?"

Then she turned to Frank. "Mab is asleep in her easy-chair beside the fire. She looks beautiful—Mab always looks heavenly when she's asleep. I kissed her, and covered her over with an eider-down quilt because she felt a little chilly; but she did not so much as stir."

Frank and Uncle Archie exchanged glances.

"We'll have a doctor in to-morrow," said the latter, pushing back his chair from the fire to end the discussion. "If she wants to go to sleep, why can't she get into bed first, I should like to know?"

"A doctor!" cried Joyce. "Mab's not ill. I'm positive she can't be. If you had only seen her just now as I did, looking so sweet and tranquil, I'm sure you wouldn't let such a thought enter your mind."

But though she spoke with a grand air of assurance, the mere whisper of such a possibility sent her creeping back to Mab's room in a state of nervous apprehension as soon as Frank had said his good-night and departed.

On her way up stairs she had to pass

the door of a small room given up to Kathleen and her dressmaking. Voices from within fell upon her ear.

"Do you think I would marry an O'Shea?" said Kathleen's voice. "No, not if I had promised a hundred thousand times over."

"You shouldn't make promises you don't mean to keep," said a man's voice, which Joyce readily identified as Ned Donovan's. "And let me tell you I've found out your secret, and know well enough why you are breaking your promise to Bryan O'Shea. Let me give you——"

"Secret—I've no secret!" interrupted Kathleen shrilly.

"Let me give you a word of warning," Ned went on. "Bryan is beginning to have an inkling of the truth, and it'll go hard with the man—you know who I mean—if he crosses Bryan in his love-making."

Joyce went on to Mab's room. "The foolish little flirt," was her mental comment on Kathleen's conduct.

Later on she read Ned's words by a fuller light.

CHAPTER XVII.

"MAB, darling, only three more weeks and I shall be gone," said Joyce, kneeling beside Mab's chair and putting her arm round her waist. "I'm going to ask you to do ever so many things for me before I vanish from the scene. In fact, I'm making my last will and testament this morning, and leaving commissions to be executed all round."

"What things do you want me to do, Joyce?" asked Mab, looking down with troubled eyes into Joyce's sunshiny brown ones.

"Well, dear, first and foremost I want you to promise that on the very day after my wedding you'll go back with Uncle Archie into Gloucestershire, and stay with him there the whole time I am away."

"Oh, that was all settled yesterday. I told Uncle Archie I would, and mother is going to stay with the Wheelers at Brighton meanwhile. Didn't you know?"

Joyce drew a long breath of relief and said a mental thanksgiving.

Then she went on to request number two.

"And I want you, dear, during the short time I shall be at home here to take up with some occupation. Go into house-keeping again, or take some music lessons and practise hard."

"Joyce, I daren't touch music."

"Well, then, take up with something else—painting, embroidery; occupation of some sort you ought to have."

Mab grew nervous and distressed. "I don't feel fit for anything just now, Joyce," she pleaded.

Joyce looked at her anxiously. "You ought to see a doctor. Uncle Archie——" she began.

But Mab interrupted her vehemently. "No, I will not see a doctor. There, my mind is made up. It is of no use you or anyone else talking of such a thing."

"Dear, if you won't see a doctor you must let your friends prescribe for you. Now my prescription is occupation, steady, regular occupation from morning till night."

Mab sighed. "What am I to do, Joyce? Will you tell me that?"

"Well, dear, why not recommence your district-visiting? Don't you remember how interested you were in those poor people at Pimlico!—in the streets leading off the Embankment, I mean."

Mab shuddered, as though mentally she shrank from "those poor people at Pimlico in the streets leading off the Embankment."

Joyce went on: "It always seemed to me a little, yes, just a little unkind, dear, for you to take up so hotly with them and then suddenly to drop them altogether and never go near them."

Mab grew thoughtful. "I suppose it was unkind. Yes, Joyce, I'll go and see them all to-morrow, and make a point of calling on them at least once a week till I go away with Uncle Archie," she answered resolutely.

Once more Joyce sent up a mental thanksgiving. After all, things were arranging themselves far better than she had at one time thought possible. Here was Mab meeting her wishes as soon as they were uttered; and as for her mother, ever since Uncle Archie had been in the house the shadow of his common-sense appeared to have fallen upon her, and nine-tenths of her whims and vagaries had retired into the background.

With regard to the Buckinghams a compromise had been effected. Sylvia still remained in the house as Mrs. Shenstone's guest; but it was an understood thing that, on the morning of the wedding-day, she was to depart to other friends across the Irish Channel.

Joyce had stipulated for a quiet wedding-day.

"Mother," she had said, "ask crowds and crowds of people over-night to the house, and I'll kiss them all round and exhibit myself and my presents to your heart's content; but I won't have a soul at the church to see me married except you, Uncle Archie, Aunt Bell, and Mab."

Mrs. Shenstone had fallen in with Joyce's wish; the party on the eve of the wedding was planned on an ambitious scale. Joyce, thankful to have secured a general peace, gave hearty and willing assistance. Sylvia also lent a more gracious aid than was her wont in matters where Joyce was concerned. Uncle Archie looked on, grumbling and austere, while serene Aunt Bell smiled on everyone.

Captain Buckingham seemed a little shy of the house now that Uncle Archie had taken up his abode in it. He and Mab never met, save in the society of others; and then Joyce took care they should not exchange half-a-dozen words together. Sylvia's demeanour towards the family was that of formal politeness. Towards Mrs. Shenstone it was affability, slightly coloured with reserve. Joyce, in her own mind, translated her manner into words somewhat as follows:

"Now, you foolish woman, that I have got all I want out of you and your surroundings, I mean, quietly and without any fuss, to drop you."

Mab was as good as her word. Each of the three weeks that elapsed between her talk with Joyce and the wedding-day found her making her rounds among the "poor people in the streets leading off the Embankment." Right glad they were to see her shy, thoughtful face among them again. They gave to it every whit as hearty a welcome as they accorded to her yards of flannel and tickets for coal.

Even the day before the wedding found her with a packet of books in her hand, rapping with her knuckles at knockerless doors, and climbing ladder-like staircases that seemed expressly contrived for thinning the population. She worked very hard that day out of doors, just as hard as Joyce was working within doors at writing letters of thanks for her numerous presents, and arranging the details of her "packing up" with Kathleen.

Coming out of the narrowest and dirtiest of the streets she had been visiting, Mab was met by a woman who importuned her to go at once to see a neighbour of hers who, she said, was lying dangerously ill in a blind alley—"Chandler's Alley," she

called it, pointing in its direction with her forefinger.

Mab hesitated only a moment. It was late, it was damp and cold; but still, if a half-crown of hers, and a five minutes' cheery talk could lighten a fellow creature's sufferings, she felt bound to run the gauntlet of dampness, late hours, or any other personal inconveniencé.

So, refusing the woman's proffered aid as guide, she retraced her steps, feeling confident she knew exactly in which direction lay Chandler's Alley.

She had been too hasty in her reckoning, however. So, at least, she concluded when, as she took the narrow turning which was the only blind alley she knew of in the neighbourhood, she found that it consisted of some twelve or fourteen neglected-looking houses, which had evidently been condemned to be pulled down in order to make way for the large and handsome buildings which were just then springing up in all directions.

One only was tenanted—the last house on her left hand. It exhibited a sign over its blistered and battered door, informing the public that "John Johnson, plasterer," had therein taken his abode. It somewhat retrieved its generally dingy appearance by a trim muslin curtain and a row of flower-pots at the parlour window.

"Was it worth while," Mab asked herself, "to knock at the door, and enquire whether the sick woman lived there, and if this were Chandler's Alley?"

She lifted the door knocker. Someone turned the corner of the alley at this moment, and, with rapid strides, came towards her. It was Ned Donovan. She recognised him immediately. He, however, did not see her till he was within a yard or so. Then he stopped abruptly.

"Miss Mab!" he exclaimed in tones of blank surprise.

She met surprise with surprise.

"Have you friends in this place?" she asked. "Kathleen told me you had gone back to your work at Woolwich."

The man's face darkened.

"They gave me my dismissal there, Miss Mab, and from another place afterwards; because I am an Irishman, I suppose." His voice was not pleasant as he said the words. It altered as he added respectfully: "This is not a place for you to be in, Miss Mab, at this time of day at any rate. If you'll allow me I'll see you through these streets to your own door, or will call a cab for you at the corner."

Mab chose the latter. She must, she felt, give up her errand of charity for that day. The rain was coming down briskly now, she was rapidly getting drenched, and felt generally tired and out of sorts.

Nevertheless, dreary and depressing as her morning had been, it was blue sky and sunshine itself by comparison with the one she could picture passed in Joyce's company, with the shadow of the morrow's farewells deepening upon them.

SOME NARROW ESCAPES.

ON BOARD A TROOP-SHIP.

IN the days when the adventure, about which I am going to write, took place, the manner in which our troops, and more particularly recruits for regiments in India, were sent on foreign service was very different from what it is now. Soldiers were always shipped to the East in sailing-vessels viâ the Cape of Good Hope, and were never less than three and half—nay oftener four, and even five—months before they reached their destination. At present, and for a considerable time past, troops bound for Bombay are landed at that port on the twenty-seventh or twenty-eighth day after leaving Portsmouth. The arrangements for all concerning the voyage are also very different now from what they were in the days of which I write. Soldiers, whether in regiments or detachments, are at the present time never sent out to the East unless they have been at least some ten or twelve months in the service, and have acquired a certain amount of that order and discipline which form the very life of military efficiency. Forty years ago it was not so. If recruits were wanted badly for any corps in India they were often enlisted one day, sent to the depôt at Chatham the next, and before a week was out were clad in uniform, and, if a vessel happened to be engaged by the authorities to take troops to Bombay, Calcutta, or Madras, they were sent on board at once.

The voyage to Bombay, of which I am about to give an account, was a fair example of military mismanagement in the days I refer to. As regards myself, I was an Ensign of some three or four months' standing, of which I had not passed more than six weeks at the depôt in Chatham. I knew no more about military discipline, or how to command soldiers on an emergency, than an average costermonger does

about shipbuilding. In barrack-room language I did not know my right hand from my left, not having yet got through my preliminary drill. But one Friday afternoon, when I was writing a letter to the Adjutant asking permission to go to London on three days' leave of absence, I was told that I should have to embark at Gravesend in the good ship "Jutland," for Bombay, on the following Tuesday. On enquiry I found that the officers who were under orders to go out in the same vessel were two in number: one of them a young Captain whose regiment was in India, but of whose corps there was not to be a single man on board the ship with us; the other, an Ensign, a few weeks senior to myself, and equally ignorant of military discipline. Of soldiers—or rather, recruits—two hundred, belonging to five different regiments, were told off for the voyage. Not one of these had been more than six months in the service, and by far the greater part had not worn uniform more than a third of that time. A few of them were made acting-sergeants and corporals, but only for the voyage; and the others, knowing this, did not, after the first few days, obey them in any way. As to means of punishment, we had none whatever on board. There was, it is true, a sort of cabin under the fore-castle which was called—by way of irony, I imagine—the lock-up; but in which, as a matter of fact, those confined were far more comfortable, and saw much more of what was taking place on the quarter-deck, than they could hope to do in the "tween-decks," which was the portion of the ship set apart for the men to live in. There being three commissioned officers on board we might, in accordance with the Articles of War, have held court-martial for the trial of offenders; but as there was not a fourth officer to confirm whatever sentence we gave, the latter could not, according to the rules of the service, have been carried out. The soldiers—or rather, the recruits, for they were mere newly-enlisted lads and utterly without any kind of discipline—on board very soon found out how impotent we were in this respect, and the consequence was that they did very much as they liked.

In the time of which I am writing, the recruits on board a ship chartered to take them to India, were supplied with three pints of porter every day. The only punishment which the officer commanding could inflict upon a man brought before him for

disobedience of orders or any other offence, was stopping a portion, or often the whole, of the delinquent's liquor for a period of one, two, or more days. But this was practically no punishment at all, for the men who were so sentenced received from their comrades quite as much porter as they were ordered to be deprived of. The fact was that the quantity supplied to the men was a great deal too large.

The recruits on board led an utterly idle life. The ship was so small, being of less than eight hundred tons burden, that it was utterly impossible to drill more than about fifty at a time; and the Captain of the vessel declared that he could only spare the use of the deck for the purpose of drilling for one hour every day, and that only in fine weather. It followed, as a matter of course, that each man got only one hour's drill every four days. It is true that there was a parade every morning, at which the recruits were obliged to appear clean and neat, and, to do them justice, they turned out pretty smart on these occasions. But the parade only lasted half-an-hour, if so long; and, after it was over, the men did very much as they liked all the rest of the day.

During the greater part of our long voyage to India—we were five months and four days from Gravesend to Bombay, during which time we never touched at any port—the weather was very hot. This, together with the allowances of porter served daily, and the fact of the men having nothing whatever to do, seemed the reason why the liquor had an evident effect on their conduct, and that not for good. Not an afternoon passed in which three or four of them were not more or less intoxicated. To make matters worse, we found out after we had been some time at sea, that the recruits were in the habit of clubbing together in order to obtain, now and again, what they called "a big drink." Thus, privates A B and C would agree that, for one day, B and C should not touch their porter, but give it all to A, the consequence being that A, having drunk nine pints of strong liquor, was pretty certain to be intoxicated. The next day A and C drank nothing, and gave all their porter to B, who, in his turn, was pretty certain to be drunk. Thus, out of every three confederates, one was almost sure to have taken a great deal too much every day.

For a long time the officers on board could not understand how it was that al-

though there was no liquor to be bought on board, and no spirits of any kind were served out, not a day passed without several of the recruits being drunk. But even when the cause of the evil was discovered it was found impossible to prevent it. As I said before, the so-called acting-sergeants and corporals on board were merely recruits, whose temporary rank would cease with the voyage, and who, when they joined their respective regiments in India, would be only private soldiers. As a matter of course they did not like to offend those who would be their future equals and companions, and so they turned a blind eye upon many things which caused us not a little trouble.

In order to keep the 'tween decks as airy as possible, the officer commanding on board ordered that one-third of the recruits should always remain on the main, or upper deck. To carry out this order, the recruits were divided into three watches of about sixty-five men each, with a commissioned officer in charge of every such division. The officer commanding us did not shirk the duty, as from his position he was in a manner entitled to do, but took his share of the work the same as his two subalterns. The first watch came on duty at eight p.m., all the men composing it being obliged to remain on deck until midnight. The second watch had its turn from midnight until four a.m.; and the third from four a.m. to eight a.m., at which time this particular duty was supposed to cease.

One afternoon, when we had been some three months at sea and were very weary of the life we were leading, the Captain of the ship told us at dinner that, in the course of the night, we should pass the Island of Tristan d'Acunha, but would leave it some eight or ten miles to starboard, so that, more particularly as there was no moon, we should not be able to see it.

That night it was my turn to come on watch at midnight, and to remain on deck, with one-third of the recruits, until four a.m. I was called by my soldier-servant about half-past eleven; dressed; went on deck; had a few words of chat with the commanding officer whom I relieved; mustered my men; had the roll called; and placed sentries at the hatchways, to prevent the men slipping down below, which they were very much in the habit of doing when not looked after. After seeing that everything was in order, I lit a cigar and went forward to have a smoke in the bows of the vessel. I have no hesitation in saying that my

doing so was what may with truth be called a happy thought, which saved the lives of everyone on board.

A more beautiful night it has never been my luck to witness, either in India, or in any other part of the world. The ship was gliding along at about six or seven knots an hour, under the trade wind. The second mate who had charge of the ship's watch, was dozing on a chair upon the poop, and seemed, as well he might, to think that nothing could go wrong, and that it was wiser to take advantage of the lovely night in order to get a little extra rest for body and mind. The sailors of the watch, as well as the recruits whose duty it was to remain on deck, seemed to be very much of the same opinion, for, with the exception of the sentries over the gangways, they were all reposing here and there on the deck, and many of them not even making a pretence of being awake. Nay, when I went forward in the bow to enjoy my smoke, the two sailors who were on the look-out, or who were supposed to be on that duty, were both nodding, and not even attempting to disguise the fact of their being more asleep than awake.

All of a sudden, a faint, somewhat far-off, but still a distinct sound caught my ear. I ought to mention that as a lad I had seen a good deal of cruising amongst the north-western islands off the Scottish coast, where a very active look-out has to be kept to avoid the breakers and rocks which are so common in that part of the world. The sound I now heard reminded me of those dangers; but, remembering that there was no land near us, and that we had been told we should pass the Island of Tristan d'Acunha several miles off, I felt that I must be mistaken. Something, however, made me think that I might as well make sure as to whether there was really any sound, and what it was. I therefore sprang up, crept forward on the ship's bowsprit, and in less than a minute was convinced that there were breakers right ahead, to which we were getting every minute nearer and nearer. To scramble back to the fore-castle, rush to the poop, awake the slumbering mate, and tell him what I had heard, was the work of very few moments. But my words were by no means well received. The mate woke up, heard what I had to say, and then, telling me not to be a fool, and not to interfere with what I knew nothing about, and what was not my business, prepared to go to sleep again. Fortunately, or, I might say with truth, providentially,

the Captain, whose cabin was on the upper deck, heard me speaking, and, jumping up, came out and asked what was the matter. I told him of the sounds ahead, that I was certain there were breakers in that direction, and begged him to go forward and listen for himself. He did so, and in far less time than it takes me to describe the scene, he sprang aft, calling out at the top of his voice: "All hands wear ship, every man to his post; turn up there, turn up sharp!" As he passed me I could see that his face was quite white; and the manner in which the hurried officers and crew showed that he believed the crisis to be most serious.

And serious, indeed, it proved. Our escape from destruction was certainly a very narrow one. When the ship was put about—and considering that almost every man on board was asleep when the danger was discovered, the work was very quickly done—we could see quite plainly, from the poop, the breakers, which were then not five hundred yards astern of the vessel, and which evidently extended, right and left of us, a very considerable distance.

As the Captain told me afterwards, had I heard the sound which caused me to give the alarm, ten minutes or a quarter of an hour later than it was my good fortune to do; or had I, as would have been the case with ninety-nine of every hundred landmen, heard the breakers, but not understood what the sound was; nothing whatever, humanly speaking, could have saved the ship from total wreck.

It turned out that the breakers on which we were moving were those that surrounded the Island of Tristan d'Acunha. Owing to certain currents, the vessel had drifted several miles out of her course, and, instead of leaving the island as the Captain had told us we should, some seven or eight miles to starboard, we were, when I first heard the sounds that caused me to give the alarm, standing direct for what must have been in a very short time the cause of our total destruction.

As a matter of course, the mate who had charge of the watch was greatly to blame. If he had done his duty, he would have seen that the two men on the look-out at the bow of the vessel kept awake; and if they had done this, the sound of the breakers would have caused them to give the alarm in time. As it was, our escape was one of the most narrow events of the kind it has ever been my lot to hear of.

escape from wreck. We had already been close upon four months at sea, and, owing to adverse winds and the distance we had still to get over, the Captain had no hopes of reaching Bombay for at least four weeks.

Supplies of all kinds on board began to show signs that they would ere long come to an end. So much so was this the case that even at the cuddy table we were obliged to be content with fresh meat three times a week, and to put up with salt beef and pork on the other days. With the recruits on board, the most serious deprivation they had—or at least that which they felt the most—was owing to the fact that the porter served out to them was coming to an end. In order to make it last the longer, the Captain of the vessel, and the officers commanding the troops on board, agreed that it would be better to give the men a smaller quantity of liquor every day. The three pints were therefore reduced to two. A great number, by far the majority of the recruits, said nothing of this change in their allowance; they had the good sense to see that it was a wise precaution against having nothing whatever to drink before the voyage came to end. But, unfortunately, we had on board a considerable number who were not only badly disposed, but who hoped, by means of something in the shape of a mutiny, to gain for themselves what would give them the means of obtaining drink in greater quantity, and perhaps a little plunder into the bargain. I ought to mention that although, as I have said before, nearly all our men were the rawest of raw recruits, there were amongst them a few—perhaps a dozen or fifteen—who had served some little time, although not in the British army. Not many months before the beginning of our voyage, the last remnants of what was called the Queen of Spain's Legion, a force recruited to fight under Sir De Lacy Evans during the Carlist war in Spain, had been disbanded, and a considerable number of the men who belonged to it had enlisted in our service. Of these there were, as I have said, some twelve or fifteen amongst the recruits on board our ship, and a very bad and mutinous set of men they were. They were fully aware, and they did not fail to acquaint their comrades of the fact, that owing to the scarcity of commissioned officers, and the total want of efficient sergeants and corporals on board, the recruits were masters of the situation, and could do very much as they liked, with little or no fear of punishment.

It was about a month after this narrow

As is almost always the case in similar circumstances, there was amongst these men one who was looked upon by his fellows as a leader, or, at any rate, an adviser, in all that was wrong and against the rules of the service. This individual, as we found out afterwards, had, as a young man and under another name, been a few years in the English army, but had, in consequence of some act of open mutiny in one of our colonies, been sentenced by court-martial to be shot. Owing to his youth, and the fact of his having been, as it was supposed, led into crime by others much older than himself, his punishment was commuted into penal servitude for ten years, of which, owing to good conduct, and to great courage shown during a fire, he was forgiven half, and had thus only served five of the ten years to which he was sentenced. On his release he managed, by changing his name, to enlist in the Queen of Spain's Legion, and when that body of men was disbanded, he contrived to rejoin the English army in which he had commenced his career. At the time of which I write the first war in Afghanistan had begun. We had lost a somewhat large number of men, both in the battle-field and by climate, so that recruits for our regiments in India were in great demand, and if strong, able-bodied men presented themselves for enlistment, very few questions were asked. Thus it was that the man of whom I am writing, although in reality a soldier of some standing, was present amongst the recruits that were on their way to India.

From the commencement of the voyage this man had shown himself to be insolent in language and mutinous in conduct. He was a smart, good-looking fellow, and our commanding officer was so taken with his appearance as well as his evident knowledge of what the discipline of the recruits ought to be, that he promoted him to be an acting-sergeant, and gave him charge of a squad of men, some twenty or twenty-five in number. But the real character of the fellow was very soon seen. He was so insolent on more than one occasion to the officer who had given him his temporary promotion, and who had promised that on the arrival in India he would do his best to get the promotion made permanent, that, after several warnings, there was no alternative but to reduce him to the rank of private, when he had, as a matter of course, to take his turn of duty with the recruits over whom he had, for some three or four weeks, held a subordinate command.

It was only then that the fellow began to show what he really was, and to exhibit his natural disposition in its true colours. As we got on the voyage to India he became worse and worse, and often openly defied the officers on board as well as the orders he received. He seemed never to think for a moment that his conduct might be severely punished in the not very far-off future, when we had got to the end of our voyage. He boasted openly that there was on board no means whatever of punishing any offence, no matter how much it might be contrary to the rules of the army, saying, what was quite true, that the men who were supposed to be confined for bad conduct were better off than those who were at their duty, and that there was not a single pair of handcuffs on the whole ship.

On the day on which this man brought his mutinous conduct to a climax, and of which I have a very vivid recollection, for reasons that will be seen in the next few lines, there was a greater difficulty than ever about the porter which had to be served out to the men. The Captain of the ship had himself been in that part of the vessel where the barrels were kept, and declared that—taking into calculation the time we should most likely be in reaching our destination, and the adverse winds, to say nothing of the prolonged calms which seemed likely to prevail—the porter could not possibly last the remainder of the voyage, unless the quantity served out to each man daily was reduced to one pint, as it had, about a fortnight previously, been reduced from three to two pints.

The commanding officer at once saw the wisdom of this proposal, and at the morning parade told the recruits that this reduction would take place, but that, if it appeared later that there was a chance of our reaching Bombay before the casks were empty, the allowance would be increased again to two, and perhaps to three pints. No sooner was the parade dismissed than the individual I have mentioned, with some six or eight of the recruits, approached the commanding officer in a most insolent manner, without even saluting him, and said that they came as a deputation from the rest of the men on board, to say that they would not stand any further reduction of the quantity of liquor served out to them, and that, if there was not enough porter on board, they insisted upon having a due share of the beer, wine, and spirits which they knew to be on board the ship for the use of the cabin passengers. Anything more

insubordinate and defiantly insolent, than he was, both in language and manner, it would be difficult to imagine.

The commanding officer told them to stand back, and rejoin their comrades. A certain order had been given after due and careful consideration, and it would not be cancelled. "In any case," he continued, "their manner was not that which soldiers ought to assume towards their superiors, and if they had any complaints to make they must do so next morning after parade, and must come accompanied by the non-commissioned officers of their respective squads. He, the commanding officer, regretted greatly having to reduce the quantity of porter served out to the men, but under the circumstances there was no help for it."

Upon hearing what their superior said, the recruits who had approached him evidently saw the mistake they had made, and were preparing to withdraw. But the man I have mentioned was of a very different opinion.

"If you won't give us what we want by fair means," he shouted, "we'll have it by foul. Come on, lads, let us get into the cuddy, take what we want, have all the drink we need, and be masters of the ship."

As the fellow spoke, he stepped forward towards the cuddy, or dining cabin, but his followers held back. Seeing what his intentions were, I put myself in his road and ordered him back, saying that he should not enter there. On this the scoundrel pulled out a pistol, and fired it point-blank at me. How he missed me, seeing that we were not six feet from each other, I am at a loss to say. I heard the ball whistle close past my ear, and it was found afterwards in a panel of the cabin door, not two feet from where I had been standing; and if ever a man had to be thankful for a narrow escape I am that individual.

This, however, so far as the mutineers was concerned, proved the beginning of the end. I jumped at him, and being young and strong, had him by the throat in less time than it takes to tell the tale. We fell together, he under and I on the top of him. Others then came to my help, and the fellow was soon a prisoner, bound hand and foot with ropes.

I may mention that this man's end was far more sudden and unexpected than any one looked forward to. Had he lived to reach Bombay, he would have been tried for his life, and no doubt condemned to

death. But he managed one day, when on deck for the air, with a sentry over him, to jump overboard, and bound as his hands and feet were with ropes, he had no chance whatever of being saved, even if the ship had not been going through the water at seven or eight knots an hour, as she was then doing.

The rest of the mutineers at once returned to their duty, and nothing could have been better than was their conduct during the remainder of the voyage.

THE DEATH OF LOVE.

AND is he dead at last? He lingered long,
Despite the fever-fits of doubt and pain:
It seemed that faith had wov'n a web so strong,
'Twould keep him till his pulse beat true again;
Centre of so much youth and hope and trust,
How could he crumble into common dust?

Cold blew the icy winds of circumstance,
Prudence and penury stood side by side,
Barbing the arrow shot by crafty chance,
Snatching the balsam from the wounds of pride;
Slander spiced well the cup false friendship gave,
And so Love died. Where shall we make his grave?

Scatter no roses on the bare, black earth.
Plant no white lilies; no blue violet bloom.
Weak in his death as feeble in his birth,
Why should life strive to sanctify his tomb?
Even gentle memory is by Truth forbid
To honour aught that died as light Love did.

Let the rank grasses flourish fearlessly,
With no fond footstep brushing them away;
While the young life he troubled, strong and free,
Turns to the promise of the world's new day,
Leaving the darkening skies to close above
The unhallowed burial-place of shallow Love.

CORNERS.

WHAT is there in a corner that makes it so attractive to human nature? Nearly everyone covets a corner of some kind. One man likes to think that he has taken possession of a corner in a certain young lady's heart; whilst another is happy in believing that he is in a warm corner of a rich old gentleman's will. The busy man, taking his share in the strife and worry of business, often sighs for an opportunity of retiring into a pleasant corner to end his days; whilst the poor outcast, who has fallen out of the ranks in life's battle, who has lost name, home, and friends, creeps into some lonely corner to die. The word seems to commend itself to us as a synonym of snug comfort. There is something in the word that seems to speak of quiet, seclusion, and rest. When one is on a long and dull journey, or perhaps plodding doggedly towards home through mire and wet, or sleet and snow, how

cheerfully, in the mind's eye, appears the chimney-corner! A bright, blazing fire; drawn curtains; a good light; warm slippers; and a good book, or cheerful conversation; and what greater happiness can he desire? At such a time the chimney-corner means home in its fullest significance.

Although we no longer sit in the chimney, we still speak of the fireside as the chimney-corner. In winter and at Christmas-time especially, we still look upon it as the ideal of home. How many tales have here been told of ghosts and apparitions, of love and hate, of sin and sorrow! How oft have the scattered members of a family been here re-assembled; while parents and sisters have listened in happy wonderment to brother Tom's adventures in far Australia; to Harry's perils and escapes upon the stormy seas; to Percy's toils, hunger, and misfortunes, and final good luck in the mines of Cariboo! And mother lets a tear or two roll down her cheeks, and father coughs huskily as the lads speak of times when their thoughts wandered back to the old fireside, and they wondered if they were in the minds of the loved ones who were then sitting in the dear old chimney-corner. Then is sister Amy moved to run to the piano, and strike up the song which was written by one who was a wanderer on the earth, who died a homeless stranger in a foreign land, the touching "Home, Sweet Home." And, as the voices of the others join, who knows what thoughts and images are resting in the corners of their hearts. Tom is thinking of a certain corner in his old knapsack which contains a portrait and three letters, tied round with a slender ribbon; mother, and by some mysterious sympathy, father too, are thinking of one whose place is vacant by the fireside—a little "Tiny Tim," who made a year of suffering holy by his patient, loving ways, and who now lies in a corner of the old churchyard.

Everywhere we find the love of corners showing itself. In railway-carriage, tram, or bus we notice that the corner seats are always taken first. Let your friend show you round his garden, and you will soon come to what he tells you is his favourite corner. Perhaps it is beautiful with ferns, and rockwork, and climbing plants; perhaps it contains choice specimens of his favourite flowers; perhaps it is a shady seat, where he often enjoys his pipe and book; but, whatever it may be, certain it is he will show you such a corner.

In the old-fashioned coffee-houses and taverns of the last century the regular customers had each his favourite corner. Addison and Pope had theirs that no one ventured to occupy. In a certain old tavern in Fleet Street one may still see, and at times occupy, the corner once affected by Dr. Johnson and his friend, Goldsmith.

Walk through the streets in a poor district of London, and you will note what a favourite lounging-place is the street corner to the idlers of the neighbourhood. It is a sort of club where they meet for gossip and for mutual encouragement in idleness. You very often find a public-house at such a corner. Here you will see the "members," some leaning against the wall, others facing them, all with their hands in their pockets; those who have "bacca" smoking, those who have not occasionally drawing a few eleemosynary whiffs out of the pipe of some charitable friend. Now and then one or two will indulge in a few moments' sparring or horse-play, or will break out in a melancholy sort of bear-dance—a shaking of the legs, and a knocking of heel and toe on the pavement which we believe is known as the "double shuffle." Shufflers of work they most of them seem to be, and it is a mystery how they live. Possibly this mystery might be solved by some of those girls and women who slave for twelve hours a day at the sewing machine or the wash-tub. You will notice that the inveterate loafer loves a corner as he loves his life. Against this post he leans, his hands in his pockets, his pipe in his mouth, and passes hour after hour in what we may suppose to be his substitute for contemplation. He has learned what position makes the lines and angles of the post fit most comfortably to his person. He can place his feet on a certain spot in the pavement, and throw himself gently back against the post with a certainty of hitting the most comfortable position to a nicety. Here he will wait, willing to accept offered "arf-a-pints" to any number, or to earn a few pence occasionally by some odd job; but regular work he hates, and would rather "die at his post" than accept it.

Again, the street corner is the favourite spot of the man who wants to earn a dinner by the sale of the moderate stock possible to a limited capital, or by the exhibition of the talents which he hopes distinguish him above the crowd. Here, also, we find the corn doctor; the grease

extractor; the amateur preacher; the book hawk; the doctor who gives puzzling explanations of popular diseases, who challenges anyone in the crowd to dispute with him in French, German, Latin, or Greek, but whose English is rather indifferent, and who sells for a penny, "only one penny, mind you, what them as rides in their carriage, 'as to pay a guinea for." We also find the gentleman who "for a wager" sells gold rings at a penny, or mysterious packets of great value for next to nothing, and many others of the same genus.

Then there is the kind of corner celebrated in the juvenile verse concerning Jack Horner. This is evidently one of those commercial corners we often hear of, in which certain honest gentlemen combine to rig the market. Perhaps it is a corner in railway stocks, perhaps a corner in wheat, perhaps in cotton. Whichever it is Jack Horner is sure to have his finger and thumb in the pie. Sometimes he burns his fingers; sometimes he pulls out a plum, in which latter case he legitimately says: "What a good boy am I!" for in these days "Wealthiness is next to godliness," and who dare accuse the man who is worth a plum of being bad?

Of quiet corners there are many in this dear old land. Pleasant spots in country, town, or village, in secluded valley, or by the sea-shore. Comfortable country houses, snug cottages, quiet almshouses, or survivals of old monastic asylums or institutions. How must the busy man, over head and shoulders in the sea of business, who by chance happens to wander through the secluded cloisters or across the quiet quadrangles of some old foundation, how must he doubt the wisdom of his fevered life, and perhaps long to give up the battle with all its disappointments, defeats, and weariness, and to retire to just such a calm, peaceful retreat!

What a blessing to many men must have been the existence of monasteries in days of yore! It was not all who delighted in battle and plunder; it was not all who were strong, or rich and powerful. The poor man had to be a soldier or a serf, patient and uncomplaining under wrong and cruelty; the rich man had to be a courtier to those above him, a tyrant to those below, and always ready for war with his equals—hunting, fighting, and feasting his only occupations. In the midst of this noisy world, where brute force ruled, the monastery was the only place where learn-

ing could be kept alive, where the man of peaceful disposition, the lover of books or of art, could find a refuge. Here, protected from violence by the powerful arm of mother Church, and the superstitious awe of the mail-clad rough, might the peaceful gentleman, or even the clever son of the peasant, find leisure and opportunity to follow the gentle occupations in which his soul delighted. A blessing, indeed, in those rough times was the existence of many such quiet corners.

In many journals and country newspapers there is a column set apart known as the "Poet's Corner," which is perhaps as much appreciated by certain minds as any corner that exists. To how many a humble lover of literature has this corner brought happiness! Many a half-educated lad, who never was and never could be much above his fellows, has yet had his love for books fostered, and has been made to strive for better things than the common pleasures of his neighbours by the encouragement he has received in seeing some of his simple efforts published in the "Poet's Corner." It has made him seek and find a beauty in life which he otherwise would have missed; made him like the hidden life in the earth,

Grasping blindly above him for light,
Climb to a soul in grass and flowers.

Has not some local Tennyson often trembled with pleasure to see his "Lines to Matilda" printed with his name, Thomas Barkis, in full at the end? And has not Matilda shown the effusion to all her aunts and cousins? And albeit she did afterwards marry the grocer's son, and now appears a thriving matron as she peeps from the parlour behind the shop; yet does she not still retain that little square of newspaper, and show it at times to a friend laughingly, with, perchance, a slightly tender feeling partly of regret for young days that never can return, partly of pity for "poor Tom," who, after all, missed the great happiness of making her his Matilda? And Tom, was he ever the worse for it? Did he not travel in hardware just as well as if had never written anything in that special line? Does he not look upon books with a different eye to what he otherwise would have done?

Then, again, there is that good soul Miss Broadfoot, who makes such capital tea-cakes, and really does give a good cup of tea when you happen to call. Is it nothing, dear reader, the happiness she has derived from the printing of her little

chirrupings? Her verses on "The Tear-stained Heart," her touching lines on "The Young Girl's Sigh" (Miss Broadfoot is a young girl of forty-three), and that beautiful poem, "To My Mother's Mittens;" was it not good for a gross realistic world to know that such "thoughts that breathed and words that burned" could still emanate from our local press?

There are some corners that may be said to be famous, and of world-wide celebrity. For instance, we have Hyde Park Corner, a spot teeming with life, gaiety, and fashion, at times the richest and most aristocratic corner in the world. Here, more than once, have the citizens of London mustered in arms to meet the coming invader. At one time they await the unfortunate Wyatt in his rash rebellion against the Maiden Queen; at another they throw up entrenchments to resist the expected attack of the troops of the false Stuart, who tried so hard to tread the Commons beneath his feet.

Here, under the shadow of the last dwelling of the great General who overthrew Napoleon, the God of Slaughter, and close to the noble building where goes on a constant battle against pain, disease, and death, here daily pass crowds of those who think and speak of themselves as the World.

Here is a corner rich in wealth, rich in talent, rich in beauty. Splendid carriages, noble horses, wealthy riders. Here the Queen of Fashion, and the King of the Money Market pass; here the statesman and the poet; here the successful general, who has won honours in all parts of the world; here the spendthrift, drawing on his future life; here the money-lender, watching his flies with a quiet calculating eye, and gaining the smiling salutation of many an aristocratic Adonis, who would scorn to acknowledge the existence of an ordinary plebeian; but money is King, and your real blue blood is nothing against gold and a big balance at the bank.

Here comes handsome, penniless Fred Ingleby, with good connections, good manners, and good heart. He will ride up and down the Row, in hopes of getting a few words with Lady Mary, who will, however, be sharply watched by a determined mother and a vindictively affectionate sister, who both suspect her of being capable of throwing away all her chances. Here go the happy members of the leisure class, in and out, up and down, like figures in a galanty show. Idlers of various

classes below them, walk about and admire or envy them. See the pale mechanic or starving clerk, out of work and out at elbows, who watch with half-angry eyes this crowd of those who live, and laugh, and enjoy all the luxuries of life, almost without knowing whence they come, while others cannot get even the chance of working for their bread. Are they thinking of "a good time coming," when there shall be bread and happiness for all; or of a bad time, when the volcano shall break out, when the earthquake shall come? Do the fortunate ones ever think that

There is a poor, blind Samson in this land,
Shorn of his strength, and bound in bonds of steel,
Who may, in some grim revel, raise his hand
And shake the pillars of this Commonweal,
Till the vast Temple of our liberties
A shapeless mass of wreck and rubbish lies?

Come now into the heart of London, and look upon this, which is a notable corner indeed, for this is the Pie Corner, where ended that Great Fire of London which began in Pudding Lane. It is not only interesting because of this great calamity, for, standing here, one's memory swarms with interesting incidents of the past.

Look northwards, and you see the old foundation of St. Bartholomew, which owes its being to Rahere, the Conqueror's minstrel; your eyes fall upon that Smithfield where once knights displayed their horsemanship, where citizens drilled and 'prentices played; you see the very spot where many a martyr suffered at the stake, and sealed his faith with his blood. Here Jonson must have walked, and watched, and studied to collect his pictures of life and character before he showed his humours of Bartholomew Fair upon the stage.

Look across the road, and you see the spot where stood the Giltspur Street Compter, once crowded with debtors and felons—a sort of appendix, a fit chapel-of-ease to that grim gaol of Newgate which meets your eye further on. And, as you have now turned southward, you are in full view of the spot where many a poor wretch has swung in air to give a moral lesson to the ribald, laughing, thieving crowd below, who came there as to a holiday show kindly provided by a paternal Government. Here many a 'prentice hand has tried its first pocket, many a one has entered on the first stage of a career, of which the last was visible on the platform above him. Here

many a poor wretch has been strangled for passing a bad shilling or stealing a few yards of cloth, for then, far more than now, mercy was out of the question for those who were wicked enough to sin against what Tennyson's Northern Farmer styled: "propuppy, propuppy, propuppy."

Let us hasten from this spot to take ourselves in imagination amongst green fields and pastures to that celebrated "Tattenham Corner," known wherever the English tongue is spoken, from China to Peru.

One day in the year it is the corner to which the thoughts of most of the Anglo-Saxon race turn with expectant interest. A metropolis sends its thousands of holiday-makers to form a dark fringe along that broad green ribbon, on which this day shall be woven the fate of many a lad and many a greybeard, of many a knave and many a fool.

Here come the glorious steeds—they round the corner—there is a rush of galloping hoofs, a flash of bright colours—they are past. A few ticks of the clock—'tis over. The champagne corks pop, bright eyes become still brighter, the winners laugh and say they knew all along how it would be; pigeons fly; and the electric wire is flashing the name of this year's Derby winner to expectant thousands in the Western World, in India, Africa, and the Great England of the Southern Seas.

Shouts, hurrahs, laughter, clink of glass and chink of coin, pleasure and rejoicing on all sides. No, not on all sides, for some poor wretches turn aside, sick at heart, half blind and dazed with the sharp terror of the stroke of fate. The sword of Damocles has fallen, the die is cast, the "perhaps" has come to pass, and now the consequence must be faced. What is it? To this smart cavalry officer it means exile to an Australian sheep-run, a Western ranch, or a Columbian mine. To this man, defalcations discovered, exposure, a good name gone for ever; to some a prison, to others a sharp run downhill to a pauper's grave. To some, alas! there is no way but one, that exit for so many weary players, that "way out" for so many disgusted spectators of the great drama of life: a bony hand draws back the curtain—let us pass on.

We must not leave this subject of famous corners without mention of Poet's Corner in Westminster Abbey. This, we may truly say, is the most famous corner in

the whole world. It is holy with the dust of the mighty souls of England. Dull must be his heart whose cheek does not flush as he reads the mighty names and breathes in the atmosphere of the grand poets standing in this corner with the climbing clustered columns around him; and reading the names cut on monument or simple stone, one seems to feel that one is in a real presence, and a belief in spirits seems easy and natural, nay almost imperative.

I stepped with noiseless foot as though the sound of mortal tread
Might burst the bands of the dreamless sleep that wraps the mighty dead.

Here lies old Dan Chaucer, surrounded by his sons. Here lie Campbell, Rowe, and Gay. Here, at the foot of Shakespeare's statue, reposes Garrick by the side of his old friend, Dr. Johnson. Here lies Shakespeare's godson, Davenant. Here his compeer, rare Ben Jonson. Here Spencer, with Prior at his feet. Here Beaumont and Dryden, Cowley, and Butler. Here the witty Sheridan, the grave and courtly Addison, the dramatist Cumberland, the historian Macaulay. Among the last, but perhaps the dearest to our hearts, the one who showed us poetry and love in the existence of our poorest brothers, Charles Dickens.

There is little doubt that most, if not all, of our great writers, have made a pilgrimage to this corner. Addison writes: "When I am in a serious humour I very often walk by myself in Westminster Abbey, where the gloominess of the place, and the use to which it is applied, with the solemnity of the building and the condition of the people who lie in it, are apt to fill the mind with a kind of melancholy, or rather thoughtfulness, that is not disagreeable."

Charles Knight says: "We could wish most heartily we knew the name of him who first gave this appellation to the south transept of the old Abbey, and thus helped most probably to make it what it is—the richest little spot the earth possesses in its connection with the princes of song. Such a man ought himself to have a monument amongst them."

It is probable that the man has a monument amongst them. Goldsmith has a monument here, and he is the most likely writer, save Charles Lamb, to have given this name. In an essay on Westminster Abbey he makes one of the attendants say:

and, at the foot of Lambeth Hill, one ten feet thick and eight feet high, which might have been a fragment of the oldest London river-wall.

All this part of London was then marshy, for in Thames Street, always a rich mine of Roman remains, we find that the buildings unearthed are almost invariably built upon stout oaken piles. The Wallbrook, too, like the Sherbourne and the Langbourne, must have been something more than a mere stream, for the timber supports of a fair-sized bridge have been discovered, and the causeway leading from it in the direction of what is now Princes Street, consisting of big stones laid upon regular layers of earth and wattles supported by timber, as if a quay had run along the banks.

The second evidence, that of the burial-grounds, is even more clear. The first law of the tenth Roman Table enacted that no person should be buried, or body burned, within the walls of cities; and custom ordained that cemeteries should be on the sides of the great highways—as we may see on the old Appian Way outside Rome; in the Street of Tombs outside the gate of Herculaneum at Pompeii; and along the Watling Street at Uriconium, near Wroxeter, in Shropshire. Sepulchral remains have been extensively dug up in Bow Lane, Moorgate Street, Ludgate, Fleet Lane, Threadneedle Street, and the Minories, all of which localities are outside the lines of the first city, and within the boundaries of the wall built by Theodosius two hundred and fifty years later. Again, on the site of the Royal Exchange, was discovered a deep gravel-pit, filled with old sandals, oyster shells, and all sorts of refuse, which would naturally be deposited outside the walls of a town.

Then Boadicea swooped down on the city and destroyed it. But Suetonius Paulinus took a terrible revenge on her; and the site of the battle, or rather the massacre, in which the ten thousand Romans killed eighty thousand Britons out of a force of two hundred thousand, may be at Battle Bridge, near where King's Cross station now stands, and close by the old British track, the Maiden Way, which, although now known as York Road, may be traced under its old name leading northwards, amidst the wild solitudes of the Cumbrian fells. Until half a century ago the outlines of the camp to which the Romans retreated from London, and whereat they assembled their forces for

revenge, might have been clearly distinguished in the White Conduit Fields near Pentonville, although the enthusiastic and imaginative Stukely places it near where Saint Pancras Church now stands, and went so far as even to identify Cæsar's Prætorium.

For two hundred and fifty years after this terrible event we hear little of the history of the city; so that we may understand that the Britons, utterly crushed by the slaughter and the death of their warrior queen, allowed the city to flourish quietly as a commercial centre, and to win for itself the additional title of Augusta.

About the origin of this name antiquaries are at variance. Some say that it was derived from Helena Augusta, the mother of Constantine the Great, who had lived long in Britain. Some say that the city was so called as being the quarters of the Second Legion, named Augusta, of which the emblems were a Pegasus and sea-goat, and whose head-quarters were at Richborough. But the most plausible suggestion is that, as being the capital of a province, it shared the affix with seventy other cities of the Roman Empire.

At any rate, London seems never to have been anything more than a commercial centre, for very few remains of fine buildings have been found, whilst the statuary and works of art do not compare in beauty and excellence even with those disinterred at Cilurnum or Borcovicus (Chollerford and Housesteads) in Northumberland, much less with those from Bath, York, and Colchester. We see, indeed, even at this distance of time, the peculiar stamp of character in London which it has never lost, and which, in spite of embellishment, it can never entirely lose—the stamp of a city of business as distinguished from a city of pleasure or a military centre. Moreover, making all allowance for the absorption by the subsequent Saxon and mediæval builders of the stone remains of the Roman city, the proportion of stone buildings in it seems to have been very small to those of brick; and we are wrong when, in our enthusiasm, we picture to ourselves Roman London with splendid fanes, and markets, and arenas and temples, and refuse to admit that its builders used brick as being more suitable and durable in a marshy country, over which hung fog during the greater part of the year.

In A.D. 306 the Governor, Theodosius, surrounded London with a wall shaped

like an irregular bow, of which the river represents the string, extending from one river point to the other, about two miles and three hundred yards long, twenty feet high, and ten feet thick, provided with fifteen posterns, forty towers twenty-five feet high, and a ditch which in some places was two hundred feet wide. Of this wall the remains are very scanty; but the curious explorer may be interested in following its course, and can judge, from the fragments which yet exist, of the wondrous constructive genius of our first conquerors.

We start from Ludgate Circus, for between that point and the river the Roman Wall was entirely demolished and rebuilt under Edward the First. Within the past twelve months the remains of a bastion might have been seen in St. Martin's Court, but it has since gone the way of most of its companions, unless its foundations still exist among the cellars of the public-house built upon its site.

Close to here, that is, where the Old Bailey turns off, stood Ludgate, and we go up Old Bailey to Newgate, pass behind Christ's Hospital by Bull-and-Mouth Street, and, turning into the little churchyard of St. Botolph's, Aldersgate, now laid out as a public garden, may see in the gardener's shed a fragment of the old wall. From here we cross Aldersgate Street, pass by Falcon Square, where another bit of the wall was visible a few years back, and get into Cripplegate Churchyard.

Here there is a fine, sturdy old bastion of undoubted Roman workmanship, although the facing stones have been removed, in which were discovered in 1876 the statue of a Roman warrior and a number of architectural fragments. Passing under the gateway leading into Fore Street and bearing always to the right, we get into London Wall.

Here, on our left hand, in the churchyard of St. Alphage, we see a goodly piece of the Roman Wall, which has been carefully preserved, and above it traces of the stone battlements added by later builders. We follow the wall, or rather, the street called London Wall, cross Moor-gate Street and Old Broad Street, follow the passage through St. Botolph's Churchyard, turn down Camomile Street, leaving Houndsditch on our left, down Duke Street, somewhere about which we believe another piece of bastion may be seen by penetrating to the cellars occupied by Hebrew old clo' men, cross Aldgate, down the Minories until we get to Vine Street.

Here, under the London Bonded Warehouses, a good length of the old wall is visible, with niches at regular intervals which might have been shelter-places for the legionaries as they kept their constant watch over the fen-land of Essex.

West of Trinity Square, behind George Street, and close by the first Tower Station of the Inner Circle Railway, is a splendid bit of the old wall, fifty feet long and twenty feet high, built of rag-stone with the usual layers of tiles at two-feet intervals. From here the wall went on to the Tower Postern, east of which stood, as stands now, the main fortress of the city.

Mr. Roache Smith, the greatest authority upon Roman England, is of opinion that Roman London had but the customary complement of four gates—at Cripplegate in the north; at Dowgate in the south; at Aldgate in the east; and at Newgate in the west. But, taking into consideration the unusual irregularity of the western wall, and the fact that no fewer than six, and probably eight, main roads entered the City, other authorities are inclined to think that, in addition to these four, there were also Roman gates at Ludgate, at Aldersgate, at Moor-gate, and at Bishopsgate.

When we stand where, at present, London Stone is, we are at the theoretical centre of Roman England, that is, near the spot whence all the itineraries were measured, for London Stone, a "milliarium aureum," stood on the opposite side of Cannon Street, near where Dowgate Hill descends to the river.

To this spot converged six, if not more, great roads.

From the west, starting from Dorchester, passing through Old Sarum and Silchester, crossing the Thames at Staines, and entering London from Piccadilly by Ludgate, came Ermine Street.

At the north-east corner of Saint Paul's it met Watling Street, coming by Edgware Road and Oxford Street through Newgate, and another great road from the north, which came either through Aldersgate or Cripplegate, and about the course of which opinions still differ.

At London Stone, Watling Street turned down to Dowgate, whence there was a ferry or "trajectus," to Stone Street, Southwark. At the end of what is now the Borough High Street it bifurcated, the main Watling Street proceeding along Kent Street, and the Old Kent Road to Blackheath, Rochester, Canterbury, and Dover, the branch going to Streatham, Croydon, Dor-

king, Oakley, Billingshurst, and Pulborough, to Chichester, under the name it still bears—Stone or Stane Street.

East of London Stone, Ermine Street continued as far, perhaps, as Gracechurch Street, and, taking a north-easterly direction, passed through Bishopsgate by Chesnut, Huntingdon, and Grantham, to York and Lincoln, whilst a vicinal way led in a more easterly direction along the present main road by Stratford to Colchester; and a sixth street went by Eastcheap to the Tower, and probably along the Essex bank of the Thames to the sea.

Within the limits of the walls the spade and pick very rarely penetrate to a depth of twenty feet, and in some cases to half that depth, without bringing to light interesting memorials of old Roman London; and the visitor to the British and Guildhall Museums may see for himself pavements, pottery, sculptures, domestic utensils, weapons, coins, articles of ornament and use, and other innumerable trophies and relics of a higher civilisation than Britain saw again for nearly a thousand years.

Of genuine works of art the remains are few. A colossal head of Hadrian was dredged up from the Thames, and a bronze hand, thirteen inches long, which, perhaps, belonged to the same statue, was found in Thames Street during the excavations made in preparation for the new London Bridge in 1830. A beautiful little Apollo and a Mercury, and the stooping figure of an archer with silver eyes, were found in Queen Street, Cheapside, and these are the most remarkable.

Of the tessellated pavements found, the most remarkable are the splendid one of a room twenty feet square, found in Leadenhall Street in 1803, at a depth of only nine feet from the surface; one representing the Rape of Europa, discovered on the site of the present Gresham House in Old Broad Street; a very extensive one in Camomile Street; and a very large and fine one found in Bucklersbury in 1869, and preserved intact in the Guildhall Museum.

Baths, or portions of baths, such as the "sweating-room" and the hypocausts, have been found in Thames Street; the distinct remains of a small villa in Crooked Lane, near King William Street; and the walls and pavements of others under Lombard Street and on both sides of King William Street. When the Fleet Ditch was finally cleared away and hidden from sight in the middle of the last century, an enormous number of coins, weapons, and household

goods were found, and are fancifully supposed to have been flung in during the precipitate flight of the Romans from Boadicea and her terrible warriors.

Judging from the character of the remains found in different parts of the City, it would appear that what might be called fashionable Roman London was grouped about where now stands the Royal Exchange. But, from the same evidence, it seems that the Romans shared the whim of the modern Cockney, in living away in fresh air and amidst rural scenes, for along what must have been the pleasant Wallbrook have been found the remains of detached villas, and especially under where now stand the premises of the Safe Deposit Company at the corner of Queen Victoria Street, have been disinterred fine Samian and Upchurch ware, evidently more of an ornamental than of a useful character. Remains of villas have been found, too, along most of the great roads outside the walls, as far as St. Andrew's, Holborn, under the Holborn Restaurant, and even to Deptford on the south-east. Wall paintings of a similar character, but of a very inferior description to those in Pompeii, have been dug out on either side of the Southwark Borough High Street, and it may be decided that the Bath in Strand Lane was attached to the pleasant riverside establishment of a Roman grandee.

Of temples the remains are singularly scanty, but this fact may be accounted for when we remember that pagan temples were invariably built of the finest stone, and that the Saxon and Norman builders, who inherited the deserted Roman London, would certainly have not failed to use such ready-made material for their own purposes.

Whether there was or was not a Temple of Diana on the site of St. Paul's Cathedral is still a disputed question amongst antiquaries. Sir Christopher Wren gave a decided opinion in the negative, and based it on the fact that, to ensure a sound foundation for the new Cathedral, he had penetrated to a depth of forty feet without coming upon any remains pointing to the existence of such a temple. His dissentients, however, show an altar of Diana, dug up in the immediate vicinity; point to the large quantities of stag-horns found, as indicating the sacrifice in long-past times of the orthodox character to the divine huntress; and even say that the etymology of the name Londinium is nothing less than City of the Moon.

Ruins of what are said to have been a Temple of Concord have been found under the Church of Saint Mary Woolnoth, and, at the same time an immense pile of horns and antlers, together with a well, which is said still to give the purest water in the City; and in Old Broad Street was found a stone commemorating the restoration of a temple by one Vicinia. Altars and statues of gods and goddesses—Apollo, Bacchus, Ceres, and the Deæ Matræ—have been found elsewhere; but these were probably domestic altars and household gods.

Even were there no traces left of old London Wall, we could define the ancient City boundaries with sufficient exactitude by means of the cemeteries. In Saint George's Fields, Southwark, innumerable monuments, lachrymatories, urns, and stone coffins, have been discovered. So also in Bunhill (Bone-hill) Fields, in Spital Fields, in Moor Fields, in Goodman's Fields, in Cold Bath Fields, in Finsbury, and outside Ludgate.

From the frequent presence of coffins and entire skeletons amongst the tear-vessels and sepulchral urns, it would appear that to some extent the pagan system of cremation was being supplanted by the Christian method of sepulture, perhaps towards the end of the fourth century, and perhaps under the influence of the Christian mother of Constantine the Great—that Helena Augusta who discovered the remains of the true Cross, who lived in Britain, and whose name is by some authorities associated with the name of the city.

Of the aspect of suburban London under the Roman dominion, we can form but an imaginative picture in the absence of relics and topographical guides. At Southwark there was probably a station and a summer camp, as there was also at Pentonville; but whether the Southwark rampart, which still exists in the name Bankside, was a British work or part of the Roman defences, it is impossible to say. Stukely says that Long Acre is a corruption of Long Agger, and mentions that there was a racecourse where now runs the street inseparably associated with coach-builders, and is of opinion that where now is Finsbury Circus was the London Campus Martius.

To the west, and the south, and the east, and north-east of London, was little else but marsh-land. On the north were the bleak heights of Highgate and Hampstead, which were undoubtedly fortified; and, close up to the river on the south-east, came that dense Kentish forest which

extended almost unbroken to the coast. But, isolated by its natural position as Roman London may seem to have been, in reality the splendid roads which spread out from it in every direction kept it in constant communication with the rest of the colony; whilst by the river a ready and easy access to the continent was maintained, and a four days' march could bring reinforcements and supplies from the great stations at Reculver, Richborough, Rochester, and Dover, if need was.

The enormous growth of suburban London during the past few years has somewhat interrupted the researches of antiquarians in the country immediately surrounding the city, but it appears that the nearest stations to London were: northwards, Sullonicæ, now Brockley Hill, on the old Watling Street to Saint Albans; southwards, Crayford, or Croydon, or Keston, or whatever Noviomagus may be decided to be; eastwards, Ilford; westward, Bibracte, on the Imperial Way to Bath, and Caserleon, now Staines; and to the north-east, Duroilitum, which may be placed at Cheshunt.

Directly, however, we get out of London proper, we are on debateable ground, and to the outsider it is absolutely amusing to note how antiquaries—especially local antiquaries—fight about stations and camps and roads, and almost literally magnify the merest molehills into mountains, or at any rate into Roman ports and Roman fortresses, and Roman amphitheatres, in fact, into anything Roman, or, failing to establish a Roman identity, into anything Danish or British, but not condescending to notice anything later than the eleventh century, when in reality the objects of their research often date back only to the period of the Great Civil War, and not unfrequently to quite modern times.

LOST IN THE VALLEY.

By the Author of "Driven of the Wind," etc.

A STORY IN SIXTEEN CHAPTERS.

CHAPTER IV.

MAURICE felt extremely annoyed.

Disappointed too, for, with his capability for hero-worship, he had already promoted Eveline Douglas into his small gallery of ideals who could do no wrong. Now, she was distinctly doing wrong in encouraging the attentions of a man who had evidently not the slightest respect for her.

"She ought to have more sense," he said to himself angrily; and he proceeded to find fault with his collars, with his coffee, with Trevor, with Bénéoit, with Paris, with everything, and with everybody.

Trevor's appearance had grown much less depressed during the last few days; to-day he almost smiled as Maurice found fault with things in general, and, even in his ruffled mood, his master could not help noticing the unwonted cheerfulness of his aspect.

"Are you beginning to like Paris any better?" he said. "I'm getting rather tired of it myself."

"Tired of it, sir—in a fortnight!" echoed Trevor.

"Yes," said Maurice. "Paris isn't the only place in France. I think I shall travel about for the rest of the month."

Trevor cleared his throat, and began pottering about the room in a melancholy manner.

"I've thought, sir," he said at length, "that if I was to become, so to speak, conversant with the language, it might be more agreeable for you. So I am endeavouring to *hacquire* it."

"Oh! from Bénéoit?" asked Maurice.

"Partly, sir; and partly from Miss Helen, the young person who waits upon the Countess, and who happens to be a very superior, steady sort of young woman."

"Superior to Martha, Trevor?" his master enquired maliciously.

"Well, sir, I am not prepared to say her manners or her morals are, as one might put it, better than Martha Evans's, but she 'ave more style."

With which criticism, uttered in his usual sepulchral manner, Trevor flitted slowly from the room, leaving Maurice partly amused and partly relieved by his statement.

In his own letters home he had simply alluded to Eveline Douglas as "an English widow lady, living in the same house, whom he often visited, and who had been very kind to him;" which description, as he guessed, conjured up in his mother's mind a picture of a lady of the age and appearance of Her Gracious Majesty the Queen. But Trevor was fond of letter-writing, and Maurice had a dim feeling that if, in his epistles to Martha Evans, he stated that his young master spent several hours a day alone with a young and dazzlingly lovely woman, his people might be inclined to underrate the exact amount of platonism

infused into such an intercourse. That they would altogether disapprove of Mrs. Douglas, with her beauty, her allurements, her extravagance, and her isolated position, he had no doubt—and then, he himself could tell them so little about her.

He was glad of the Scotch mill-owner, and clung to that one fact about her former history with much relief. For his own part, he did not wish to know more, or rather, he had not wished it before yesterday. But now, little haunting fears would arise in his mind, questioning him as to why Eveline had taken Miss Douglas's insolence as if she were used to it? why she had said very few people would receive her? above all, why she had suffered de Villars's insolent admiration, and absolutely driven out with him in her victoria, a favour which she had never yet bestowed on him, Maurice?

Was she afraid of him? Or was she tired of her lonely life? Surely, in the latter case, she might find some more congenial companion than a dissipated rake of de Villars's stamp. The more Maurice thought of her conduct, the more inexplicable it seemed.

He had left England because he was worried, and now he determined to leave Paris for the same reason. He did not intend to go home, although the fact of his entire family being absent from it was certainly an attraction.

"But if I am alone at The Grange I shall certainly think about her," he said to himself.

And he wanted to leave off thinking about her. He was consulting a map of France, and industriously planning out a fortnight's tour which should be both cheap and picturesque, when a letter came for him from his sister Ethel, at Cowes.

Ethel was the youngest of the family, and given to "gush." Miss Dudley had been the object of her adoration for some time, but now Miss Dudley was superseded by Miss Dudley's friend.

". . . Such a lovely little creature; I'm sure you would admire her, Maurice, dear. You know you always admire people who look rather extraordinary, and she is not in the least like anybody else. She is very small indeed, and so fascinating and dainty that she is more like a pretty doll than a woman. She is twenty-three, but she looks much younger, although she has had a great deal of trouble, poor thing! She is staying with Miss Dudley, teaching her French and Italian, and Miss Dudley

knows her story. So shockingly sad! Her husband killed himself three years ago, after giving all his money to a most wicked Italian woman. Poor little Madame Ravelli can't mention his name without bursting out crying even now. She, and I, and Laura Dudley go out walking together every day. Sometimes mamma comes too, and she has taken such a fancy to Madame Ravelli that she has invited her to spend Christmas at The Grange. We are sure you will like her as much as we do. We are all so anxious to see you, and to hear all about your adventures. I am so glad that those nice old ladies, Mrs. O'Hara and her daughters, and the widow, are so kind to you.

"Your affectionate Sister,
"ETHEL"

Maurice had classed the "English widow lady on the floor below," and her Irish friends all together as "ladies, very nice, but not very young." Hence his sister's misconception. He wondered now whether Trevor had alluded to Hélène in his letters as a house-keeper of mature years, and rather hoped he had. He was interested in the description of the little foreign widow lady, having foreign widow ladies on the brain at present.

How odd that here was another case of a man ruining and absolutely killing himself for love of a worthless woman! Just such another event as the one alluded to in that fragment of a letter some one had lost in the valley and he had found. An odd letter! He must show it to Mrs. Douglas; she was so romantic and so easily interested in all you told her. Not now, though. He remembered with a pang that he was no longer on the easy terms of friendship with her that a fortnight had already established between them; that he was hurt, puzzled, and offended at her behaviour; and that, moreover, he was going away. The idea of absolutely saying good-bye to her appeared very painful to him. Was he growing really attached to her, was he really over-stepping the limits of passionless friendship he had laid down for himself? In that case, the sooner he packed up his trunks and left Paris the better. He had no intention of worrying himself ill about any woman, and possessed a morbid dread of making a fool of himself, both of which states of feeling he classed under the head of being in love. Being married suggested to him heavy responsibilities, endless bills, rare solitude, and more or less gentle

"nagging," to be endured on every subject. Besides, it was as feasible to imagine the Venus of Milo for a chimney ornament as Eveline Douglas settled down to quiet domesticity at The Grange.

"I dare say she would like me to be in love with her, as most men would be in my position," he decided; "but she would no more care to marry me than I should to marry her."

Yet the very thought of it thrilled him ever so little with the suggestion of white arms round his neck and a soft-scented cheek against his own, not unpleasing even to a man who considered himself altogether passionless. Love and marriage by the fire, alone with a cigarette and coffee, seemed rather idyllic, but love and marriage in reality—!

He decided he would pack and start the next morning for the South of France. So he and Trevor were busy all the morning, and when, in the afternoon, he passed by Mrs. Douglas's rooms on his way downstairs, he would not call and see her, steeling himself by the reflection that she had probably M. de Villars to amuse her. When he returned she was, as he guessed, still out driving, so he left a little farewell note with Pierre, thanking Mrs. Douglas heartily for her extreme kindness to him, and telling her that he was obliged to leave Paris early on the following day, but that he would call on her, if she would allow him, before he started the next morning. He thought that by deferring his farewell visit to the very last moment he should make it impossible for her to upset his plans, as he guessed she had the will, and feared she had the power to do. Then he went out to dinner depressed, but firm in his resolve. When he returned at half-past seven Benoît informed him that a lady was waiting for him in the salon.

A lady who rose at sight of him, and stood looking at him with tears in her soft brown eyes.

"I have been waiting for you two hours," she said.

She was still in the dress she had been out driving in, the chestnut velvet cloak in which he had first seen her.

"I am so sorry——" he began, but she interrupted him.

"And I am so sorry, more sorry than you can tell. I am going to lose the first friend I have made for three years, and I don't even know why, or what I have done to offend him. Will you let me stay here for half an hour?"

"I shall be only too glad to have you here."

"And only too glad to say good-bye to me for ever," she said as she leant back wearily against the cushions of the sofa on which she was sitting. "I know you must have a thousand little arrangements to make for your journey to-morrow, and I am in your way. But, if we are never to meet again, you can surely spare me one half hour?"

He found himself already finding excuses for her conduct of yesterday, as he listened to the music of her voice.

"How have I vexed you?" she asked, after a pause.

He tried to laugh.

"Vexed me, Mrs. Douglas? You must think me very presumptuous in daring to be vexed at anything you do. Why should I? I am going to spend the rest of my holiday in the South, that is all."

"But you have a right to criticise me; you have a right to be vexed," she persisted, rising from her seat, and standing over him with one hand laid on his shoulder. "Don't be cold and reserved with me, my friend, but tell me, please tell me truly what I have done."

Maurice hesitated a moment. Then he said:

"Well, I am very prejudiced; and, as I have taken a strong dislike to a friend of yours, I do not wish to run the chance of meeting him again, as I probably should do if I stayed in Paris."

"If it is only that that hastens your departure," she said eagerly, "you need not go. I dislike M. de Villars quite as much as you can do, and I will promise that you shall never meet him at my rooms again."

"I may not meet him, but you will go on receiving him," he said.

She was silent. The pressure of her fingers upon his shoulder increased. Looking up, he saw how white and worried her face looked.

"Listen," she said sadly. "I dare not refuse to receive him, and I will tell you why. Several years ago I accidentally, through no fault of mine, brought great grief and trouble upon some of his relations—a wrong I can never undo."

She paused.

"It was about—about money," she added hurriedly. "And my husband was the indirect cause of the present poverty of M. de Villars's relatives—poverty which they will not allow me to relieve. The

subject is a very painful one to me, and, unless you really require more explanation, I would rather not refer to it again. But, do you understand now why I feel myself bound to be at least civil to M. de Villars?"

"I really can't see why you should feel bound to encourage the attentions of an impudent scoundrel just because some of his relatives were ruined through no fault of yours, especially if you dislike him."

"Dislike him?" she repeated slowly. "I detest him; or, rather, I should detest him for his insolence and presumption if I were not used to insult on the part of every man I meet, like most unprotected women. Maurice," she continued earnestly, leaning forward in the chair she had taken opposite to his, and fixing him with her great, sad eyes, "don't go away until you are obliged to go. It is not only that I shall miss you, that I value your friendship, but you make me think better of my fellow-men. I know you are very little more than a child, years younger than I am; but to meet any man who does not presume upon my isolated, helpless condition to force unwelcome attentions upon me is a new experience. Only the O'Haras, Miss McIntyre, and Dr. Grantley prevent me from thinking the whole world evil. I would not lose them and their friendship, and I would not lose you and yours, for anything this world can give me. I know it is selfish of me to ask you; but, for the sake of the good, the happiness, the solace your companionship is to me, stay in Paris just for these few days more. I will do just what you like, receive whom you like, refuse to see anyone you disapprove of, if you will only stay."

She was watching him intently; his face was turned away, and he was looking thoughtfully in front of him. She rose, and standing by him again, she smoothed his fair hair with motherly tenderness, and turning his face gently with her hand, she made him look up into the lovely, pleading, tearful eyes above him.

And Maurice said that he would stay.

He was rather annoyed with himself for thus, for the first time in his life, allowing his plans to be upset; and so, to show Mrs. Douglas that he did not intend to sacrifice his liberty of action to her, he tried to make his daily visits to her shorter, and to fill his remaining days with appointments among his newly-made friends in Paris. But, however pleasant the bachelor reunions, or the little dinners in which he

took part, it was always a relief to return to the softened lights, the subdued tints, the luxurious comfort of Eveline's sitting-room, and to watch her calm, sad face, to see the heavy eyelids slowly lifting over the soft eyes, and to notice the light that shone in those eyes when they were turned on him.

So the time went quickly by, and the first days of October, the last of his stay in Paris, brought to Maurice an increasing unwillingness to leave the city.

His people were constantly writing to remind him of his approaching return. They were all back at The Grange, and had taken their new fancy, Madame Ravelli, with them, "to keep up the girls' French." Maurice was much interested in the accounts of this lady, but not sufficiently so to reconcile him to the prosaic life at The Grange. He had very little time for thought just now, as his days were fully occupied in paying farewell visits, and in buying Christmas presents for his people at home. Eveline Douglas helped him to choose them, and together in her brougham, for since his threatened departure she had taken him out driving with her frequently, they ransacked Paris for pretty little things that would be likely to please his mother and sister.

At last the 18th of October came, and Maurice was to leave the next day. Eveline's eyes filled with tears at the very mention of his departure, and Maurice, who dreaded a scene of any sort, almost wished he could leave without saying good-bye, and so avoid the lingering sadness of a protracted farewell. He was not in the least in love with her, at least he did not think so; but then he did not know much about love, and the distracting, agonising emotions he had always sung and read about, were quite unlike the pure and calm affection and respect with which she inspired him.

Eveline had kept her promise, and he had not met the Marquis at her rooms again. But he had seen him on the stairs, apparently waiting for him, and de Villars had been most effusively polite, and had even gone the length of begging the young Englishman to have supper with him and a few other members of his club. After refusing several times, Maurice at last, for the sake of a new experience, complied, and de Villars promptly introduced him

among the most vicious and dissipated of Parisian fashionable society. But Maurice's common sense and purity of mind stood him in good stead. Having been among them once he determined never to go again. Their ways were not his, he decided, and he had neither money nor inclination sufficient to induce him to waste his time with them.

So de Villars, who had been eager to report the moral ruin of her protégé to Eveline, had to be silent on the subject, and to content himself by voting him an idiot and a milksop. He had won his bet, but he was by no means satisfied with his position, or with his occasional visits to Eveline, on sufferance, in the presence of Miss McIntyre. Being well informed as to Maurice's movements, and his constant intercourse with the Countess, de Villars naturally put an entirely wrong construction on their relation to each other, deciding that Maurice was her accepted, as he was her rejected, lover. He was piqued and annoyed, and the badinage of his friends on the subject provoked him still more. He felt that he owed it to his all-conquering reputation to take some decisive step. He had called at Mrs. Douglas's rooms on this, the last afternoon of Maurice's stay, and had been denied admittance. Very soon after, from the balcony of his club, he saw her entering her carriage with young Wilde. De Villars was really angry; he felt he was being made ridiculous for the sake of this fair-haired boy, and this very evening he determined should see him avenged.

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SATURDAY, OCTOBER 9, 1886.

PRICE TWOPENCE.

A DATELESS BARGAIN.

BY C. L. PIRKIS,

Author of "Lady Lovelace," etc.

CHAPTER XVIII.

EVERYONE decided that Mrs. Shenstone's reception, on the eve of Joyce's wedding, was more brilliant than any to which they had before been summoned by that lady. It had been planned on a more ambitious scale, and had had more time, thought, and energy bestowed upon it.

Mrs. Shenstone, in the most elaborate of blush-rose tinted robes that a Parisian modiste could contrive, surveyed herself in succession in four full-length mirrors, and came to the conclusion that everyone's first exclamation on entering her drawing-room would be "dear me, she looks young enough to be the bride herself."

Joyce acted as maid to Mab, and helped to attire her in a dress as dead white as her own. Then she arranged her thick brown hair so as to shadow her anxious, thoughtful face, and so crowned and bedecked her with jewels that people saw in the girl a dignity and beauty they had never before noted.

As for Joyce herself, she decided that for that night, at least, she would be radiant; and radiant she was.

"To-morrow," she confided to Uncle Archie, "Frank and I will creep into church silently and demurely to the sound of muffled drums, but to-night, at any rate, the drums shall not be muffled."

Uncle Archie muttered something to the effect that, in his young days, weddings and funerals alike were conducted decorously and without ostentation. "People didn't make such fools of themselves then as they do now," he grumbled.

Sylvia comported herself with a good deal of unobtrusive tact that evening. She put on dark colours, and placed herself at Mrs. Shenstone's elbow as that lady received her arriving guests.

"You look as though you needed a chaperon, Tiny," she whispered insinuatingly into her ear.

And Tiny was instantly mollified, and all Sylvia's misdeeds were pardoned on the spot.

Frank felt himself to be on the very pinnacle of happiness that night. "It's more than I deserve, a hundred thousand times more," he soliloquised over and over again, thanking Heaven that he had had the common-sense to make his pride give place to his happiness. It made him giddy to think of the years of bliss of which he seemed at the moment able to command a bird's-eye view.

He stood a little way apart from Joyce, watching her in her bright beauty so prettily humouring old Uncle Archie, so protective to Mab, so forbearing to all her mother's follies and affectations.

"It's worth living on prison diet all one's days to get such a night as this," he thought, "and to think that my whole life will be a succession of such nights, or rather of something infinitely better!"

Then somehow he felt his eyes were wet. He threw himself with energy into the stream of guests, found occupation by volunteering to bring ices to some elderly dowagers, who, ensconced in a quiet corner, did not feel equal to daring the crowded staircase to procure them for themselves.

The refreshment buffet was in the dining-room. As Frank entered only two persons were in the room, a maid who had come in for a gossip, and the man who was serving the ices. The former fluttered away at Frank's approach, the latter, an elderly,

serious-looking man, to all appearance of the respectable butler class, held up a warning finger and whispered :

"Not a word, sir, if you please. I knew you would recognise me, so I've been waiting here to have a word with you on the quiet."

Then Frank to his amazement recognised in the serious-looking butler a detective, a man of a superior and thoroughly confidential stamp, with whom of late he had had dealings in connection with some intricate law business.

"Morton!" he cried indignantly, "what in the name of fortune are you doing here? I've a great mind to—"

"Not a word, sir," said the man again. "I've had my orders from Scotland Yard. There's a lot been going on here that you know nothing at all about. All sorts of dubious people have been made free of this house."

"Good Heavens! But whatever your information may be I'm sure it isn't necessary for me to tell you that the lady of the house is perfectly ignorant of their dubiousness."

Naturally all his suspicions fastened at once upon the Buckinghams and their Irish intimates.

"Ah!" said Morton confidentially. "A nice lot the lady of the house has surrounded herself with! Fenians, sir! The house is getting quite a reputation as a sort of head-centre. Appointments have been made, meetings called at the lady's receptions—under her very nose, I might say. Hush, sir! Here they come for ices. Raspberry, or strawberry, or vanille did you say, sir?"

Frank had only time to whisper a word. "Come to my rooms direct when you leave here, I shall be up all night. I've a great deal to say."

Then he took his ices and departed, but by this time all recollection of the personality of the elderly dowagers had faded from his memory. Whether they were attired in cœrulean blue or sulphurous yellow he could not for the life of him have said. He only knew they looked very hot and red in the face, and were making a perfect gale with their fans. But, possibly, that by this time was the condition of every elderly dowager present.

With an ice in either hand he went peering into all the corners of the room, so far, at least, as he could approach them for the crush. He pushed on one side the curtain which half-draped the small con-

servatory leading off the drawing-room, thinking the ladies might have retreated thither for a pleasanter atmosphere.

But there he saw a sight which made him start back a step in astonishment, and put down his ices on a small table briskly enough—nothing less than Mab and Captain Buckingham seated side by side in confidential talk.

"You should make the attempt daily; spasmodic effort is useless. The habit should be steadily persevered in," Buckingham was saying in an authoritative tone that set Frank's blood boiling. As for Mab's face, it looked thoughtful, spiritual, dead white as her dress.

"Mab," said Frank, taking her hand, "will you go at once to Joyce? She is looking for you. She is in the music-room."

Mab rose instantly. Captain Buckingham rose also. "Won't you put your cloak on?" he asked; "you pass a window on the way to the music-room. Here is a wrap someone has left behind."

Frank had to stand still, and see Mab wrapped in an Indian shawl by Captain Buckingham.

"Good-night," she said to him softly, when the operation was over. "I shall remember."

Then, without so much as a look at Frank, who stood there steadily watching her, she went straight out of the room. She made no attempt to seek her sister. Straight up the stairs to her own room she went.

Mab's bed-room was large, and luxuriously furnished. It looked comfortable enough as she entered. Candles were lighted on the toilet-table, a big blazing fire crackled up the chimney and threw a lurid light on the figure of a girl kneeling on the hearth-rug, with her head buried in Mab's easy-chair.

"Why, Kathleen, what is it?" cried Mab in wonder, for muffled sobs seemed to come from out the cushions of the chair.

Kathleen's pretty, pouting face was all red and tear-stained as she jumped up from her knees to answer her young mistress's questions.

"Oh, it's nothing—nothing—nothing—Miss Mab," she cried vehemently, finding occupation meantime for her fingers in making up the fire, getting out brushes, lighting superfluous candles.

"But there must be something to make you sob like that," insisted Mab, going to

the girl, and laying her hand kindly on her shoulder. "Come, tell me, I may be able to help you."

Kathleen stood still with the match-box in her hand. She did not like to say that her tears arose from the fact that Ned had given her another terrible scolding, and had vowed he would have nothing more to do with her to the end of her life unless she kept her promise and married Bryan O'Shea. No, that wouldn't do at all: disagreeable cross-questioning might follow.

"It's about Ned, Miss Mab," she answered, steadying her voice, but not looking Mab in the face, "he has changed so lately. He's in with a lot of people who are no good at all to him, and he'll end with getting into the hands of the police, I'm afraid."

"Ah—h! Do you know the names of any of these people?" asked Mab, recollecting her unexpected meeting with Ned that morning on John Johnson the plasterer's doorstep.

"Oh, there are ever so many, Miss Mab, all Fenians or Nationalists. A bad set they are," answered Kathleen, still busy-ing herself at the toilet table.

Mab sighed. Thoughts came in a rush to her mind. After all the time, all the thought she had bestowed on this man, it was pitiful to think that he should thus determine to rush headlong to ruin. What could be goading him on to such mad folly? Here there came a conscious flush to her face, a stab of pain at her heart.

She knew his secret; it would have been folly to pretend, even to herself, that she did not. What, if instead of being the good angel she had intended to be to him she had been his evil one, and had darkened and cursed his life for him! What if it were his desperate love for her that was driving him to throw his life away in this reckless fashion! Could she do nothing, absolutely nothing, to save him?

She clasped her hands together, and sank into the chair into which Kathleen had wept out her sorrows.

"Leave me, Kathleen; put out every light in the room. I want to think," she said, leaning back in her chair and covering her eyes with her clasped hands.

Kathleen did as she was bidden. At the door of the room she paused, giving one backward look at her young mistress. It seemed to her that she had suddenly fallen into a sweet, sound sleep.

For one instant the two men in the drawing-room below faced each other.

"Is this intended for an insult?" asked Captain Buckingham.

"You may take it so if you like," answered Frank, carelessly turning on his heel, and with a look on his face that has ere this cost a man his life.

"The place is not convenient, or——" began Buckingham, but broke off abruptly. He made a movement as if about to pull out his watch, but checked himself. "I leave here at one——"

Frank's temper broke its bounds now.

"Do you want to know what time it is?" he said, his low, strained tones showing that he was at white heat. "It's a question, I believe, you are rather fond of asking. Well, I will tell you: time to give adventurers and conspirators a word of warning, and, if they don't take it, to hand them over to be dealt with by the law."

His temper had fairly vanquished his common-sense, or he would never have spoken such words as these.

Captain Buckingham, to all appearance, left him master of the situation. He grew ashen white, his eyes flashed.

"You may find another answer given to the question before long," he said, in a tone so low that an elderly dowager, who stood at his elbow gesticulating to Frank for her ice, did not hear a syllable.

Then he made straight for the door, and the sound of the front door closing, a minute after, told Frank he had quitted the house.

"What a consummate fool I've made of myself!" thought Frank. "I had better find Morton, and confess to him at once."

But, though he hunted high and low for the man, and questioned every servant he came upon as to his whereabouts, he could not light upon him. He had disappeared, possibly to report to Scotland Yard certain proceedings which had excited his suspicions, or—Frank could only hope so—it might be that he had departed on the traces of Captain Buckingham.

Frank stood thoughtfully for a moment at the head of the stairs, just outside the music-room door. What had he better do? Slip away quietly, take a cab to Scotland Yard, and find out how much mischief it was likely his hot temper had wrought? He took out his watch: the hands pointed to a quarter to one. People would soon be leaving now, his absence would not be noted. He had better possibly frame some word of excuse to Joyce.

There was she radiant still, just within the music-room, which had for the even-

ing been converted into a show-room for the brilliant silver and jewellery, which had been presented to her under the guise of wedding presents.

Her clear, joyous tones came to him over the heads of the guests pressing in or out of the room. "Now this is the treasure cave, you must say your 'open sesame' before I let you in. This is it—'Joyce, my dear, I think you're the happiest girl alive.'"

She caught a glimpse of Frank as he paused irresolutely outside, and whispered the hurried question:

"Have you seen Mab anywhere? She has not been near me all the evening."

Frank's answer was intercepted by the appearance of Mab herself, descending the staircase from the upper floor. She still had on the Indian shawl which Captain Buckingham had wrapped around her. Her face was white as before, her eyes looked fixed and unseeing.

Joyce made sure she would come straight into the music-room for a passing word, and drew back a little into the room to make way for her. To her surprise she passed on and down the second flight of stairs. People were beginning to depart; a stream soon flowed in between Joyce, Frank, and the staircase. A sudden terror seized Joyce. She caught at Frank's arm. "Oh, follow her, what is she going to do?" she whispered, for the look on Mab's face had fallen like a chill shadow upon her.

It was easy to say, "follow her"; a bird's wings over the heads of the departing guests might have done it easily enough. Nothing else.

Frank dived in and out, with and against the stream as best he could. He got somehow to the drawing-room, had a tolerably fair view of it, thanks to two inches more of stature than most of the people there owned to. Mab was not there. Sylvia Buckingham was standing in her dark dress at Mrs. Shenstone's elbow, and that lady, looking a little tired and jaded in her blush-rose garments, serenely smiled on her departing guests.

On to the dining-room, thence to the supper-room, Frank went. Not a sign of Mab anywhere. Thence out into the hall, on to the doorstep even, where stood a crowd of great-coated footmen, waiting for their respective masters and mistresses.

"Are you looking for anyone, sir?" asked one of these, seeing 'where has she gone?' plainly written on Frank's face. "A lady in an Indian shawl came out five

minutes ago. We thought she was making for one of the carriages, but she passed them all and took the first turning to the right."

Mechanically Frank took a hat, which some thoughtful hand held out to him, and dashed out into the darkness. The bright lamps of the line of carriages which reached from the door to the corner of the square, made patches of shifting light on the damp pavement. Beyond the line the dingy vista of the street which ran off the square showed dimly through the gloom. Down the turning the man had indicated Frank went at the top of his speed. It seemed to him, as he turned the corner, that a figure resembling Mab's disappeared at the farther end. Faster and faster flew his feet over the ground. The by-streets leading down to the river were deserted and silent. A crawling cab, two slip-shod girls, a belated street minstrel, were the only representatives of the bustling life which tided along the wider thoroughfare.

He turned sharply round the narrow street where it seemed to him Mab had disappeared. A gas-lamp at the corner of an alley leading off this street lighted up a gleam of gold in the shawl of a small figure which passed swiftly beneath it. Frank was running now, and, almost breathless, he gained the corner of this alley, to see Mab, or, at any rate, a small dark figure, that might be Mab, standing on a door-step at the farther end.

Either the door must have been innocent of bolt or bar, or someone from within must have opened it, for Frank to his terror saw it swing back on its hinges, and the small dark figure disappear.

"Mab! Mab!" he shouted frantically, and the dark, empty street and deserted-looking houses threw back his cry at him in hollow, mocking tones.

The whole thing seemed to him like some hideous nightmare, in which against his will, he had been suddenly forced to bear a part.

"What in Heaven's name is she bent upon?" he asked himself desperately, as he gained the doorstep and pushed back the door through which the girl had disappeared.

He found himself in a narrow dark passage with a door at the farther end, from beneath which struggled a yellow gleam of light.

There was Mab, in front of him sure enough; there was also a man who had seized her by the arms, and was saying in

loud rough tones: "How now, young woman! What's your game, I should like to know?"

"Let her go!" shouted Frank with all the breath that was left in his body.

"Who are you?" began the man, still holding Mab fast, for her aim was evidently to pass by him into the room beyond.

Frank had not learned boxing for nothing. One well-directed blow sent the man reeling backwards, and crash he fell, bursting open the door of the room whence the light streamed. There came a sudden hubbub of voices from a table round which three men were seated. One sprang forward and seized Mab, dragging her towards the door of the house. It was Ned Donovan. Frank was surrounded, the light on the table was put out, but not before he had time to recognise Captain Buckingham's dark face and broad shoulders. He felt himself seized from behind, there came a heavy blow on the back of his head, then all was darkness and silence to him.

SOME SCENES IN PIRÆUS.

PIRÆUS, as everyone knows, is the port of Athens. It is a lively marine place of some twenty thousand inhabitants, with deep water in its small but excellent harbour to the very edge of the modern quays, which are a resort of perennial lounging for the men and boys of all colours and nationalities who form its marine population. During a walk up and down this promenade, past the boat-loads of oranges being landed from Crete, or Cos, or Syra, or other isles of the Archipelago, one is sure to be accosted in a good many languages, for the Piræus watermen are as pertinacious as they are polyglot, and very quick to scent an Englishman.

"Boat, Signore, to the yacht! I spik good English, and am friend of all English gentelmen in Piræus and Athens. I—Spiro—take you everywhere where you have to eat good as in England, and want no money for to do it. No, no, I not a greedy Greek, but a Ionian. Them Greeks all thieves and rogues. See, Signore, a card give me by one English gentelman who was please with me."

This is the sort of address to which a stranger in Scotch tweeds is pretty sure to be subjected in Piræus.

Master Spiro, in this instance, proved as good as his word. He guided us willy-

nily to a restaurant in a back street, and with a cordial shake of the hand, and another exhibition of the card he departed, having accepted a cigarette merely as a genial cementing of our friendship for future service.

We take up a position in this restaurant commanding the window and the procession of miscellaneous individuals on the other side. There are Turks with set expressions; peasants from the Peloponnesus in rough hair dresses, open at the breast, and with pistols in buff leather cases at the waist; Albanians in white cotton shirts, frilled and starched from their stout legs like very short ball-dresses, with long red stockings to the instep, and curly toes peaked by a parti-coloured ball of worsted; Nubian men, women, and boys, with the blackest of faces and the most athletic of bodies; and hundreds of Greek soldiers of the latest conscription: merry lads with no hair on their chins, who seemed intuitively to perceive in all this war preparation and writing of manifestoes the windy fiasco it has proved to be. There are many sailors, also, so like our own British tars in apparel, demeanour, and looks, that, save for the Greek lettering on their caps, and King George's crown, one might well think they had been shipped at Chatham or Portsmouth, and were now taking holiday on shore in the port they had come to blockade.

And what does one get to eat in a native house of a typical Greek town like Piræus? Well, we begin with a bouillon, much flavoured with olive oil, the staple relish of all olive-growing countries. Then comes one of the fat pink fishes, for which this part of the Levant is famous. Its flesh melts in the mouth, and it, too, is soured in oil. Onions and potatoes are eaten with the fish, and lemon juice adds to its piquancy. A small beefsteak, worthy of Fleet Street, follows the fish. Next, a confiture, with a centre of rice meal coloured with saffron, and served with a sauce of sweet liquor; the rice meal being enclosed in a luscious coating of something for all the world like layers of goldbeater's skin. Add to these solids, a bottle of the wine of Kephisia, eighteen miles from Piræus, and you must admit that Piræus is not a desert. The cost of this dinner was a trifle over a shilling.

Our first visit to Piræus was at a time of secular jubilee. It was the last day of the Carnival. The shops were crammed

to the pavement with varied good things ; the streets overflowed with vendors of edible trifles, such as Turkish delight, nuts, gingerbread, Constantinople sweetmeats, and oranges. Everyone wore a smiling face. Many were in buffoon disguise : their jackets strung with strips of coloured paper, tissue cocked hats on their heads, lathe swords and scimitars by their sides, dummy pistols in their waistbands, spectacles of vast girth encircling their eyes. These revellers had amiable peculiarities of their own. They were not noisy. They stalked hither and thither with uplifted heads, demure as Brahmans in the final stage of their life career, and as silent. Moreover, they were lavish of what little money their circumstances and King George's Chancellor of the Exchequer allowed them to spend upon themselves. The Piræus seemed to have a number of small black boys, engaged in boot cleaning, quite out of proportion to its normal population. And ever and anon these speechless tom-fools would stop in their stiff promenade, lean their backs against a wall, and let this or that giggling little Nubian clean their dusty nethers. Nor was payment ever omitted, that we could see.

One buffoon, more of a wag than common, had bare feet, and for five minutes at a time he would stand with one foot on the shoeblack's block, staring at the sky before him, completely heedless of the roars of laughter which broke fitfully from the broad-faced crowd of merry-makers, who soon assembled to contemplate him and his absurdities. Another clown, by as quaint a farcical device, divided with this gentleman the suffrages of premier popularity. He was a tall and thin bald-headed personage, dressed in a green gown to his heels, and throughout the afternoon he patrolled the bustling thoroughfare with a long crooked cardboard nose upon his face, and in his hands a twelve-foot fishing-rod, from which dangled a fig for the little Greek boys to bite at while he walked. The sport was animated wherever he went. He lost one fig about every quarter of an hour ; but, when one went, it was immediately replaced by another from a leather satchel by his side, without the movement of a muscle in his face ; and so he continued on his ridiculous way.

To give a finish to this atmosphere of festivity, the church bells of the city volleyed tumultuously at intervals, and

the different Greek war-ships at that time in harbour fired blank cartridges. The smoke lay thick over the pale green water towards Salamis all the afternoon : it was as though the war long threatened had at length burst upon the country.

Our second visit to Piræus was on Good Friday. When Lent was beginning, the olive woods between Athens and its port were golden with buttercups, and perfumed with the scent of flowering beans. At the end of that "Sarakosté," so dreaded by the Northern traveller in Greece travelling with his Northern appetite, the buttercups had gone ; but the vines had put forth their tender green shoots, and the long meadow grass under the gnarled trunks of the trees was scarlet with multitudes of great poppies.

There were no brick-coloured cakes and comfits for sale at the Athens railway station this day. Devotional books, small votive offerings, heart-shaped and otherwise, in various metals, and candles of all lengths, colours, and qualities supplied their place. Not that the daily newspapers were wanting ; but they for the moment had lost their bellicose tone. The sheets were occupied for the most part with articles of a supramundane character that might have come from the pen of the Metropolitan of the city, instead of the impetuous young unreasonables of the respective editorial offices. The keynote of the day, however, was distinctly in the candles. Everyone had his sheaf of brown, white or yellow, plain or bespangled dips, substantial at their base, but tapering to a fine point at the other extremity. And in the railway cars (made at Oldbury, and drawn by a locomotive from a Leeds factory) the bulk of the conversation depended upon the candles : strangers comparing their purchases, and by such comparison increasing or lessening their satisfaction in their bargains. One could not but feel amused, moreover, to see the way in which a young Greek dandy, whose starched white collar touched his ears, laid aside his large-crooked walking-stick, and nursed the candles he was taking from Athens, as assiduously as if he had been born and bred in a crèche.

Saving the omnipresent phenomenon of the candles, Piræus was like a city besieged or under some other great affliction. The church bells tolled dimly one after the other, the ships in the harbour fired minute guns, and carried their flags at half-mast. By far the majority of the shops

were shut, and those that were open offered only the barest of necessaries for the hungry person in quest of a meal—painted, hard-boiled eggs, which it were a scandal to eat for the next forty hours, olives, lettuces, dry bread, and snails. Undemonstrative loungers thronged the highways, and massed by the slop-shops, which flourish in the marine part of the city. Men, women, and children, in profound black, with their liturgical books in their hands, and never without their diminishing group of candles, sped quietly to the churches, muttering ejaculations to the "Panagia" (the All-Holy: that is, the Virgin) as they went. And in all the churches on this hot late April day, from dawn until the procession with the symbolical "Corpus Christi" through the streets at midnight, relays of priests, choristers, and congregations kept up the sequence of the elaborate ritual, the multitudinous Kyries and genuflexions which mark Good Friday as the most exacting day in the Greek calendar.

We wandered away from the city towards the coast-line of the rocky peninsula of Akté, with its triple harbours; but it was impossible to escape from the sound of the bells. Even in the tiny pocket port of Munychia—with its ruined mole and trimasticks of the time of Pericles, now so shallow that its half a dozen fishing smacks almost graze the bottom at its entrance—even here, divided as it is from Piræus by a bold hill some hundreds of feet in height—the tolling oppressed us, for on the top of the hill is the monastery of the Hagios Elias, and its deep bell seemed hardly intermittent.

Thence, by ancient rock tombs and many a huge wall of rough-dressed stones, now levelled with the ground, to the second of Akté's ports, that of Zéa, with white villas at its extremities, a score or so of galley-slips left almost high and dry by the retrocession of the sea, and its theatre and coffee houses; by the malodorous water, open and empty, in the hands of the cleaners, to be ready for the licence and thirsty laughter of joyous Easter.

We enter a church situated on one of Akté's eminences. It is full to the door, and outside, ranged upon the rock commanding a view of the interior, are a number of worshippers who follow the service as vigorously as if they were under the roof, so that it is no easy matter to approach the nave, whither all eyes are drawn. But from afar we can see the rapid movement of the tall hats of the

priests, and hear their odd chants as they go round and round some object in the centre with bewildering speed. This object proves to be a bier, on which is a model body of the Saviour. Over the model is an eccentric baldacquin studded with emblematic ornaments, all of coloured tin. There is a tin heart surmounted by a cross of tin. A tin ladder climbs to the heart, and a soldier with two spears of tin is attached to the ladder. On the other side is a large cock represented in the act of crowing, and a figure symbolising Saint Peter in a state of contrition. As illustrative of sacred history, these ornaments attract the devout gaze of the scores of tanned Greeks and foreign fishermen who are able to see them. But there is one thing besides—a pall of white satin, with an embroidered Christ upon it, set with large gems, rubies, and emeralds, and diamonds, and amethysts; a sumptuous piece of work, of high intrinsic value. And ever and anon there is a lull in the service, permitting those nearest to the bier to lower their heads and kiss this coruscating jewelled pall. Two of the pappás stand by the while, and by the light in the eyes of such as are able to get near enough to accomplish this act of devotion, one understands that this is the most cherished function of the day for the laity. Thus early, it is not everyone who can approach and kiss the pall. By-and-by it will be the one goal of every dweller in the neighbourhood; but at present they who can avail themselves of the scant breathing spaces, during which the priests wipe their glistening brows, or re-tie their disordered locks, are exceptionally fortunate.

Outside the church is the belfry, a detached little building looking straight at the Acropolis, six miles away. It has two bells, one above the other; and a knot of small boys struggle for their turn at the ropes, which they pull strenuously every ten or fifteen seconds, first the tenor, then the bass.

At noon, there is a brief interval of cessation. One white-haired pappá stays with the model and pall, but all the others, and most of the congregation, troop out into the air, loosen their neckerchiefs, and give utterance to the chatter they have so long repressed. For those who find that their constitution imperatively asks for a little worldly nourishment, provision is made on the other side of the belfry. Here a baker has set up a stall for the sale of dry rings of bread and parched peas. The man or

woman, who prefers something richer than such fare, may trudge to the city for it. But if the pappá contents himself with a pea and a mouthful of bread, followed by a sip of lemonade, surely the congregation ought not to have fastidious stomachs. It is a pretty scene to watch these scores of honest people break their fast under the blue sky, with the whole of Athens lying on the plain beyond, half-girdled by the grey slopes of Hymettus and Parnes, and the dazzling Ægean close by on the other hand, Ægina in the distance, and Salamis seeming a mere stone's throw away. A flock of sheep—whose persistent bleating has been an enduring protest against the mysterious noises of the day—one by one tread towards the church, timidly, with heads pushed to the front, to see if haply they may at length satisfy their curiosity. But no sooner do the priests and people move away from the baker than the quadrupeds turn their backs, and, in a wild "sauve qui peut," scamper over the rocks and ruins, out of sight.

Proceeding through the city, and across the old Agora and the square of Apollo, one comes to the most northerly of the basins of the harbour of Piræus. Here the recession of the water is very apparent. The galley slips of this part of the harbour are high and dry. Children play about them all day long, or fish from them with a far-reaching rod. Stagnant pools mark this quarter of the city as a haunt of malaria. But on this Good Friday we found the damp ground in the vicinity occupied by herds of oxen and flocks of sheep and lambs, under the charge of copper-coloured shepherds, to the eye as fierce, tawny, and unkempt as the most bedraggled of the beasts. The lowing and bleating silenced the bells of the city, or nearly so, and seemed to incite the pigs, dogs, and children of the district to cry and shout in their turn. These poor oxen were deadly tired; they had come, some of them, all the way from Thessaly, and had arrived, as it was, only just in time for the Easter market. But the tumult of them had already attracted the butchers and buyers, wholesale and retail. Swart men and sharp-nosed women, who ought rather to have been in church, were punching the beasts, and lifting the unwilling sheep and lambs from the ground by their four legs to estimate their fleshiness. Beef is not a favourite meat with Orientals; to them a cow is a source of milk rather than of beef-steaks.

We could not ascertain the selling price of the oxen; but the sheep and lambs were in much request, and a lamb of prime quality, with no blemish, was to be had for six or seven ahillings. Within twenty hours or so none but the poorest of Greek households would be unprovided with its Paschal lamb, tied, fleas and all, to the bed-post of the establishment, until it was time to cut its throat, and impale it whole on one of the big skewers which have been a current article of commerce in the streets for the last few days. While we watched, several of the lambs were disposed of, and the purchasers slung the little innocents round their necks, holding them by the legs under their chins, now and then caressing them with a fondness that was to prove abominably sycophantic in the end. But the sheep and the more adolescent of the lambs were treated with less consideration. They were carried by their legs between two people, and their muffled bleats of protest were disregarded.

In this quarter of Piræus is its cemetery, a garden of flowers and cypresses, and with a church bell as voluble as any other. The spot is well chosen. Elsewhere in its vicinity there is practically no soil over the hard rock. The Necropolis of old Piræus was not far distant. Its empty tombs, cut clean out of the stone, line the road for a considerable way. Here it was that Lord Elgin discovered what has been surmised to be the burial-place of Aspasia. It contained a "large marble vase five feet round, with a bronze one inside, a lachrymatory of alabaster, a wreath of myrtle in gold, and bones." The site is remarkable for its bleakness on the side that looks towards Salamis and the sea, and for its superb views of Athens, behind; but, nowadays, an enterprising Municipal Board, or some such organisation, has resolved to fertilise it with the rubbish of the city; and, from the acres of filth and odds and ends, which are gradually composing a layer of vegetable matter on the barren rock, very fine smells may be enjoyed by the pedestrian who wanders that way when the sun is hot in the heavens.

Continuing past these ancient sepulchral chambers, we strike a little valley of vineyards, with stray fig and olive trees, and a small shrine to the Virgin, where two tracks bifurcate. And then, by some judicious surveying and steering, it is possible to clamber through the meagre barley fields, and over the uplands, towards a conspicuous heap of rocks and stones on what

seems to be an artificially accumulated base. This is nothing less than the throne-seat of Xerxes, whence he watched the strife between his own multitudinous galleys, hugging the coast at his feet, and the Greeks in line with the shore of Salamis, whose sandy point stretched within a mile and a half of the gold and ivory support of the King.

But to return to the cemetery. A little apart from its church is a comfortable-looking, square, red-brick building, with thick walls and two oval glass windows. Our curiosity was excited by its appearance and situation. It had not the air of a dwelling-house; nor was it a church. Some pots of flowers in its portico seemed to mark its tender associations; but the nature of these from the outside was only dimly conjecturable. Entering the room—for it was nothing more—at first sight our perplexity was increased. It proved to be a large, lofty, airy apartment, with rafters, above, and an irregular flagged floor; while, from its furniture, one might have supposed that it was a lawyer's deed-room, or a banker's safe, or the play-box depository of an English preparatory school. On three of its sides chests were piled almost to the rafters. They were of different sizes, colours, and materials. Some, two feet by one and a half, with a depth of a foot; others as large as six feet, by a breadth and depth of two feet. They were brown, black, yellow, and grey, and of wood or tin. Some had oval lids, and these were padlocked; but others had lost their lids, or burst them apart; while others again were roughly closed with nails.

But the inscriptions on these boxes soon enlightened us. Most of them bore initials or names with dates, and, painted upon them, either a cross or a skull and cross-bones, with the elucidatory word "osteon," (i.e., bones-remains) or "osta." It was a Greek charnel-house—nothing less. And this was otherwise made apparent by a pile of white cotton bags in one corner of the room, each marked "osteon" or "osta," with a single name, and by the jagged conformation caused by the bulging of the dry bones within them. The bags weighed uniformly a mere six or seven pounds, and some of them had broken, so that a thigh or an arm-bone protruded through the fracture. It seemed a little incongruous to discover half a dozen beer bottles, empty, standing on a ledge in this room, by the bags, and underneath a shallow concave wooden structure, ornamented

with black cloth and silver fittings, which was a coffin-lid. But the presence in one of these bottles of a much-guttered piece of candle, and of a tin vessel which, from its shape and incrustations could, be nothing except a coffee-pot, seemed to show that even the most dismal of localities cannot coerce the human appetite. Who knows? Perhaps the hardened worldling who devotes the anniversaries of their demise to a visit to the bones of his friends and relations, finds a cup of coffee agreeable on these occasions, and makes it on the spot. And, since the average Greek priest will beseech the stranger who looks into his church not to trouble himself about his lighted pipe inside the sacred building, it is at least possible that the mourner inside this charnel-house may solace himself with a cigarette as well as coffee.

In the centre of the floor of this room was an iron ring, welded into one of the paving-stones. This flag yielded to a trifling exertion of strength. We gradually pulled it from its socket. There, underneath, was disclosed a wide and deep pit, remarkable at first for nothing save its gloom, and the rush of cold air which seemed to blow from it. A moment later, however, we were constrained to let go the stone, and all was as before again. That moment sufficed to explain to us that in this hole were accumulated the bones and decaying bodies of those parishioners, whose friends either could not, or would not, store them in labelled bags or boxes. An unpleasant effluvia had followed the whiff of air, and, ere the stone had fallen back to its place, several score of large blue-bottle flies buzzed into the upper world.

No one, who is aware of the impudence and multitude of the Greek fleas in Greece, will wonder that, by this time, we had become sensible of their presence also in the building. It behoved us, therefore, to depart. And as, in the meantime, an abrupt change in the weather had occurred—Athens and its Acropolis being half hid by a low-lying rain-cloud—we returned to the railway station without delay; but, ere we could reach it, the rain could be seen falling in torrents over the city. Then, suddenly, there came a break in the clouds; the sunlight shot through, and a resplendent rainbow held the city in its embrace. The Acropolis was in the exact centre of this exquisite arc, which transfigured it and all Athens for a full quarter of an hour.

THE DOWNHILL OF LIFE.

If a writer of the present day took up the story of King Lear, as it is found in the chronicles of Geoffrey of Monmouth, and set to work to transmute it into a modern romance, he or she would find it necessary to change almost entirely the "motif" and action of the piece. Filial devotion and the sorrows of age would hardly prove attractive at the circulating libraries. Youth will be served, both in fiction and the drama; and, if old age is to be rendered interesting, there must be a certain anti-pathetic flavour about it. Shylock will always command interest; an old villain is treated with a certain amount of consideration; but the old gentleman, with only his grey hairs, his virtues, and his grievances to recommend him, is sure to be looked upon as a bore.

And yet old age, with its avenues and approaches, should be an object of interest to all. With the banquet of life in full prospect, the thought of its declining shades may be evaded, but for those who have dined, or who have arrived at the conviction that there is surely no place at the table for them, the question of age becomes serious, solemn, and pathetic.

*Ma vie entre déjà dans l'ombre de la mort,
Et je commence à voir le grand côté des choses.*

Thus writes Victor Hugo, the great modern exemplar of the possibilities of dignified old age, but, for the great bulk of us, what prospect is there of seeing these grand visions? The narrow side of things is the view often present to failing faculties, narrow views, and short forecasts of the future, just as in illness the horizon is bounded by the coming basin of gruel or the recurring dose of physic.

And yet it seems clear that a great deal more might be made out of age than is generally the case. The experience of a life is surely something, and should give clearness of vision; while, if no active part can be taken in the affairs of life, surely these never lose their interest to the intelligent spectator.

The spectacle of Christmas in London naturally suggests a study of old age. For that is a season when, after all, the old people are much more in evidence than the young, whose especial festival Christmas is supposed to be. The most striking feature of the London streets, and of the equally busy railways of the town and suburbs, is at this time the number of elderly people

who are moving about. Instead of working men and women, intent on their employment, we meet with old people of every variety.

Almshouses and workhouses contribute their inmates, happy for the day in belonging to the general crowd, and feeling the free breath of heaven, but who, before night, will perhaps be glad enough to creep back to the shelter of their forlorn abodes. And then there are the old people who have homes of their own, small and precarious—caretakers in empty houses, who encamp in the basement of the deserted building; or dwellers in lofty garrets, whose scant breath rarely permits a visit to the street below.

All these the bells of Christmas bring out from holes and corners. Thrust aside and elbowed out of the way at other times, now they have their innings. Now they come forth en masse, and with their garments of ancient fashion, and faces worn and withered, they bring into the life of today certain ghostly touches of vanished merriment and memories of long past enjoyments.

In wealthier homes the elders sit at home in state, and entertain their children's children with feasts, and games, and sparkling gifts; but in humbler quarters it is the old people who have to stir about in search of Christmas festivities. It is the son, who is in work, who gives the banquet, or the daughter who keeps the huckster's shop; and the old people have nothing to bring in the way of gifts, unless it be a shiny orange or a rosy-cheeked apple for the little ones.

But it is not the festive aspect of the season that strikes one so much as the pathetic. What of all the people, no longer young, to whom such anniversaries come as a reminder of departing strength and vigour, and who now take their seats at the board among the ancients with many a secret pang?

Like most of the ills of life, perhaps old age is more grievous in the anticipation than the reality. But we are right, after all, in fighting it off as long as we can, and in assuming to the bitter end the freshness of youthful feeling. There is no more venal deception than that of the middle-aged man or woman who postdates the record of advancing years, and makes believe to be still among the young. And in the same category are those devices which conceal the ravages of time and give an artificial youth. For they incite people to live up to them.

Even at seventy a woman sighs to hear herself described as an elderly person. The description may be just, but it is no less cruel.

For life glides on so imperceptibly that people are unconscious of any change in themselves. Perhaps, indeed, the inner spirit never does change—that spirit which is rather a witness and chronicler of the events of life, than an active participator in their occurrence. And in this way it comes as an unpleasant surprise to be looked upon as elderly. No doubt the disadvantages of advancing years are felt more keenly by women than by men. But, by either sex, how bravely often a losing battle is fought—a battle with failing resources, failing health, and the lassitude of age!

For all that, there is often a strong feeling among the young that the side of age has unduly the advantage. How many a young aspirant complains that his work is neglected, his abilities starved, while elderly mediocrities occupy all the avenues to success! But these last, however successful, have also their envy of the young. The time of struggle over, the despair of youth that was once so bitter, was it not better after all than the success which has come too late to be enjoyed, and can only be retained by exertions that have now become painful?

There is, however, a general agreement of witnesses, from the age of Plato to that of Darwin, that old age under suitable conditions may be as happy as any other period of life. There should be dignity and independence, with that hold upon the interests of the surrounding world, which of itself brings "honour, love, obedience, troops of friends."

And yet such an ending to life, however desirable, is not always the desire of the heart. A man may look forward to

Find out the peaceful hermitage,
The hairy gown and mossy cell.

This instinct of seclusion which seems to come to us from primitive life, is probably confined to the male sex. The elderly Brahman is enjoined to retire from the world and spend the remainder of his days as an anchorite; and a similar feeling, stronger in previous centuries than in our own, has led to the foundation of many refuges for age in the way of almshouses and brotherhoods. But at no period of life is seclusion a natural condition; and, most certainly, the collection of a number of elderly people in a kind of enforced association has never had a successful result. The

mixture of ages, classes, interests, sexes, is the one thing that keeps human society sweet and wholesome, and the influence of age is as necessary in the perfect community as the vigour and initiative of youth. Nor can it be a good thing to confine old people in barracks as in work-houses—to spend sad, lonely, loveless days amid bare and desolate surroundings, to fret and grumble at each other, and all the little world about them.

And here we may regret the decline of those handicrafts which furnished even extreme old age with some employment. Old Elspeth in the chimney corner, with her distaff and her bundle of yarn which is of actual use in the family economy, is a far more dignified person than Elspeth with vacant hands, crouching over the fire in the bare ward of a poor-house. In the Norman cottages the old grandmother winds cotton all day long, and prides herself in adding something to the family store. Or it is the old grandfather, who makes turves out of spent tan for the winter firing, or ranges the forest, and rakes together his bundle of dried sticks.

Although there are many illustrious examples of age in the van of the great workers of the age, yet there is no doubt that this is a period when veterans in general are rather at a discount. The old soldier is no longer in the ranks; there are no more grizzled Captains; the grey-headed Colonel, the father of his regiment, is a sight no longer to be seen. The battles of the world are, for the future, to be fought by boys and striplings, and seniority is likely henceforward to be looked upon as rather a bar than a claim to advancement. And the same tendency is to be observed in other directions. Those who have attained no commanding position before life is on the turn with them, are shouldered aside to make room for younger men. And all this terribly increases the strain upon men of middle age, while a feeling of hopelessness of further struggle comes upon those who are left stranded by the way.

Those who study the passing chronicles of life in the newspapers of the day, foreign as well as English, must have been struck by the increasing number of suicides to be attributed to the hopelessness and misery of advancing years. The dismal record of suicides has its bearing upon the general state of affairs. With advancing prosperity the number of those who thus fly the ills of life remains a pretty constant quantity; but any check to material progress at once

swells the ranks of the self-slaughtered. Thus in 1879 suicides made a great spring from an average of sixty-nine to eighty-one per million, and it is instructive if not inspiring, to note that by far the greater number of cases occur when the medium line of life is passed. Thus the number of cases between the ages of forty-five and fifty-five is far in advance of those at an earlier period, while the same remark applies to the next decade, although here there is a slight decrease from the one immediately before it. After sixty-five a dogged resignation seems to take the place of despair, and the number of suicides rapidly diminishes.

Now if we take the population returns for the last census, we shall find that, out of nearly twenty-six millions, the population of England and Wales, the number of men and women then in existence, and aged fifty years and upwards, is just about three millions and three-quarters, or rather more than a seventh of the whole population; and we come to the remarkable fact that this elder seventh furnishes at least half the number of suicides. And this is surely a strange fact which makes us speculate as to the possibility of making life more endurable to the rank and file of humanity, and especially to those who are verging into years.

The one encouraging fact is that, according to general testimony, the first steps towards age are the worst. From forty to fifty has been well called the old age of youth—full of regrets and vain revolt against the inevitable. But the following decade, the youth of old age, is often marked by renewed vigour and enterprise, if only we are content to follow the advice of good old Hoyle, and play the stages of the game: to follow the score, that is, and not attempt a grand game when there is only the odd trick to be won.

CHRONICLES OF SCOTTISH COUNTIES.

MIDLOTHIAN.

ALTHOUGH officially the county in question is known as Edinburgh, the name of Midlothian is both more pleasantly familiar and historically more suggestive. If the old Tolbooth of Edinburgh was rightly named the heart of Midlothian, the Lothians themselves might be styled the heart of Scotland. There could hardly have been a Scotland without the Lothians, any more

than there could have been a France without Paris. Here was the one element of stability that preserved the unity of the nation and crown of Scotland. Elsewhere the hold of the central power was often feeble and precarious. The powerful feudatories who overshadowed the royal throne often bade fair to overwhelm it altogether. The wild chiefs of the North, the Lord of the Western Isles, the proud Douglas, and the self-seeking Hamilton, together were thrice a match for the feeble and often impecunious monarchy, and singly could often bid it defiance. But the Lothians were always loyal, and from this stronghold the King and the law which he represented eventually made themselves recognised throughout the land.

Perhaps it helped somewhat towards this end that the population of the Lothians was rather Saxon than Celtic, and that the race of Cerdic and Egbert was continued in the line of Scottish Kings. The earliest existing building on the crest of the Castle Rock of Edinburgh is the chapel of the Saxon princess, that sainted Margaret, the Queen of Malcolm Canmore, who brought to Scotland, as part of her dower, that priceless relic of the true Cross, that Holy Rood, which was to give its name to the future palace of the royal line.

The first view of Edinburgh strikes the visitor, not only with admiration, but surprise. The site seems such a strange one for a great city. The usual dispensation that sends a big river rolling by a big town is altogether wanting. The wonder is vivid as to how it got there, perched upon its rocky height, this famous city, as Walter Scott describes it,

Whose ridgy back heaves to the sky,
Piled deep and massy, close and high,
Mine own romantic town!

What other town is there indeed that shares so completely in the grandeur of its natural surroundings as old Edinburgh, that seems like a part of the crested height on which it rears its dark bulk? The great cities of the plain have their own atmosphere, their own artificial climate; but the reek of Edinburgh mixes with the clouds of heaven, and, whether in haze and mist, in the darkness of the thunder-cloud, or the clear shining after rain, the city takes its part in the scene, and darkens, shines, and glowers in sympathy with every changing phase of light and shadow.

In truth Edinburgh was born of the rock; its Acropolis was the germ of its being; its steep High Street has crawled

slowly down from the Castle gate—that gate where Kings have sat in judgment, as the Kings of Judæa sat in the Gate of Jerusalem. For long centuries the city clung to the height that gave it birth, although not in its early life a fortified town. The real city of refuge was the Castle steep, and it was not till the middle of the fifteenth century that the town was girt with a wall, and the town began to rise storey above storey,

Within its sleepy limits pent,
By bulwark line and battlement,
And flanking towers and laky flood.

The "laky flood" was the once familiar "Nor' Loch," remembered even now by ancient witnesses as a foul and evil-smelling morass, which occupied the bottom of the ravine between the new and old towns, but which once, no doubt, was a crystal tarn, and deep enough to afford a complete defence to the north side of the town. After the defeat of Flodden, in the panic which followed that disaster, the burghers of Edinburgh extended the compass of the town wall so as to embrace the suburb which had sprung up outside the old wall, and within these limits the town grew upwards towards the sky.

It was at the latter end of the eighteenth century that Edinburgh finally burst its bonds, and that a new town was created on the open plateau which rose on the other side of the deep ravine of the Nor' Loch and sloped gradually down to the estuary of the Forth, or, as Walter Scott pictures his favourite town :

Unconfined and free,
Flinging thy white arms to the sea.

As for the origin of Edinburgh, it seems probable that the settlement of the Lothians proceeded side by side with that of the English part of Northumbria. The coast indeed, and the broad estuary of the Forth, would seem specially tempting to the restless dwellers on the opposite coasts. Landing on the low-lying shores of the Firth, the site of Edinburgh and its neighbouring hills appear boldly outlined against the sky; the conical height of Arthur's Seat dominating the whole, from which the outline sinks in a graceful curve, to rise again to the fine escarpment of cliff called Salisbury Crag. Further to the west the same outline is repeated at a lower level. Calton Hill forms the summit, and the outline continues across the invisible ravine, till it breaks off in the precipitous crag now crowned by the Castle; a rock which, from the earliest times, must have

been held as a stronghold by the race in possession of the district.

Angles and Picts may have fought for the possession of the Maiden Castle, for that is the earliest name that has come down to us as applied to Edinburgh. It is the "castrum puellarum" of ancient charters—an attractive title which there is little in its history to justify. The term Maiden, indeed, may be a corruption of an earlier Celtic title; but we must remember that there are many Maiden Castles in various parts of England, as well as Maiden ways and roads. The example of Maiden Lane may be cited as a familiar instance; and in fact many early earthworks, and other remains, not quite grand enough in scope for the work of the Evil One, are ascribed to the Maiden—a Maid of the Mist as far as etymology is concerned, for the origin of the term can only be guessed at.

There is little doubt, however, that Edwin, the great Northumbrian King, built a fort upon the rock and gave it his own name as Edwinsberg. And the Lothians and the Border counties to the south seem to have been rather English than Scotch till the beginning of the eleventh century, when the country passed as a matter of peaceful arrangement from the Earl of Northumbria to the King of Scots.

From that time the Castle of Edinburgh became the occasional seat of the royal line; but it was never, perhaps, a favourite residence of the Court. Dunfermline and Perth were successively the head-quarters of royalty, and it was only after the murder of James the First that the superior security of the Castle on the rock, and its greater distance from the wild tribes of the hills, brought the widowed Queen and the infant King, and with them the seat of government, to Midlothian.

Almost impregnable from its commanding position, the Castle of Edinburgh, though often besieged and captured, has never been taken by direct assault. In Bruce's days, when the fortress was in possession of the English, as Barbour relates, the Earl of Moray laid siege to it, but despaired of taking it, when one of the gentlemen of his troop, William Francis by name, volunteered to lead a party to escalate the rock. This Francis had, in his salad days, been an inmate of the Castle, and had then a sweetheart in the Grass-market whom he visited secretly at night, letting himself down on the south side of the crag, where there was a kind of goat's path from one projecting rock to another,

and ascending in the same way. The Earl determined to make the attempt in person, and one dark night, with thirty picked men behind him, he followed William Francis, who led the way, climbing from cranny to cranny in the almost precipitous face of the cliff. When the party at last had nearly reached the foot of the wall, they narrowly missed being discovered by the guard, who were going the round of the walls, when one of the picket threw a stone down the cliff, crying out: "Aha, I see you well!" as he peered over the battlements. The escalading party clung to their narrow perch in desperation, expecting nothing less than immediate destruction, but the soldier's alarm was but a time-honoured jest, and the guard only laughed and passed on. Once at the foot of the wall the Scots planted their ladders. It is difficult to conceive how they managed to drag such encumbrances up the cliff without being discovered, but there were the ladders anyhow, according to the chronicle, and the men swarmed up, and soon had mastered the watch and captured the garrison.

In the following reign, that of David the Second, we find the Castle again in the possession of the adherents of Edward Baliol; and this time the castle was captured by the Knight of Liddesdale, who made use of a stratagem which was as old as the siege of Troy. A vessel put into Leith loaded with hampers of wine, as was pretended, and the Governor of the Castle, joyfully consenting to receive such a pleasing cargo, the hampers with their bearers turned to armed men, who, raising the war-cry of "a Douglas," speedily disposed of the too confiding Castellan and his garrison.

After this exploit the Castle seems to have been dismantled, in accordance with the cautious Scottish policy of leaving no strong places for an enemy to occupy; and once, in the reign of the third English Edward, when his kinsman, the Count of Namur, landed a small force of knights and men-at-arms on the coast, and was badly beaten on the Burrough Muir, then an open plain to the south of the town, the survivors took refuge behind the broken walls of the Castle, and were able to make terms of honourable capitulation.

With the Stuarts, as has been already noted, the Castle became a royal residence; but the irksomeness of its steep and isolated security led the monarch to prefer, in peaceful times, the shelter of the royal Abbey of Holyrood.

In its present aspect Holyrood is bare and desolate enough; a palace amid the alums, a gloomy block of masonry in an arid desert of gravel, overpowered by the mass of hill and crag behind it, with which, from no point of view, it can be brought gracefully to compare, while the ruined fragment of the old Abbey church, incongruously attached to the palace of Charles the Second's days, heightens the feeling of desolation, without imparting the grace and sentiment of antiquity.

But by great good fortune—with much that is heavy and uninteresting—the very best part of the earlier palace has been preserved—the north-west tower of James the Fifth's building, with its extinguisher-turrets, the very tower that is consecrated, if that is the word, to the memory of Queen Mary Stuart. Of the old Abbey, its monks and abbots, and the story of its miraculous foundation, there is little to be said. The spectres that haunt the place are not those of the religious, whose cloisters and cells disappeared long ago, burnt by English raiders, or levelled to form the foundations of the royal palace. Instead of these we have murdered Rizzio, pierced with a hundred dagger thrusts; the handsome and fatuous Darnley; and Mary herself with her sweet beguiling face.

Between the Abbey and the Castle the way is direct enough, in one continuous street of tall and gloomy houses, festooned with the garments of the dwellers in the crowded flats—no longer so savoury as when Doctor Johnson declared to Boswell, on his progress to his lodgings in the night, that he smelt his countrymen in the dark, but still strongly flavoured with whisky and salt herrings.

First there is the Canongate, which takes its name from the canons of Holyrood, who had a charter to build a town of their own here, between the Abbey and the King's town, with the fine dark old Canongate Tolbooth, which, with its outside stair and pepperbox turrets, may give us a notion of the old Tolbooth of Edinburgh, the heart of Midlothian, now destroyed. Then there is old Q.'s mansion on the left, now a house of refuge, and where the High Street begins, is John Knox's house, a genuine relic of the great Reformer— quaint, dark, and dirty-looking without, haunted by old beggar women who claim an acquaintance with the passing stranger, and cozen him out of bawbees.

The Castle gun, which peals out at one o'clock, brings a fine waft of memories

with its roar. We may fancy that we hear the bells ringing backwards and the town drums beating the "rappel," as Bonnie Dundee rode up the street from the Parliament House, and away by the West Bow to raise the Highlands for King James; what time he climbed the rock to the postern gate, for some last pregnant words with Gordon, the Cock of the North, who held the Castle for royal James, while all the town below were shouting for William and Mary. Or we may recall the last notes of angry thunder from the Castle guns as Bonnie Prince Charlie held his Court at Holyrood, and all the fair Jacobite dames thronged to the long-deserted saloons as to a bridal—while, all the time, the Castle roared out lustily for King George.

With the crown of the steep, we come to St. Giles's Church, described, some half century ago, by Robert Chambers, in his "Picture of Scotland," as "a large, though ill-favoured building;" but now, thanks to the brother—we shall come presently to the familiar sign—restored, as well as builders and masons can restore a thing that is past, to the likeness of former days, when its aisles echoed to the tread of mail-clad warriors, and its purlieus were as often as not the scene of fierce cutting and slashing; when lords, and knights, and lairds shouldered each other in the narrow streets; and swords flew out, and pistol shots echoed sharply; and shutters flew up and doors were bolted and barred, as the burghers quickly realised that a fight was going on.

There are some yet living, who may remember to have seen the great Sir Walter striding up the street, with bright blue eye and jovial presence. We are almost as far from his day now as he was from the time of Prince Charlie and the '45; and with his presence what memories revive of the old literary world of Edinburgh—of the solid, hard-headed historians and thinkers, first of all, of David Hume, and Adam Smith, and Dugald Stewart; of the poets, too, Allan Ramsay and Ferguson; and, far above them all, Robert Burns, with his dark, vivid face; with Tom Campbell and John Leyden, to keep up the succession into the Augustan Age of Edinburgh, when Scott was busy in his little den in Castle Street, in that honest bow-fronted house, and Christopher North and the Ettrick Shepherd might be seen consorting together any day; when high inns went on in the taverns, and

high jokes in the clubs, and high talk in the snug coteries of the New Town. When, too, there were liberal publishers to pay the scores, and enterprising, too enterprising, publishers to bring out the rising author, when the last Scotch novel was eagerly looked for at all the libraries and bought by all the booksellers, and those who hung upon the skirts of the great wizard found abundant nourishment from the crumbs that fell from his table. Where are the jolly lairds, who bought the books and subscribed for the poems, and loved good literature as they loved good wine, and the high dames and noble spinsters who were so proud and yet so accessible, so highly bred and yet so original, and who sat for their portraits to the rising novelists with perfect naiveté and unconcern? And then the stern and awful critics in the background—the Scotch reviewers—fiercely gentle even to those of their own kin, but to outsiders how implacable.

It is going a long way back to talk of the sixteenth century, but assuredly the beginning of literary Edinburgh was when the courts of law which had long followed the King in vagrant fashion about the country, were fixed and concentrated in Edinburgh. There had been some wonderful law-givers in the old days, such as Crichton fræ Crichton Peel—the Chancellor of James the Second's young days—not an admirable Crichton by any means, although he may have been an ancestor of that prodigy, but a man as careless of blood-spilling, in the way of equity and justice, as any grim Douglas or cruel Hepburna. It was Crichton who was the author of the celebrated black dinner in Edinburgh Castle, about which there is an old and happily unfulfilled malediction in rhyme:

Edinburgh Castle, town and tower,
God grant ye sinke for sinne,
And that even for the black dinner
Earl Douglas gat therein.

That was the dinner of the black bull's head, it will be remembered, when young Earl Douglas and his brother were dragged from the hospitable board and beheaded in sight of their royal host.

But that kind of jurisprudence passed away when the courts of law were settled in Edinburgh, and a body of practitioners arose skilled in civil law, and interested in seeing that technical justice was done. And when the Royal Court was removed to England, the courts of law waxed even more powerful and important: while the

nobility and gentry, deprived by the strong arm of Government of the opportunity of fighting out their constant disputes and quarrels, turned to the equally fascinating, if more ruinous sport of litigation. The influence and example of French jurisprudence and procedure was powerful among the Scotch lawyers; their manners too were leavened with the old-fashioned French courtesy, and with an amenity that looked as much to the breeding—and liberality—of the litigants, as to the mere dry facts and legal aspects of the case. In the mutual relationship of the nobility of the sword and the robe, arose a school of high ceremony and politeness. Poetry and the belles lettres were cultivated—an apt quotation, or a felicitous epigram, was worth as much as a powerful argument. Thus was laid the foundation of a society polished and serene, undisturbed by the rush for wealth, or the competition for mere political distinction. And while in England the skilful but sterile policy of Walpole extinguished, as far as it was able, all the literary lights of the world of law and politics, and the influence of the Court of the Georges was even more withering and depressing; in far-off Edinburgh, apart from the roar of venal politicians and the turmoil of an illiterate Court, the stars of literary brightness rose in a clear, unclouded horizon.

But we must not forget that although Edinburgh city forms the most important part of Midlothian, yet there are other parts of the county which have their own annals and associations. There is Craigmillar Castle, for instance, three miles south of Edinburgh, which was often occupied by Queen Mary, and where, it is said, the murder of Darnley by the then original method of blowing him up by gunpowder, was finally decided upon and arranged. One trace of the Queen's former residence at the Castle is preserved in the name of an adjoining hamlet where the Queen's French Guards were constantly stationed, and which received in consequence the name of Petty France. The ruins are of a half-fortified mansion of the sixteenth century, for the feudal castle which once occupied the site was burnt by the English—blown up, perhaps, for burning had little effect upon the stout walls of ancient castles—but anyhow, the ground was cleared for the new castle, now in its turn a ruin. There exists a famous quarry on the north side of the castle from which, according to tradition, the stone was raised to build Edinburgh

Castle so long ago as the time of the Picts, when wheeled carriages being unknown to that primitive people, they formed line all along the way and handed the stones from one to the other, as in shot drill—a story this, by the way, which is told of more than one old castle.

Then we have Merchistoun and the weather-beaten tower, where John Napier, whose fame is connected with logarithms, was born some time in the sixteenth century. Newbattle Abbey too, though a modern house, has an interesting connection with the line that possesses it—the last Abbot of Newbattle, a lay abbot no doubt, being the founder of the family, his son, Mark Ker, having procured that the abbacy should be converted into a temporal lordship.

The first Lady Ker, by-the-way, could not very well have been called a Lady Abbess, as she had no fewer than thirty-one children, and had the reputation of being a most powerful witch, circumstances that may have made her lord regret that he had not lived in a former age.

There is Dalhousie Castle too, which recalls the Sir Alexander Ramsay of Bruce's days, the marks of whose powerful sword were long pointed out in a riven stone between Burrough Muir and Edinburgh Castle, and who was inhumanly murdered by the Knight of Liddesdale.

Nor should Pinkie House be forgotten, a fine old manor that once was the country seat of the royal Abbey of Dunfermline, although the house itself is of past Reformation times. A house that had a kind of halo about it in Jacobite memories, as Prince Charles slept there on the night after his victory at Prestonpans.

And then we come to Musselburgh Links, where racing seems to have been indigenous, but notable too for another kind of meeting, when twenty thousand Covenanters lined the moors from Musselburgh to Leith, and six hundred ministers in Geneva gowns and bands, are reported to have stood upon one hill; all with their faces towards the envoy of King Charles the First, the Marquis of Hamilton, who was charged to see if he could not bring the Covenanters to some accommodation. Cromwell, too, lay for a time encamped on Musselburgh Links, and the hole that was made to receive his tent is still shown by the people of the neighbourhood.

But, except for occasional nooks here and there, the general surface of Midlothian apart from Edinburgh is not interesting.

It abounds in coal-mines, in quarries, and kilns, so that there is all the pleasure of surprise and contrast when the beautiful dell of the Esk is reached, with Roslyn Castle and Chapel on its brink, and classic Hawthornden in close proximity. The marvellous detail of the interior of Roslyn Chapel is well known, with its 'prentice pillar beautifully wreathed in sculptured foliage; and the story of the master mason, who journeyed to Rome to find out the way to do it, and, seeing on his return that the 'prentice had accomplished the task unaided much better than his master could have done with all his acquired knowledge, hit the poor youth on the head with his mallet, and so emancipated him from any further servitude.

As for Hawthornden and its memories of William Drummond, and his friend and guest Ben Jonson, are they not familiar to the reading public as household words? But the traditional report of their meeting has a stamp of reality about it—the utterance of the somewhat pompous author, who does not forget that he is also a worshipful laird, contrasted with the reticence of the professional scribe who has tramped on foot from Westminster to Scotland.

DRUMMOND *loq.*: Welcome, welcome, Royal Ben!
JONSON replies: Thankye, thankye, Hawthornden.

Unhappily, Royal Ben's account of the interview is not forthcoming, nor the notes that he took on his long but interesting tramp.

CHARMS, OMENS, AND ANCIENT QUACKERIES.

IN THREE PARTS. PART I.

PERHAPS the least harmful of the useless, and (as they now seem to us) ridiculous practices employed in former times for the cure of diseases was that of mumbling a certain formula of words believed to constitute an all-powerful charm to remove certain physical ailments.

Mr. Pepys has preserved for us in his "Diary" a few unique specimens of these charms. It must not, however, be for one moment supposed that the diarist was himself a believer in the efficacy of these charms—indeed, there is every reason for believing that he was not—although, even in the time of Charles the Second, the medical profession was characterised by some very queer usages. To give an illustration, Mr. Pepys records, in dilating upon Her Majesty's illness, that

"she had to be shaved, and pigeons put to her feet." The first charm to which Mr. Pepys refers is in Latin, and was employed in stanching blood:

Blood remain in thee,
As Christ was in Himself; ;
Blood remain in thy vein,
As Christ in his own suffering;
Blood remain fixed,
As Christ, when He was crucified.

The next in order was one to be applied for the purpose of extracting a thorn:

Jesus, that was of a Virgin borne,
Was prickled bothe with naile and thorne;
It neither wealed, nor belled, nor rankled, nor boned;
In the name of Jesus, no more shall this.

Here is another and somewhat improved charm for the cure of the selfsame accident:

Christ was of a Virgin borne,
And he was prickled with a thorne,
And it did neither bell nor swell,
And I trust in Jesus this never will.

The formula to be gone through for the cure of cramp was quite as simple. All that it was necessary for the patient to do was to repeat these words:

Cramp, be thou painless,
As Our Lady was stainless,
When she bore Jesus.

For a burn, burning or scalding, no matter how severe, the patient was recommended to recite these words:

There came three angels out of the East,
The one brought fire, the other brought frost;
Out fire, in frost,
In the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.

For the cure of a person bewitched or overlooked, it was necessary that the blood of the one that had bewitched or overlooked him or her should be "drawn," after which the afflicted person would be restored to his accustomed health. Few cures for this malady were of more common belief a hundred years ago, and, strange to say, in some remote parts of the country it still exists. Notably is this the case in Dorsetshire, where only recently a woman was very properly punished by the law for violently attacking a next-door neighbour, in order that the former might draw blood, on the ground that the old woman had bewitched her daughter, a confirmed invalid. The old woman, who was a most inoffensive person, was in her garden when she was attacked, and the blood was drawn by a darning-needle being driven several times into her hands and arms.

The belief in the power of wise men and women to cure ailments by means of

charms is very common in Wales, even to the present day. A very frequently applied charm for the cure of epilepsy, among the lower orders about London and particularly in Essex, was to cut the tip off a black cat's tail, in order to get from it three drops of blood, which were to be taken in a teaspoonful of milk from a woman's breast, and repeated three times successively. Another cure was for the patient to creep head foremost down three flights of stairs, three times each day for three days successively; three being the root of the magic number nine.

Here is a charm that was actually tried in the Year of Grace, 1886, in Devonshire. A young woman, living in the neighbourhood of Holsworthy, having for some considerable time been subject to periodical fits of illness, endeavoured to effect a cure by attending at the afternoon service at the parish church, accompanied by thirty young men, her near neighbours. Service over, she sat in the porch of the church, and each of the young men, as they passed out in succession, dropped a penny into her lap, but the last, instead of a penny, gave her half-a-crown, taking from her the twenty-nine pennies which she had already received. With this half-crown in her hand, she walked three times round the Communion Table, and afterwards had the coin made into a ring, by the wearing of which she believed she should recover her health.

Dr. Harvey has left on record the following recipe, as a preventive against consumption and hectic fevers:

"Take half-a-pound of garden snails with their shells, especially those that are about vines; wash them well with water and a little salt; then wash them once or twice more with fair water, to wash off the salt; then bruise them with their shells to a mash in a stone mortar. Add to them ground ivy, speedwell, lungwort, scabious, burnet, colt's foot, and nettle tops, of each a handful; English liquoras, half an ounce; dates, stoned, twelve in number; of the four great cold seeds, of each one dram and a half; saffron, a scruple. Put them with the snails in a new glazed pipkin, or tin coffee pot, which is better, and pour on them a quart of spring water; fasten the cover close to the pipkin, by pasting round it a quantity of dough. Set the pipkin in a kettle of hot water over the fire; let it stand therein for twelve hours, then strain it and press out the liquor, dissolving into it, while it is warm, a quarter of a pound

of clarified honey. Put it into glass bottles and keep in a cellar."

In Scotland, nettles and southernwood, or, as it is called, muggins or mugwort, are held good for the cure of consumption. Dr. Robert Chambers says: "The funeral of a young woman was passing on the high road on the margin of the Firth of Clyde, above Port Glasgow, when a mermaid raised her head above the water, and in slow, admonitory tones uttered the following words:

If they wad drink nettles in March,
And eat muggins in May,
Sae mony braw maidens
Wadna gang to the clay!"

As may readily be surmised, muggins or mugwort and a decoction of nettles form a favourite prescription for consumption among the common people.

A great deal more importance was attached by our ancestors to the value of culinary preparations than is now attached by us. Here is, for instance, a recipe for a broth or callis, that was guaranteed to cure one far gone in the worst stages of consumption, if daily taken fasting and on going to bed:

"You take a young cock, or a capon; cut him in quarters and bruise all his bones; then take the root of fennel, parsley, and hickory, violet leaves and borage. Put him into an earthen pot for stewing meats in, and between every quarter lay some of the roots and herbs, corianders, whole mace, anise seeds, liquorice scraped and aliced, so filling up the pot. Then put in half a pint of rose-water, a quart or more of white wine, two or three dates made clean and cut in pieces, a few prunes and raisins of the sun—and if you put in certain pieces of gold it will be the better, and they never the worse—and so cover it close, and stop it with dough, and set the pot in seething water, and let it seethe gently for the space of twelve hours, with a good fire kept still under the brass pot that it standeth in, and the pot kept with liquor so long. When it hath stilled so many hours take out the earthen pot, open it, strain out the broth into some clean vessel, and give some to the sick person morning and evening, as I said, warmed and spiced, as best pleaseth the taste."

It is surprising to find how many people yet believe that warts may be charmed away. The processes are fairly well known and very simple, but the connection between the process and the result is very misty. An old woman is generally the

"charmer," and mutters some outlandish gibberish, repeats the Lord's Prayer backwards or something equally as absurd, and gives the victim of the warts a piece of stick. This is to be thrown away or burned, and, as it decays, the warts disappear. Another charm, "equally as efficacious," is to spit on the warts for nine mornings in succession before breaking the fast, and on the tenth all traces of them will have disappeared.

It is generally believed by rustics and superstitious persons that the seventh son born of one mother, without a daughter coming in between, is a "natural doctor," having the power to cure several diseases without the aid of medicines, and to tell the whereabouts of stray cattle or stolen property.

If the seventh son be likewise the son of a seventh son, his powers are little short of miraculous. In Cornwall, the miners believe that such an one can cure the King's Evil by a simple touch, though the process is usually for the miracle-worker to stroke the part affected three times, to blow upon it three times, to repeat a form of words, and to give a perforated can or some other object to be worn as an amulet. In Ireland, the lucky son was credited with prophetic, in addition to healing power; while in Scotland, the seventh daughter of a seventh daughter is said to be gifted with second sight as well as healing and prophecy.

As lately as one hundred years ago the following was prescribed by "wise women," and worn round the neck, as an infallible charm for the cure of toothache:

Mars, hur, abursa, abarse,
Jesus Christ for Mary's sake,
Take away this toothache.

This triplet charm was written on paper, enclosed in a clew or bag, and worn round the neck. In some parts of the country it was believed that when the spell was burned the toothache would vanish. In Devonshire, and in some parts of Scotland, a tooth taken from a skull is worn round the neck as a charm against disease of the teeth; in Ireland, rustics afflicted with this annoying pain rise early, take a sharp-pointed stick and push it with the afflicted tooth into the soil of a newly-made grave. As lately as the time of the first George, a splinter from a gibbet upon which some notorious criminal had swung, or, better still, was yet swinging, was accounted a certain specific against the toothache. In Devonshire, again, and many other parts of

the country, the parings of the toe-nails cut on Good Friday morning used to be worn round the neck to charm away toothache; while in Cornwall it is believed that relief can be obtained by biting away, close to the ground, the first fern of spring maidenhair spleenwort, if possible, though common bracken will do just as well. In Norfolk and Lincolnshire it was customary to make a poultice of horseradish, and, if the tooth which ached was on the left side, the poultice was placed round the right wrist, and vice versa. The author of this specific is said to have been Clause Patch, the celebrated English Gipsy King. In the Cathedral of Cologne is the holy tooth of Saint Apollonia, and, on that saint's day, it is extremely difficult to get near the case in which the relic is kept, on account of the crowd of toothaching devotees, of all ages and sexes, who press forward for the purpose of kissing the preserved molar, and by faith relieving their pain. In some parts of North Russia school-children, before the duties of the day commence, are ranged in lines, and not only hands and finger-nails, but the condition of their teeth are also carefully inspected. Woe betide any urchin whose molars are then found to be discoloured! This precaution notwithstanding, sound teeth are considered a boon worth praying for by the Russian, and as he kisses the portal of the church door, he exclaims: "Holy Sergius, as this stone is firm and sound and strong, so grant my teeth may be."

The following strange case occurred during the time that women were prosecuted in England for witchcraft. An eminent Judge was travelling his circuit, when an old woman was brought before him on a charge of having held a spell or charm to cure dimness of sight. Her charm consisted of hanging a "clew" of yarn round the neck of the patient; and marvellous things were told by the witnesses of the cures which this spell had performed on patients who were supposed to have been far beyond the reach of ordinary medicine. The only defence made by the poor woman to the charge, which involved one of witchcraft, was a protestation that if there was any witchcraft in the ball of yarn she was not aware of it. The clew was given to her, she said, thirty years before, by a young Oxford student, for the cure of one of her own family, who having used it with advantage, she had seen no harm in lending it for the relief of others who laboured under a similar infirmity, or in accepting a

small gratuity for doing so. Her defence was little heeded by the jury; but the Judge appeared to be very much agitated by the story. He asked the woman where she resided when she obtained possession of this valuable relic. She gave the name of the village in which she had in former times kept an alehouse. The Judge then looked at the clew very earnestly, and at length addressed the jury in these terms: "Gentlemen, we are on the point of committing a great injustice to this poor old woman, and, to prevent it, I must publicly confess a piece of early folly which does me no honour. At the time this poor creature speaks of I was at college, leading an idle and careless life, which, had I not been given grace to correct, must have made it highly improbable that ever I should have attained my present situation. I chanced to remain for a day and a night in this woman's alehouse, without having money to discharge my reckoning. Not knowing what to do, and, seeing her much occupied with a child who was suffering from weak eyes, I had the meanness to pretend that I could write out a spell that would mend her daughter's sight, if she would accept it instead of her bill. The ignorant woman readily agreed, and I scrawled some figures on a piece of parchment, and added two lines of nonsensical doggerel, in ridicule of her credulity, and caused her to make it up in the "clew" which has so nearly cost her her life. To prove the truth of it, let the yarn be unwound, and you may then judge of the efficacy of the spell." The clew was unwound, when the couplet mentioned by the Judge was found in it on a piece of parchment. The jury were satisfied, and the poor woman was discharged.

In Scotland a daisy was, and in some parts still is, regarded as a healing plant. If a sick man can only put his foot on a fully expanded daisy, he has hopes of recovery; just as in other parts some mountain spring or quiet stream is supposed to possess magical powers. Faith, no doubt, has a good deal to do with the cure, and the thought that touching any green object would effect a cure would do much to accomplish the same. It is further believed that if the farmer kneels down and bites off the first daisy of spring a plentiful crop will be his reward; and, though somewhat ludicrous, it is a common occurrence in places to see sturdy and otherwise sensible sons of the soil thus kneeling down and kissing mother earth.

Arnold de Villeneuve, who flourished in the thirteenth century, is said, according to Dr. Mackay, to have left the following recipe for ensuring a length of years considerably surpassing the period which is generally supposed to be green old age. A person thus wishful to prolong his life must rub himself two or three times a week with the juice of marrow or cassia. Every night, on going to bed, he must place on his head a plaister composed of a certain quantity of Oriental saffron, red rose leaves, sandal-wood, aloes, and amber, liquefied in oil of roses and the best white wax. In the morning he must take it off, and enclose it carefully in a leaden box until the next night, when it must be again applied. If he be of a sanguine temperament, he is to take sixteen chickens; if phlegmatic, twenty-five; and if melancholy, thirty. These he is to put in a yard where the air and water are pure. Upon these he is to feed, eating one a day. But these chickens are to be fattened in a peculiar way, which will impregnate their flesh with the qualities which are to produce longevity to the eater. Being deprived of all other nourishment till they are almost dying of hunger, they are to be fed on a broth made of serpents and vinegar, thickened with wheat and bran. After two months of such diet they will be fit for the intending Methuselah's table, and are to be washed down with copious draughts of good hock or claret.

There is the hen that is reputed in fairy tales to have laid golden eggs as fast as ever she was required; and there is the black hen of superstition that brings a golden harvest to its possessor. Both are unlike as can be. The story of the black hen, which discloses an infallible recipe for the rapid accumulation of an immense fortune, runs thus:

Take a young black hen, neither too young nor too old, at eleven o'clock at night, neither before nor after; do not make it scream or squeak on any account; hold it tight, but do not choke it, and with it go to any spot where two roads meet. When you hear the mystic hour of midnight strike, make a circle on the ground with a cypress wand; stand in the middle of it—the circle, not the wand—cut the hen in two, and say these mystic words three times:

Eloim, Essaim, Shessaim,
Kiam, Koam, Keeam,
Fugativi et appellavi.

Immediately turn to the east and kneel down and pray. When your prayer is

over utter the great summons, and lo! and behold you the great spirit will forthwith make his appearance, clothed in a scarlet-laced coat, yellow vest, and green pantaloons, prepared to do your bidding. In order that the wrong person may not receive the commands, I should add that he who will obey has a dog's head, ass's ears, and horns and hoofs. He will at once say, "What wantest thou?" and his voice will sound like double-distilled thunder. You have then only to speak, to become rich, mighty, and honoured. Due precaution, however, is essentially necessary; the one who calls up the spirit or fiend must be in a state of grace, or, instead of obeying, the spirit of the fiend will himself demand obedience, and will have it too. The experiment, all things considered, is a risky one for timid people to attempt.

The hand of glory is a Russian superstition. In this semi-barbarous land there exists a deeply-rooted belief that wonderful powers are possessed by the owner of the hand of a man who has been executed. It must, however, be a left hand. After obtaining possession of the hand it must be salted, dried in the sun, and then baked. In it must be put a candle made of Lapland sesame and virgin wax. It may then be lit, and in whatever place the fortunate owner may enter people remain spell-bound and motionless, and you can do just what your fancy dictates.

Another story tells how a candle made of grease from human flesh will throw out sparks when near hidden treasure, and go out when close to the treasure. In our own country, in the time of Charles the Second, ten guineas was thought a small price for the hand of a person who had been executed. The scrofula could be cured by the patient merely being rubbed by one of these horrible relics; and many other virtues were supposed to be attached to them. In the Roman Catholic chapel at Ashton, in Mansfield, there was formerly, if not now, a dead or holy hand, much treasured as a relic, and believed in for its wonderful power to cure. It belonged to a certain Father Arrowsmith, who was executed at Lancaster in the year 1628. His right hand was cut off after death by one of his friends, and preserved for many years in Bryn Hall, after which it was sent to Ashton. Many tales are recorded of the marvellous cures this "holy" relic has wrought. It was supposed to cure tumours, which were rubbed by it, and in 1872 a paralysed person walked many miles in

order to try its efficacy, but was found on the way too exhausted to proceed.

In the county of Suffolk, and I dare say elsewhere, an extraordinary superstition with regard to the efficacy of sacramental wine exists; cures, it is alleged, having been effected through its instrumentality when all other means had failed. It is not long since that a clergyman was applied to by a nurse, on behalf of a baby who would not cease crying, for some such wine. The nurse evidently believed the child to be bewitched, while the clergyman considered that it suffered from flatulence. However, the wine was given, and as no second application was made, negative evidence was afforded that a cure may have been worked by its means.

LOST IN THE VALLEY.

By the Author of "Driven of the Wind," etc.

A STORY IN SIXTEEN CHAPTERS.

CHAPTER V.

IN the meantime, happily ignorant of the hostility he was incurring, Maurice was enjoying to the full his last hours in Paris. Eveline had arranged that he should go for a last drive in the Bois with her; then she was to leave him at the house of some friends with whom he was going to dine.

"You must see me again to-night to say good-bye," she said, as they drove slowly in an open carriage round the lake.

"How can I?" he asked. "You are going to the Opera with Mrs. O'Hara, and the Devignes will be sure to keep me till late, as they are going to have singing and recitations in my honour to-night."

"Well, we shall probably both be home at the same time. If you are back before me, I will leave orders with Hélène to show you to the little salon. There you will find the cosiest wood fire, and you may dip into Mudie's latest consignment and smoke cigarettes till I come. It will be our last chance of a quiet talk, for, at nine to-morrow morning I shall lose you; and one is so stupid at nine in the morning; one cannot even say one is sorry to lose a dear, dear friend."

Her voice broke a little at the last words.

"There, now I am going to cry in the Bois, before everyone," she said, smiling at him through a mist of tears. "You will come, will you not?"

"Of course I will," he answered. "Apart

from you yourself I am so fond of that dear little salon, that I am heartbroken at the thought of leaving it. I know I shall begin pulling our odious drawing-room at The Grange about the moment I get there, endeavouring to infuse into its unloveliness something of the Oriental charm of your room. We are all crewel-work and conventionality at home."

"I should like to see your home," she said dreamily.

"No, you would not, I assure you. Our drawing-room chairs would set your teeth on edge. And you would look, oh! so out of place there!"

Eveline looked hurt.

"But I was not always rich," she persisted. "Years ago, before my marriage, I was very poor, dependent on my step-father's charity, and he was mean. I had many changes of fortune during my married life too——" she stopped short.

Maurice had often before noticed her reluctance to allude to any phase of her former experience. But there was one point on which his curiosity could no longer be restrained.

"Would you mind telling me your married name?" he asked.

She looked at him quickly, an expression almost of alarm crossing her face. Then she laughed in rather a constrained manner.

"Of course I thought you knew," she said. "My husband's death was such a—shock to me that I never even mention my old name. He was the Count of Montecalvo."

"How strange!" exclaimed Maurice. "I have met a gentleman of that name twice at Madame De Vaux's soirées. A tall man with a long black beard and moustache. Surely he is some relative of yours, and would know you?"

"He was my husband's brother," said Eveline; "but, as you leave Paris to-night, you will not meet him again."

"By Jove, I shall though!" exclaimed Maurice, as his eyes strayed among the well-dressed crowd thronging the park, "for there he is."

"Where? I don't see him. The sun is in my eyes," said Eveline, hastily opening her parasol, and letting its shade effectually conceal her face.

"He is looking this way," said Maurice, raising his hat as a handsome dark Italian, with long black beard and moustache, rode past their carriage. The Count of Montecalvo returned his salute. Then, impelled

by a fashionable idler's instinct to see the face of any woman who is trying to conceal it, he reined in his horse a moment, by which manœuvre he caught a sudden view of the delicate profile—ashen-white at this moment—of Eveline Douglas.

Maurice, looking at him, saw him start, change colour, and frown heavily, then whip up his horse and hurry past the carriage.

He looked at Eveline in surprise. Was this the greeting that she expected from her brother-in-law? There was no look of surprise or dismay on her face, only the same hopeless, hunted expression which he had seen there once before, when Janet Douglas insulted her at Mrs. O'Hara's. She was staring straight before her with eyes that saw nothing, and her gloved hand, when he touched it, was cold as death.

"Mrs. Douglas, my dear Mrs. Douglas, are you ill? Shall I tell the coachman to drive you home?"

"No, no, it is nothing," she said, forcing herself to smile; "only the sight of that man, whom I have not seen since my husband's death, was—was painful to me. His family will not receive me, because they always thought it a *mésalliance*, being very proud, you see."

"Proud!" he echoed; "they ought to have been proud of you. You look every inch a Countess, a Queen!"

She turned her face, in its pale beauty, towards him, a smile of the tenderest gratitude filling her eyes.

"Thank you, Maurice," she said simply.

She was silent again until Maurice's destination was nearly reached; then, gently laying her hand on his, she said:

"Try to think of me always well. You will hear many things against me, I dare say, some true, some false. I have done very little good in my life, and a great deal of harm. But at least I can say this: that the good was intentional, and the harm was not."

"I shall always think of you as I know you," he answered, pressing her hand between both his, "my ideal of all that is sweet, and beautiful, and good."

For answer she only sighed, and, with a reminder that if he returned first he was to wait for her, she left him at the door of his friend's house.

The incidents of the day and the thought of his coming farewell interview with her, had combined to plunge him into a nervous, excited, restless state, most unusual to him. He was absent-minded and

silent during dinner; he could think of nothing but Eveline Douglas; of her strange half-confidences; of the lingering tenderness with which she held his hand in meeting and parting with him; of her great, half-veiled eyes; of her delicious voice. The whole world, according to her account, seemed in a conspiracy against her, and yet she seemed the last woman alive, with her gentleness and evenness of temper, to provoke dislike. But de Villars's insolent assurance, Miss Douglas's violent abuse, and the cold hatred that flashed into her brother-in-law's face at sight of her, all recurred to his mind with irritating persistency.

He was sorry that Dr. Grantley had not yet returned to town, as he would have liked to question him concerning the unaccountable animosity, which so many people seemed to cherish against his beautiful friend. The O'Haras were full of her praises, but they never volunteered any information as to her former career. Maurice was certain it was a long record of undeserved suffering, but he would have liked to know the particulars, that he might boldly champion her cause against her detractors whenever he should meet them.

At Madame Devigne's he was asked who was the lovely woman he had been seen with in the Bois, and he found himself thinking, as he stated it was an English widow lady, how very little more he really knew about her.

Would she tell him anything more to-night, he wondered, at that farewell interview which, he now determined, should be as long as possible? And how would she say good-bye? Would she kiss him? She might well do so, in the semi-motherly fashion in which she treated him. He was glad he had never deceived her with regard to his age. Thinking he was seventeen, she would be more likely to press those perfect lips to his cheek as she said good-bye. Not a permanent good-bye. He would write to her, prepare his mother to receive her on a visit, or, better still, would himself return to Paris next Easter—Paris was so extremely nice at Easter. These thoughts filling his mind, rendered his conversation, never of the most brilliant order, even less so than usual this evening. But he made up for his deficiencies by singing "Good-bye" later on, in a manner that affected his hearers more than his singing had ever done before.

As early as possible he excused himself

on the plea of packing, and by half-past ten he was in a fiacre on his way back to the Boulevard Haussmann. Running lightly up the marble staircase to the second floor, he found, as he expected, that Eveline had not yet returned. Hélène, however, smiled at him, and showed him into the inner salon, radiant with light from the ruby-coloured hanging lamps, and the ruddy, scented logs, crackling in the fireplace—for the evenings were growing cold, just cold enough for a man fully to appreciate the luxurious, perfumed warmth of this room.

He flung himself into a low armchair, and, closing his eyes, listened to the hissing of the firewood, and the splash of the fountain.

The kitten—her pet white kitten—came and rubbed itself against his knee. Taking it up tenderly, he pressed his cheek against its fur, and kissed it as he had sometimes seen her do. She would be here very soon, sweeping across the velvety carpet in her trailing silk gown, filling the room with her beauty, rivalling the falling water with the melody of her voice. What would she wear? This was always a most exciting question with him. She was like a whole gallery of beautiful pictures, in her constant changes of rich and harmonious dresses. He began to roam about the room, taking a farewell of all her pretty things—pictures, china, curiosities. In an open cabinet, at the back of an ivory casket, he caught sight of a closed miniature case he did not remember to have been shown. Was it a portrait of her? He had never seen one; so, taking it out, he opened it eagerly.

It was a small painting, on ivory, of two young men, one of whom he guessed, by his resemblance to the Count of Montecalvo, to be Eveline's husband.

It was a bad face, Maurice decided, as he held the picture to the light. Distinctly handsome, of a purely Italian type, with bold, black-fringed eyes, and a short, dark beard and moustache that did not conceal the cruel, sensual mouth. "Clever and bad," Maurice thought, as he turned his attention to the face of the other man. A foreign type again, but fairer, younger, weaker, handsomer still, with an indolent smile playing round the half-shut eyes and uncertain mouth. The picture was interesting, in any case, from the contrast between the two faces; the one imperious and evil, the other languid and weak-minded in expression. They were half-length portraits, and the two stood there.

the younger with his arm affectionately thrown round the other's neck. A memory of a long dead and gone friendship, and possibly of many other things concerning which at this moment Maurice was ignorant.

The clock, a dainty toy set in a porcelain frame, struck eleven as he stood looking at the miniature. Almost at the same moment he heard a sound in the next room. The intervening door was ajar. He had left it so, that he might hear Eveline arrive. The door was entirely hidden on the other side by the blue-grey silk curtains draped across it.

It was a man's step, Maurice felt certain. Was it Pierre? But why should Pierre creep about in that stealthy fashion? After a few seconds the noise ceased, and, as Maurice was on the point of throwing open the intervening door to make sure that it was not a thief concealing himself there, he heard a ring at the outer door, and voices in the hall.

It was Eveline returning from the Opera. He heard her enter the salon, and give an order to *Hélène*, then dismiss her with her opera-cloak. He could hear the sweep of her dress as she approached the door of the room where he stood. Then suddenly she stopped short with a smothered cry.

"*M. de Villars*, you here?" she exclaimed. "How dare you enter my rooms at this time?"

Maurice could hear her make a sudden movement, probably to the bell. Then she stopped again, as if her action had been impeded.

"*Ange adorée!*" exclaimed the Marquis, in a passionate whisper. "I saw you at the Opera, and left before you. I entered while your maid was flirting with the valet upstairs. She had left the door open. I saw my chance, and took it. Ah, do not repulse me! You cannot! You must not! Perfidy, will you kill me with your coldness, your cruelty? And all for what? For an insignificant schoolboy who cannot appreciate you, cannot worship you as I do."

"*M. de Villars*," said Eveline, in a cold, hard voice. "Shall I ring, or will you avoid a scandal, and go now?"

"No, upon my soul, I will not! Eveline, I know too much about you for you to dare to treat me in this way. If I leave you now, I swear to you I will go straight to *M. Wilde*, and tell him everything."

"And do you think you are going the right way to win my affection by incessantly forcing your society upon me, by wearying me with your threats, and by striving to alienate the only friend I have?" she asked bitterly. "Do you consider your conduct is that of a gentleman? Do you see nothing cowardly in thus persecuting a lonely and unhappy woman with open threats and covert insults? Do you think you are likely thus to endear yourself to me? *Mr. Wilde* is not, will never be, my lover; but if he were, if he was dearer to me than anything in this world, I could not love him more than I detest you. Now go."

Both Eveline and her companion spoke in French, and so low and rapidly that Maurice could not distinguish what they were saying. He was extremely uncomfortable at being thus an unintentional eavesdropper. But he knew that Eveline at least was aware of his presence near, and that, if she wanted him, she had only to call him to her. He drew nearer to the door as he heard her last words.

"Ah! but you are sublime when you are excited," he heard the Marquis say. "I had rather you should hate me than look at me like a marble statue. Eveline, you are beautiful as an angel. Your hatred, your contempt, what are they to me? Anger makes you only more lovely, more irresistible. And I know how to change your feelings to me. No—you shall not ring."

He stopped. Maurice heard the Countess make a rapid movement forward, then stop suddenly, as if intercepted.

Throwing aside the portière, the young Englishman entered the room just in time to see the Marquis catch her in his arms, and to hear her startled cry:

"Maurice!"

Before *M. de Villars* had seen him, Maurice had seized him by the shoulder, and pushed him aside with more strength than he had thought himself capable of. Then, holding aside the curtains from the door of the room he had just left with one hand, he offered the other to Eveline with grave politeness.

She looked at him a moment, hesitating; then she let him lead her in silence to the adjoining room.

"Stay here, Madame," was all he said. Then, closing the door, he stood with his back to it, facing the Marquis.

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ALL THE YEAR ROUND

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A DATELESS BARGAIN.

By C. L. PIRKIS,

Author of "Lady Lovelace," etc.

CHAPTER XIX.

THE slowly-breaking dawn of the winter's day that was to have heard the wedding-bells of Joyce Shenstone found her standing beside Mab as she lay on her bed, chafing her hands, bathing her ice-cold forehead, trying to force wine between her colourless lips.

Mab had been brought back to the house, about half-an-hour after she had quitted it, in a cab. The cabman had stated that he was on his way to Mrs. Shenstone's house, on the chance of picking up a fare, when a man standing with the lady at the corner of a by-street had hailed him, telling him the lady's address and bidding him drive carefully. The lady appeared to be in a half-fainting condition, and had to be almost lifted into the cab.

She had altogether fainted when they had opened the cab door, and had had to be carried up the stairs to her own room. There she lay inert, lifeless, her features, ashen grey against her white pillows, mocked by the glister of the jewels which still hung about her brown plaits and sparkled on her arms.

Joyce's face was only by one degree less death-like in its pallor, as she bent over her. It was by many degrees more anxious and bewildered. Wonder and anxiety halved her heart between them. By-and-by Mab might awaken to both, but for the nonce blessed unconsciousness held her.

Joyce had at first, naturally enough, imagined that the man who had called the

cab, and lifted Mab into it, must have been Frank; and had, also naturally enough, wondered greatly why he had not jumped into it after her, and himself brought her safely home.

A few questions addressed by Uncle Archie to the cabman quickly proved the surmise incorrect.

"Did the gentleman give any reason for not driving home with the young lady?" he asked.

The man answered with a knowing look:

"He wasn't a gentleman, nohow, sir. Whatever he was, he wasn't that. It was too dark to see what his face was like, or what his clothes were either. But I haven't drev a cab for fifteen years not to know a gentleman's 'hi' from a working-man's 'hi.'

The speech wanted translating. Uncle Archie was at first inclined to believe that the organ of sight was referred to. Little by little, however, the man's meaning made itself plain to him. The old gentleman grew suddenly abrupt and abstracted. He gave short, sharp answers to Joyce, bidding her be off and look after Mab, and not bother him. Then he despatched one of the servants to Frank's rooms to see if he had returned there, another to the nearest police station to request the immediate attendance of the Superintendent.

The candles had burned low, the grey dawn had deepened into the dun yellow of a London sky, before the faintest sign of returning life showed in Mab's face.

Her heavy lids lifted a moment; drooped again; lifted once more; and the deep, wondering eyes fixed themselves on Joyce's face.

"Joyce, tell me what has happened," she whispered faintly.

But the doctor interposed. He would not have so much as a word exchanged

between the sisters, till half-an-hour of rest had intervened, till tonics or food had been taken, and the patient's recovery assured.

So Joyce had to endure half-an-hour of bewildering suspense, with the unanswered question: "where is Frank? what occurred to separate you two?" held back with difficulty, and her sense of hearing straining to its utmost limit to detect the sound of Frank's ring at the door, his step on the stairs.

When at length the weary half-hour had counted out its thirtieth minute, and Mab, still with that white puzzled look on her face, repeated the request, "Joyce, Joyce, tell me what has happened," Joyce met it with the counter-question, "Mab, darling, tell me, first of all, what has become of Frank? Where did you and he separate?"

Mab stared blankly, "Frank! Frank!" she repeated, "I have not been with him, have not seen him ever since—since—" here she broke off, putting her hand to her head as though the effort to think pained her, "since the night of the party, that was, oh I don't know how long ago."

At this moment the doctor was summoned by a message from Uncle Archie to attend on Mrs. Shenstone, who had been running the gamut from hysterics to swoons, and back from swoons to hysterics, for the past hour-and-a-half.

Joyce, left alone with Mab, did her best to help her collect her scattered senses.

"Yes, dear, the party was last night, you know. You left the drawing-room rather suddenly. Kathleen says you went up to your room and fell asleep in your easy-chair. After a time you came down again, and——"

A sudden gleam of renewed recollection swept over Mab's face. She caught eagerly at Joyce's hand.

"Did he come back with me—Ned Donovan, I mean?" she asked excitedly.

"No one came back with you, dear, not even Frank, who followed you out of the house to look after you. Where did you go, Mab? Try and think. We are all anxiety to send and enquire about Frank, whether he has met with an accident or what detained him."

Again Mab's hand went to her head.

"Joyce, I will try and tell you everything; but so much is misty to me I don't know how to get hold of it. I came up-stairs; yes, I remember, and found Kathleen sobbing, because Ned had joined some

dreadful secret society. I thought I would try to get him to give it up, and I sat down in my chair to think how I could best get hold of him. He always used to listen to me, you know, when his father could do nothing with him——"

"Go on, dear; you sat down in your chair."

"Yes." Here Mab grew painfully confused, and her words began to halt. "I sat down in my chair; I don't know how to tell you—you wouldn't understand, Joyce."

"You fell asleep, dear."

"Ye—es, you would think it sleep, I daresay, and I don't know indeed where asleep ended, and—and vision began——"

"Mab!"

"It's true, I can't help it—it's true. I saw—yes, I saw, but I could hear nothing; I saw Ned Donovan going up the steps of a house outside of which I had seen him in the morning. I saw him seat himself at a table with two other men, but who they were I did not know. And I thought 'that is their secret place of meeting—that is where their wicked plots are laid. Ned must shake himself free from them at once.' But after this everything is confusion to me. Whether I went really and tried to make him leave the house, or whether I think I did and only fainted on the bed, I have not the vaguest idea."

Joyce's bewilderment vanished now, swamped in an agony of apprehension for Frank's safety, in what might prove to be a nest of Irish conspirators.

"You know the house, darling, outside which you saw Ned Donovan yesterday morning!" she cried breathlessly, trying to piece together Mab's facts, so oddly coherent in their incoherence, that they recalled the "stuff that dreams are made of."

"Yes, I know the house," answered Mab; "but I can't tell you the name of the street or the number of the house. I could take you to it easily. Give me your hand, Joyce; help me to get up at once."

But the mere effort to lift her head from her pillows threw her back into heavy death-like unconsciousness once more.

CHAPTER XX.

SILENCE and darkness seemed to fall upon the house that day. In the early morning the wind had sharply changed to the north; the heavy rain-clouds came down in soft, sleepily-floating snow.

It heaped itself on the door-ways and window-ledges; it put distance between the street voices and Mrs. Shenstone's warm, yet, withal, desolate rooms. For all the world it seemed to Joyce like the day of a funeral—the day on which one sees carried out of the house all that one holds most precious in life, coffined and ready for burial. From room to room she wandered restlessly. Now she would be bending over Mab, anon she would make her way into the library to consult with Uncle Archie as to what was next to be done, or would stand staring blankly from the drawing-room windows at the rapidly-whitening streets. That soft, sleepily-whirling snow cut a notch in her memory sharper than any that graver's tool could have made. In after years Joyce never saw a snow-cloud thickening and rounding in a dun sky, without a shudder.

Uncle Archie, although he had quickly enough communicated with the police, expressed his opinion stoutly and loudly that Frank would "turn up right enough before the day was over."

Mr. Morton, the solemn-looking detective with large, expressive eyes, small nose, and mouth with drawn-down corners, who had ladled the ices of over-night, responded promptly to Uncle Archie's summons. He was frank and communicative as to the undesirable circle of friends with which Mrs. Shenstone had surrounded herself.

"If she'd been O'Donovan Rossa himself she couldn't have made a better centre for the dynamiters and Fenians. There's about a dozen of the fine ladies and gentlemen who were here last night we shall keep a strict eye on for the next twelve months or so," he said.

Uncle Archie alluded to the Buckinghams. "Of course they're about the worst of the whole lot?" he queried.

Morton shook his head. "We know all about that pair," he answered knowingly. "Of course they're adventurers, and the sooner you get clear of them the better; but they're not the worst of the lot by a long way. He's the open, loud-mouthed Fenian, the sort of man who knows the police have their eye on him, and, though he swaggers a good deal, takes care to keep within the law. He has lived by his wits, one way or another, for the past fifteen years. He played the part of showman to that poor girl in Boston who died about seven years ago, through mesmerism or clairvoyance."

Uncle Archie grew scarlet. He pulled the bell furiously. "And do you mean to say that a man of that sort has been made free of the house, associating with my sister-in-law and nieces?" he cried, the words coming out very like the gobble, gobble of a turkey cock.

Then he turned to give an order to the servant.

"Captain Buckingham is never again, under any pretext whatever, to be admitted to the house. I will explain to your mistress."

"I would advise discretion—prudence," began Morton.

"Confound your discretion and prudence, we've had too much of them already," interrupted the irate old gentleman.

"Captain Buckingham has called twice already to enquire after Miss Mab, sir," said the servant, putting fuel on the fire.

"Impertinent scoundrel! If he calls again tell him your orders; and if that doesn't send the sister flying out of the house after the brother in double-quick time I don't know what will," he added, turning to Morton, who had crossed his knees, folded his hands complacently, and sat staring into the fire as though he meant to give himself up to a pleasant morning in Uncle Archie's society.

There was no need, however, to take any trouble about sending Sylvia "flying out of the house." Her boxes had been packed over-night, and she was, at that very moment, saying a characteristic good-bye to Mrs. Shenstone in that lady's sitting-room.

Mrs. Shenstone, between her fainting fits, reclined in a rocking-chair fanning herself with a big ostrich-feather fan.

"If I could think myself of any use to you, Tiny, dearest, I wouldn't start to-day," Sylvia was saying sweetly enough, though the curves of her mouth seemed invariably to give the lie to her sweet words. "As it is, however, I cannot but feel myself in the way. Your daughter has given me plainly to understand that she will be uncommonly glad to get rid of me."

It may be surmised that Sylvia had not chosen to read Joyce's manner until it suited her convenience so to do.

"Oh, Joyce is so peculiar. We are never of one mind in anything. Ah-h, my head. Give me my vinaigrette, darling."

Sylvia handed the vinaigrette. "And you won't forget, dearest Tiny, what I told you about the distress of those poor

people in Connemara—you know you promised me a hundred pounds for them, and I had your name entered on the subscription list at once."

"Oh, did you! Well, I can't write a cheque to-day, my hand shakes so," and flutter, flutter went the fan, faster than ever.

"Ah, but you know you always keep a good deal of ready money in your davenport; it isn't locked. Look here, Tiny, here's your pocket-book stuffed."

But it wasn't stuffed when it went back to the davenport, and Sylvia's purse had proportionately increased in bulk.

Then there had followed showers of kisses, sobs, farewells, between the two.

But Joyce, meeting Sylvia on the stairs ten minutes after, could not have detected the ghost of a tear on her cheek, even had she called a field-glass to her aid.

Only the briefest and most formal of good-byes passed between these two.

"I hope you'll have good news before night, an interrupted wedding is so painful," Miss Buckingham said, on her way out through the hall.

"Thank you," was Joyce's cold reply, as she went into the library, where Morton and Uncle Archie were still in consultation.

"I don't mean to say that anything very terrible has been concocted in this house," Morton was saying as she entered the room, "but if our information is correct, a new branch to an old society, or a young society itself, has been organised at this lady's evening receptions. It appears to consist of a council of three and a small executive; but at present we know but little of its special aims and objects, and what we do know, my dear sir," this with the air of one who had grand professional secrets entrusted to his keeping, "you may be quite sure we shall not divulge till the right moment."

"H'm, one doesn't need to be told that dynamite is at the bottom of all these conspiracies."

"Or boycotting in Ireland on a systematic scale. You, my dear sir, as an outsider, will hardly credit the time, the thought, the funds, that are expended to bring about some small piece of boycotting in a remote corner of Ireland—a thing we in London read in a ten-line paragraph in our morning's paper and forget all about the next minute."

All this time Joyce had been standing listening. She broke silence now.

"Do you mean to say you think Mr.

Ledyard has fallen into the hands of any of these people, these Fenians and dynamiters?" she cried, feeling that now the ghost of her fears had suddenly taken definite shape and confronted her.

Uncle Archie turned upon her sharply. "I wish to Heaven, Joyce, you'd stay upstairs and look after Mab and your mother, instead of coming fussing in here, interfering in matters that don't concern you."

"There is really no cause for anxiety," said Morton, with a grand air of superior knowledge; "we shall hear of Mr. Ledyard long before the day is over. We are in London, my dear young lady, not in St. Petersburg."

"And why on earth have you your hat and cloak on, Joyce?" broke in Uncle Archie again. "Whatever whim have you in your head now?"

"Mab is better, and has been able to describe minutely to me the house outside which she saw Ned Donovan yesterday, and where most likely she went last night. I can take you to it at once if you will come," was her reply, which sent the two men looking for their hats at once.

The alley of condemned houses was little more than a quarter of a mile from Mrs. Shenstone's door. A swift, silent tramp of about five minutes through the snowy streets, brought the three face to face with the sign-board of "John Johnson, plasterer."

The house was the ordinary six-roomed house one sees so often in London backstreets. It consisted of a parlour, with kitchen behind, and four upper rooms, two on each floor. It bore much the same neat appearance as it had yesterday, when Mab had rapped at its front door. Signs of life were nowhere, and Mr. Morton's repeated knockings brought no response, save hollow echoes from across the deserted alley.

Uncle Archie turned to Joyce. "Now, Joyce, you've shown us the way right enough, you had better turn back and go home as quickly as possible," he said raspingly.

"I'm going in with you, Uncle Archie," answered Joyce, growing very white, but withal as calm as, or calmer than, the old gentleman himself.

"That you're not. Of all things in the world I detest to have a young woman for ever forcing herself where she's not wanted."

"Hush, dear, don't scold, I can't stand it to-day; but I am going in with you,"

answered Joyce in a voice that silenced Uncle Archie at once.

"The door is too tight to force," said Morton. "I know the landlord of these shanties, I'll go and get the key from him—it's only a stone's throw from here—and ask him a question or two as to Mr. John Johnson, plasterer."

Uncle Archie and Joyce paced the blind alley for a long ten minutes, while Morton departed on his quest. Here the snow was fresh and crisp. There was nothing to attract the busy life that tided along the larger thoroughfare.

A few children with red, dirty faces loitered a moment or two at the corner to stare at the unwonted apparition of a lady and gentleman in these unaristocratic quarters, but it was too freezingly cold for anyone to loiter long, and Uncle Archie and Joyce pursued their tramp, tramp, over the snow uninterruptedly.

That ten minutes prolonged itself to as many hours to Joyce's imagination, which peopled the empty, silent house of "John Johnson" with all sorts of terrors. Traces of Frank Ledyard they must find here, it seemed to her. Perhaps they had shut him up in some cellar or hiding-place; perhaps they had left him lying bleeding and dying on the floor. The houses began to swim before her eyes, the snow to dazzle her. Would the man never come back? It was growing beyond endurance.

"Uncle Archie, I know I could get in at that front window if you helped me up," she said, desperately clutching at the old gentleman's arm.

Morton turned the corner of the street at that moment, and saved Uncle Archie the necessity of a remonstrance.

He came along with a briak tread, his nose very much in the air and a big bunch of keys dangling in his hand.

"One of these will be sure to fit, the landlord says," he said, as he began trying one of the biggest in the lock.

Joyce could scarcely keep back her impatience; her fingers were clenching into the palms of her hands beneath her fur cloak, her feet were scattering the crisp snow into ridges and pits, as she stood waiting a step below Morton with his big bunch of keys.

He, good man, blandly sought to entertain them with scraps of information he had just picked up concerning "John Johnson," while his leisurely fingers tried the keys in succession.

"Dixon, that's the landlord of these houses, he keeps an oil and colour shop round the corner, says John Johnson came to him about six weeks ago to hire this house, stating he had a job of work on near and the place would suit him for the next three months. He paid three months' rent in advance, which Dixon was uncommonly glad to get, as he had taken it for granted that, after the houses had been condemned to be pulled down, no one would be likely to make an offer for any one of them. He says the man looked like a decent mechanic, but there was nothing remarkable in his appearance, and he shouldn't know him again if he saw him."

"Oh, I am confident that key must fit!" broke in Joyce imploringly. "See, it is the exact size. Ah, thank Heaven!" this added as the key creaked in the lock, and the door turned on its hinges.

Naturally they went first into the little front parlour which opened off the passage on their right hand.

Bare walls, an empty fire-grate, and thirteen feet by twelve of bare floor met their gaze. Nothing else.

Mr. Morton took out his note-book and pencil to report—that there was nothing to report.

Joyce's impatience refused to be longer restrained.

"While you are writing I will run upstairs and look through the other rooms," she cried half-way up the first flight. "Don't trouble to come up, Uncle Archie, unless I call."

In succession she opened and shut the doors of four desolately empty, cupboardless rooms.

She came downstairs swiftly enough, to find Uncle Archie and Morton entering the small kitchen which flanked the front parlour.

This was closely shuttered and dark as night. Uncle Archie paused on the threshold fearful of running the gauntlet of possible stumbling-blocks with that tender old right foot of his.

"Oh, I've cat's eyes, I can see where the window is!" cried Joyce.

She and Morton together contrived to unbar the shutters and let in the white, frosty daylight.

It revealed three wooden chairs—one overturned—a common deal table, with a lantern upon it. Nothing beyond.

"Ah!" said Morton, giving a low whistle and beginning to scribble again, "we're getting on their traces, are we?"

A door to the right of the window caught Joyce's eye. She opened it. The light from the larger room revealed an empty oblong of red-brick floor.

"This must be the wash-house of the establishment," said Morton, leading the way into the little out-building.

Joyce followed on his heels. Her eyes followed his too as they went piercing into every corner. There was not a splinter of furniture here, nor anything to lead one to think that there had been a scuffle, or that a life-and-death struggle had been fought out on the red tiling. Not so much as a crushed button or tattered rag, and, thank Heaven, none of those dark splashes which men of Morton's profession know only too well.

Joyce drew a long breath of relief. She had not yet reached that stage of misery when a terrible certainty is welcomed as a desperate ending to a still more horrible suspense.

Morton proceeded to lift the latch of a little door at the further end of this out-building; of bolt or bar it knew nothing.

A dreary picture in black and white met their gaze. A small square of yard, covered with untrodden snow, bounded by a low wooden fence with many gaps in it. Beyond this fence lay a stone-mason's yard with several out-buildings. A big board announced the fact that it was "to let." Its frontage looked on the river; its farther side was bounded by a narrow canal; its rear found its limit in the high wall of a factory.

The blackish river, with the yellow fog settling down upon it, set Joyce shuddering.

"We must go through that fence, we must search all those out-buildings," she said, trying hard to keep her failing heart from showing in her voice.

"My dear young lady," said Morton, composedly, "it will all be done before night thoroughly, much better than you or I could do it. We'll have the men here to remove the snow, dig the yards up if need be——"

Joyce's felt as if her wits were leaving her. "Dig, dig for what?" she asked vaguely, almost unmeaningly.

When ten minutes later, as they three went silently out into the snowy streets, she heard Uncle Archie give a husky order to Morton, "We must have the river dragged without delay," she had no voice wherewith to ask the question, "Dragged for what?"

CHARMS, OMENS, AND ANCIENT QUACKERIES.

IN THREE PARTS. PART II.

IN Gloucestershire, according to Rudge, on Twelfth-day Eve all the servants of every farmer assemble in one of the fields that has been sown with wheat. At the end of twelve lands they make twelve fires in a row with straw, around one of which, larger than the rest, they drink a glass of cider to their master's health, and success to the future harvest. Then, returning home, they feast on cakes made with caraway seeds soaked in cider, which they claim as a reward for their past labour in sowing the grain. The ceremony in the field is said to be an effectual charm against smut in the wheat.

If I were asked which of all the old superstitions with regard to the cure of diseases I thought the most stupid, I should be inclined to say that of touching for the King's Evil, were it not that there are considerations mixed up with this that make the nonsensical into a reality. The nonsensical consists in a King or a Queen becoming the tool of charlatans, and the reality that the approaching royalty, together with faith, might so act on the constitution of a scrofulous person as to bring about a cure. It is generally believed that the custom commenced with Edward the Confessor in England, though in other countries it was in existence long before. Right down to the time of Charles the evidence of "touching" is just sufficient to make it clear that the custom was practised, but that Charles gave effect to the superstition and "effected many remarkable cures" there is abundant evidence on record. In Evelyn's Diary, July 6th, 1660, is this entry: "His Majestie began first to touch for the evil, according to custome, thus—His Majestie sitting under his state in the banquetting house, the chirurgeons cause the sick to be brought or led to the throne, when, they kneeling, the King strokes their faces or cheeks with both hands at once, at which instant a chaplaine in his formalities says: 'He put his hands on them and healed them.' This is sayed to everyone in particular. When they have been all touched they come up again in the same order, and the other chaplaine kneeling and having an angel (piece of money) gold strung on white ribbon on his arme, delivers them, one by one, to his Majestie, who puts them about

the necks of the touched as they passe, whilst the first chaplaine repeats: 'That is the true light that came into the world.' Then follows an Epistle (as at first a Gospel) with the Liturgy, prayers for the sick with some alteration, wity a blessing, and the Lord Chamberlaine and Comptroller of the Household bring a basin, ewer, and towell for his Majestie to wash." In 1683 Charles appointed regular times for the ceremony—from All Hallowtide till a week before Christmas; after Christmas until the first week in March, when all touchings cease until after Passion Week.

When Charles visited York in the year 1639 he kept his Maundy Thursday in the Cathedral, where the ceremony of washing the feet of the poor people was performed by the Bishop of Ely; and on Good Friday the King touched nearly five hundred persons for the Evil, using the formula described in Evelyn's Diary. On the 9th January, 1693, Charles the Second ordained that no person was to come who had before been touched, and each was to obtain a recommendation from the vicar or churchwardens of his or her parish. In the editions of the Prayer Book, 1707 and 1709, a form of prayer introduced in 1684 will be found, as used at the ceremony of touching the King's Evil. James went through the ceremony at the French Court with great success, and the last English monarch to publicly "touch" was Queen Anne. Holingshead says of Edward the Confessor: "As it has been thought he was inspired with the gift of prophecy, and also to have the gift of healing infirmities and diseases, he used to help those that were vexed with the disease commonly called the King's Evil, and left the virtue as if it were a portion of the inheritance to his successors, the Kings of this realm." The reference to the same monarch in "Macbeth" will occur to most readers.

In India they have a peculiar charm for the discovery of a thief by means of chewing rice. Dr. Hayden says: "The secretion of saliva seems to be under the influence of the same mental emotions as affect the functions of the stomach. Fear, anxiety, and various other depressing passions, diminish digestion, and most probably produce this effect by stopping the secretion of gastric juice. Observation shows us that they have a decided influence in lessening, or even in entirely arresting, the secretion of saliva, a circumstance not unknown to the observant natives of the East. In illustration of this,

it may be mentioned that the conjurers in India often found upon this circumstance a mode of detecting theft among servants. When a robbery has been committed in a family, a conjurer is sent for, and great preparations are made. A few days are allowed to elapse before he commences his operations, for the purpose of allowing time for the restitution of the stolen property. If, however, it be not restored by the time fixed, he proceeds with his operations, one of which is as follows: He causes a quantity of boiled rice to be produced, of which all those suspected must eat. After masticating it for some time, he desires them all to spit it out upon certain leaves for the purpose of inspection and comparison. He now examines this masticated rice very knowingly, and immediately points out the culprit, from observing that the rice which he has been masticating is perfectly dry, while that which was masticated by the others is moistened by the saliva."

The act of spitting on the hand, so often seen amongst labourers and working men before beginning a task, is, though not generally known, the remains of a charm. According to Pliny, spitting was superstitiously observed in averting witchcraft, and in giving a more vigorous blow to an enemy. Hence we get the custom with prize-fighters, of spitting on their hands before they begin to fight. Boys, a few generations ago, used to "spit their faith" when required to make a promise; and when colliers combined to get their wages raised they used, before the days of trades unions, to spit on a stone together by way of cementing their union. When persons were of the same party, or agreed in their sentiments, there used at one time to be a popular saying that they had "spit on the same stone."

One of our popular sayings, "God save the mark," is an ancient charm, equivalent to the "salvum sit quod tango" of Petronius, and is connected with an Irish superstition, that if a person in telling the story of some injury of limb or wound to another person should touch the corresponding part of his own or a bystander's body, he averts the owner of similar mischief by saying "God bless (or save) the mark," as a sort of charm.

In the far Highlands, superstition has a strong hold on the primitive people who inhabit that part of Great Britain. The county of Sutherland furnishes a remarkable example of this superstition. It is

said that in an unfrequented part of the country, near the foot of Strathnaver, lies a small loch, to which has been ascribed wonderful healing virtues. Its fame has spread far and wide in the northern counties, and pilgrimages are made to it from many remote districts of Sutherland, from the adjoining counties of Caithness and Ross, and even from Inverness and the Orkney Islands. It is not known when the loch first came into repute with the sick, but it must have been when superstition had even a stronger hold in this country, and ignorance prevailed more among the people than now, for this belief in the mysterious curative power of the water can be traced back through several generations. The water and the leaves of a plant which grows in the loch are still used by the sick at their homes, but to derive the fullest benefit from these the patients must make a personal visit to the spot.

The word "Abracadabra," the name of one of the Syrian deities, was the foundation of the well-known mystic diamond charm that, as lately as one hundred years since, was considered infallible as a cure for certain ailments.

A paper inscribed with the charm, and hung round the neck by a piece of silk, was regarded amongst the ancients as a direct invocation of the Syrian deity, and was recommended by Serenus Saronicus as an antidote against fever and all other diseases. Shortly before 1588 A.D., a quack doctor charged fifteen pounds for this prescription, and made his dupe, who was suffering from an acute attack of ague, much worse, by inducing him to eat the charm instead of wearing it round his neck.

The charm of solemnly making an assertion, and "crossing the breath," as it is called, is found among young boys in rural England. It consists of placing the hand on the mouth, breathing on it, and making the sign of the Cross by drawing it from left to right across the heart. "If it be not so, I will cross my breath" means among boys an equivalent to "on my life." It is also common in Pennsylvania, where the children, mostly the descendants of the ancient Quakers, have not perhaps even seen the modern sign of the Cross as used by the Roman Catholics of the present day, which differs from the foregoing in touching the forehead with the fingers and then lightly touching each shoulder or drawing the hand across the breast. As these children are of

families certainly not Roman Catholic for two hundred years or more, and are not under Roman Catholic influence, this, it is conceived, may be the ancient form of making the cross, and is at least of high antiquity.

It is almost incredible that a charm so absurd, as that of the touching of a dead body by a suspected person to prove his innocence, should ever have existed; yet it is not so long since it was considered a crucial test. If the person so touching were guilty, blood would flow; if innocent, it would not. In the year 1636 Andrew Smeaton was taken up, on suspicion of having murdered a man who was found dead at Bemblow Moor. He was held innocent, not on any legal proof, but because, at the request of his master, he not only touched the corpse, as all the rest of the assembly had done, but "lifted him up and embraced him in his arms, and willingly offered to remain a space in the grave with him." As no blood flowed on this contact, Andrew Smeaton was held guiltless of the murder; which doubtless he was, poor fellow, though his acquittal might have been based on wiser grounds. One case of bleeding I will give now, in contradistinction to the foregoing. In 1644 four men were drowned by the upsetting of their boat in a calm. Maria Peebles, a noted witch, was charged with having wrecked these unfortunate men by overlooking them. Proof conclusive was obtained when, at her touch, "one bled at the collar-bone, another in the hands and the fingers, gushing out blood thereat, to the great admiration of the beholders, and being a revelation of the judgment of the Almighty."

In the North of England, up to within a very recent date, it used to be common to plant the herb known as "house-leek" upon the tops of cottages, to charm away witches. In very remote districts I have seen these leeks so planted within a very few years, and, no doubt, they were placed there by the superstitious occupiers of the house for the purpose I have mentioned.

An amulet hung round the neck, or carried in any other way about the person, is, absurdly enough, believed to have the effect of warding off morbid infections and other disorders, and even of curing disorders by which the body has already been attacked. The belief in the efficacy of amulets has subsisted at some time or other amongst every people. The first mention of their use occurs in Galen, who informs

us that in the opinion of the Egyptian King Nehepsus, who reigned 630 B.C., a green jasper cut into the form of a dragon surrounded by rays, would, if suspended from the neck, promote digestion in the wearer. Coming to a later period, amulets were made of the wood of the true Cross about A.D. 328. Boyle, the philosopher, assures us that he found an amulet of moss which had grown in a dead man's skull, the best remedy for a copious bleeding at the nose, to which he had been long subjected. Burton praises some amulets while deprecating the use of others. He writes: "I say with Penodias, they are not to be altogether rejected. Peony doth cure epilepsy; a spider helps the ague; and precious stones most diseases." Roger Bacon, too, firmly believed in their efficacy. The anodyne necklace, which consists of beads formed from the roots of white briony, and is sometimes hung around the necks of infants with a view of assisting their teething, is an instance of the still surviving confidence in the mediæval virtue of amulets. The caul is worn as an amulet, and such is the belief of seafaring people in them, that it is said by such: "A child's caul will preserve their ship from being lost and they from being drowned." It is related by Josephus, that when Solomon discovered a particular herb, which he believed efficacious in the cure of epilepsy, he considered it advisable to employ the aid of a charm, either to increase its power or to popularise its merits. The root, or herb, was concealed in a ring, and applied to the nostrils of the afflicted; wonderful cures were thus wrought. A writer in "Chambers's Journal," of July 1861, says: "The father of history, Josephus, declares that he himself was present at the successful application of an amulet by a Jewish priest, when the Emperor Vespasian and the Tribunes of the army were co-witnesses of the experiment." More famous amulets were, however, those coins called the money of Saint Helena. They were so named from one side bearing the effigy of Saint Helena, the mother of the Emperor Constantine. They, again, had a special reputation for the cure of epilepsy. As such, according to the author of the sixteenth century, one was worn by no less a personage than the Sultan Amurath. It is probable that one of our Christian Kings was no less a believer, for, in the wardrobe account of the fifty-fifth year of Henry III., among the valuables in charge of the keeper, is enumerated a silken purse containing

"monetam sanctæ Helenæ." This appellation, Du Cange considers, includes not only the money coined with the image of Helena, but all that of the Byzantine Emperors which bore the impress of the Cross. The same writer notices that nearly all the coins of this character which have been preserved are perforated near the edge, proving the extent of their former use as amulets.

In Greece credence in the curative qualities of the amulet, though common, was not universal. Theophrastus broadly declared Pericles insane, when that General was observed wearing an amulet. The derision of Theophrastus does not seem to have affected Pericles, for we find in Plutarch that when the famous Athenian was ill, he mutely pointed out an amulet to the friends who visited him, intimating by the action, not only the fact of his indisposition, but also a confidence in the means of cure.

In Rome, on the contrary, amulets were of general adoption. There, plants, gathered at the prescribed seasons, were deemed of superior power to minerals. Mount Colchis had an extensive reputation for producing the mysterious herbs; but Mount Caucasus is mentioned by Ovid as of even superior fame. So confident were the Romans in the power of their amulets that, when they failed in their effect, the mischance was ascribed, not to any fault in the charms, but to some mistake in their preparation. It is probable that, in the opinion of the Emperors, this general credence of the Romans, by increasing the superstition, diminished the energies of the people; certain it is that from some cause the Emperor Caracalla, in the decline of the Empire, prohibited the use of amulets.

In Babylon the wearing of amulets assumed the character of an institution.

From Plutarch we learn that the soldiers wore rings, on which an insect resembling a bee was inscribed; the judges suspended from their necks a figure of Truth, composed of emeralds; and other forms, for various purposes, were in common fashion.

In Catholic countries, it is commonly believed that the little figures, "Agnus Dei," blessed by the Pope, have the same effect in the prevention of disease. In the happier times of the Papacy, such amulets were highly esteemed, and commanded a ready sale.

But more potent than these was the sponge with which the table of the Holy

Father had been wiped. Being chiefly valued for the cure of wounds, one was presented with the greatest possible solemnity by Gregory the Second to the then Duke of Aquitaine.

Talismans are very much akin to amulets. These consist of a figure cut in stone or cast in metal, and made with certain superstitious ceremonies when two planets are in conjunction, or when a certain star is at its culminating point. They were probably used originally to avert disease, for we find them mentioned in the history of medicine among all ancient nations. Christians were not even exempt from similar superstitions. In the Middle Ages relics of saints, consecrated candles, rods, rosaries, etc., were thus employed, as they are still in some parts of Spain. The talisman of our day, that of Charlemagne, is in the possession of the Empress of the French. Its pedigree is undoubted, having been found fastened round the neck of Charlemagne at the opening of his tomb. It was appropriated by the Town Council of Aix-la-Chapelle, and by them presented to the first Emperor. He in turn made a gift of it to Hortense, at whose death it came by descent to the husband of the present owner. It is somewhat larger than a walnut; the centre is composed of two rough sapphires—which stone is said to repel gout and ague, and endow the wearer with courage—a portion of the Holy Cross, and some other relics of the Holy Land. These are enclosed in a filagree work of fine gold, set with rare gems. A French journal, while describing the talisman as “*La plus belle relique de l’Europe*,” seems to hint that the former good fortune of the late Emperor Napoleon the Third may in some degree be attributed to the charm of the great German. It, however, had not sufficient power to avert his downfall, and the triumph of the country from whence first came his talisman; nor was it sufficiently efficacious to prevent his death at a comparatively early age.

IN OYSTERLAND.

SINCE the days when the inimitable Tom Hood, writing of the varied fate that befalls dwellers on this planet, told us that while a few are lucky enough to secure the sweets of the world, others are “like Colchester natives, born to its vinegar only and pepper,” the bivalvular fame of the quaint old Roman town thus alluded to,

appears to have steadily declined. Like the showman’s leopard, the native oyster has changed his spots considerably during the past half century or so, and, for the time being, picturesque Whitstable holds sway in public estimation as the great oyster-producing district of England. But whilst Milton-next-Gravesend has been altogether forgotten ostreally, and but little is now heard of Colchester, it is, as a matter of fact, from the beds of “layings” in the creeks that run through the country immediately round the once famous Camulodunum that the largest fishery of the succulent mollusc is carried on. Hither from America, France, Portugal, and Holland, are imported varieties of the dainty bivalve, to be nursed side by side in the shallow “rays” with our own smooth-shelled, delicate native. Hence they go forth again in thousands, having acquired, in the opinion of the trade, some of that peculiar flavour that only the Essex river-beds can impart. How much the quality and flavour of a rough Portuguese or coarse American is improved by seven weeks’ board and residence in Colne waters, it is for dealers and connoisseurs to decide; that they thrive and fatten on the fare, that makes our own oyster to be highly prized above all others, is beyond dispute.

But oyster culture has been more learnedly discussed in piscatorial pages, and it is not intended to enter upon its technicalities here, but to describe the life and surroundings of the inhabitants of the land where the mollusc has flourished since the days when Alfred drove the Danes into Brightlingsea, the chief of the cluster of tiny villages inhabited by the race of simple sea-farmers. Mersea Island across the creek, and Wyvenhoe, the birthplace of far-famed yachts, are each in the occupation of oyster fishers; but their abode par excellence is Brightlingsea, locally known as “Brickelsea,” a limb of the Cinque Port of Sandwich, and, as its name implies, of insular character. It is a busy little place in its way, for here, too, is a famous yacht yard, and so there is always much coming and going in the tortuous “High” Street, where almost every other of the low, irregularly built shops sets forth that yachts and vessels are fitted out, though it is difficult to believe from their exteriors that they even contain enough provisions for the wants of those at home. Perhaps “yachts” has been inserted to give importance to the announcement, in which case it is easy to

understand that the wants of the simple oyster-man on his expeditions would not sorely tax the resources of the little emporiums. On the water side of "the street," are the many little openings that take one down to the "Hard," each one of which seems paved with oyster shells, and is redolent of tar and the salt, appetising odour of the bivalve itself.

Up and down these turnings the blue-jerseyed fishers are tramping all day; either they are going "out" or coming "in," and, like the sea they serve, they are ever moving and restless. Perhaps constant intercourse with Holland, which lies just across the sea, has invested the "Brickelsea" folk with some of the Dutch customs, just as certain parts of this portion of the east coast have acquired somewhat of the appearance of Mynheer's country. It is, at all events, at once remarkable to the visitor that the narrow streets, the little houses, and the countless children are most scrupulously clean and neat, and that the process of cleaning seems always to be in hand. Judging from their appearance, it would seem that when the housewives have scrubbed their dwellings, they renew their labours upon the chubby youngsters, who do such infinite credit to their native air.

Brightlingsea men are very proud of their little ones, who very frequently rejoice, by-the-way, in the names of favourite yachts. The old-fashioned Mahala, Susannah, and Polly, have been replaced by Norna, Belle, Crystal, Emerald, Vera, and others familiar in yachting circles. These little sailor-folk are trained up well enough, and become in their turn the kindest fathers, the best sailors, and the hardest and most trusty fishers to be found round our coast. It is a strange fact that the men rarely marry other than Brightlingsea women. Though they visit foreign lands and other English villages in pursuit of their calling, they bear in mind the Scotch proverb that "it is better to marry over the midden than over the moor," and remain faithful to native charms. He who breaks this unwritten rule is regarded as somewhat of a wanderer from the fold; but it is seldom that one errs in this direction. The result is not so unsatisfactory as might be assumed, though constant intermarriage makes surnames somewhat scarce, there being only about half a dozen among the entire population. But if names are few, religious denominations are plentiful enough;

Anglicans, Swedenborgians, Methodists, Wesleyans, Congregationalists, and Salvationists, have each their place of worship, and on Sunday all Oysterland turns out to one or the other. High above the village stands the church. Its lofty grey tower is a conspicuous mark to those at sea, and across the neighbouring marshes there oftentimes shoots the red glare of the tower lamp, which a faithful watcher keeps burning when the nights are dark and the waves of the great North Sea turbulent.

Sailing out to the Skilling on a gusty night the sailors have home still in view though many miles away; and in the kindly keeping of the thoughtful Vicar, who sits hour after hour in the cold belfry to keep the light alive, they know that their little ones will be safe. On the sloping ground around the old church lie those whose business has been in the great waters, but who now rest from their labours within sound of the sea. There are many, alas! who are tossing between seas that belong to the port, for during the terrible gales of 1883 Brightlingsea's record of the lost was a heavy one, and the little fleet of oyster boats and fishing smacks was seriously diminished.

Below the high ground of the churchyard, which, like the rest of the village, is the perfection of neatness, peep the mast tops of the many yachts in the "fleet," and everywhere around glisten the pools in the marsh-lands, albeit they are well screened by their ragged borders of coarse grass and tall bulrushes. In Thick's Wood, half a mile beyond, an extensive heronry had existed from time immemorial; but a few years ago the birds unfortunately took flight, and their place knows them no more. But oyster dredging and trawling are still not the only "sports" left hereabouts, for beyond, on the wild, lonely marshes of St. Osyth, there is wild duck in abundance, whilst across the Pyefleet channel, thick with oysters, on the Roman Mersea Island, sheldrakes, redshanks, and oxbirds start up in myriads from the tufts of stiff, wild ranunculus and the spiky coarse grass that characterise the entire shore, as they do that of Scheveningen. Oysters are marvellously abundant about this island, which, unlike the many others that abound round this coast, is inclined to be hilly. As the boats wind in and out of the bays and fleets, the dark-green, slimy shells are seen under the glistening water as thick as pebbles on a shingly beach, and, when the tide goes out, they may be seen

lying in huge ridges and clusters on the muddy slopes of the river-beds. St. Oayth, which is likewise ostreally inclined, produces a leaner-looking specimen than those lower down the creek. As regards size, by the way, the native of these parts seems to have generally degenerated, for, in 1655, one Dr. Muffet, in a work entitled "Health's Improvement," alludes to the remarkable size of the oysters of Peldon, a village adjoining Mersea, which was seriously wrecked by the earthquake in 1884. "Alexander, with his friends and physicians," writes the Doctor, "wondered to find oysters in the Indian Seas a foot long. And in Plinie's time, they marvelled at an oyster which might be divided into three morsels, calling it, therefore, Tridacnon . . . ; but I dare affirm that at my eldest brother's marriage at Aldham Hall, in Essex, I did see a Pelden oyster divided into eight good morsels, whose shell was nothing less than that of Alexander's."

It is on a bright summer morning that Oysterland is seen at its best. Essentially a sunny place, for the trees stop short some way out of the village, it is then that the whole place seems flooded with light and life. Though hardly picturesque as a whole, the bright bits of colour fluttering from many mast-heads, the red-capped, dark-faced sailors, and the white sails of the dredging boats form, at least, "the makings" of a picture. The scene is animated enough. The sun flashes all over the "Hard," and sets the brass fittings of pretty little yachts all ablaze, while the ceaseless tat-tat of the builder's hammer keeps time to the lazy splash of the water against the sides of the red-sailed smacks, resting side by side with the uncouth Jullanar and the dainty Genesta, both of racing fame. The figure-heads of departed vessels look down upon the scene from a sailmaker's yard, and, outside the doorway of The Anchor, a nondescript dog, curled on a heap of oyster shells, blinks lazily at passers-by. These are the only motionless objects round about. In the yacht yard and at the sailmaker's there is much work in hand; down by the water's edge a captain and his men are making ready a smart little yawl, that looks as if she had never been meant for rougher water than the Thames, but which her captain proudly boasts has buffeted the fiercest of the North Sea waves; and across the creek, round the cluster of poles roughly bound with dried grasses, there is a considerable amount of movement among the blue jerseys.

Here oyster work is in full progress, for the Fourth of August is past, and oysters are in demand, though the initiated affirm that they are unfit for food until the water is cool. The men, in huge boots, stand thigh-deep in the waters, sorting the bivalvular sheep from the goats, and picking out the dead and useless from the hauls taken by the dredgers earlier in the morning. It is marvellous with what rapidity this sorting is done, for the oysters are not even glanced at, but are flung aside in heaps according to the shell. An expert can tell the nationality of an oyster blindfolded, though the casual observer would be able to detect little difference in the configuration, excepting perhaps that of the native variety, which is so much the smallest and smoothest. Scarcely less wonderful is the precise manner in which each owner keeps within his own grounds, simply marked off by rude stakes driven into the river-bed. These poles are all exactly alike, and appear to the unprofessional eye to be stuck in without any order; but not a single oyster is ever taken from the wrong bed, nor is there any misapprehension over a yard of ground.

There is, however, considerable difference in the produce of the farms, but, unlike other businesses, A cannot enviously watch the flourishing condition of B's goods whilst they are in process of maturing. The creek may be black with "spat" in the season, yet no one interested in its development can know or even guess what the result may be. This year, for instance, there was no special promise of a good harvest, yet oysters are most abundant, so much so that those that fetched twenty-two shillings per hundred last year are now being sold at eleven shillings—a fact apparently unrecognized by retail dealers. The culture of natives, by-the-way, appears to be a very simple business, for beyond occasionally nursing the "spat" and moving it to other and richer "layings," there is little to do, unless it be to "pit" the young oysters in the deep, brick troughs that lie all along the banks, a proceeding not approved of by the best merchants, for the pitted oyster neither grows nor fattens. Where the laying has been good to begin with—that is, properly prepared and well selected as regards depth of water, the flow and ebb of the tide, and so on—it is wholly unnecessary to resort to pits, for "neither heat nor frost nor thunder" can then affect the oysters.

Such layings as these are worth from four to seven hundred pounds an acre, and it is estimated they they produce collectively from five to ten thousand pounds' worth of oysters annually, whilst from end to end of the Colne, the "spat" alone is valued at twenty thousand pounds.

Brightlingsea men, of certain qualifications, are made free of the river, and may, outside the boundaries of the private grounds, exercise their rights with the dredging net. The right to fish these waters for oysters was granted to Colchester by Richard I., under which charter, the work at Brightlingsea, the nuring ground of the so called "Colchester native," is now carried on. But of course the ordinary oyster fisher depends chiefly on his luck on the dangerous North Sea, where, unhappily, the dredging is only done at great risk of life. To the wives of these hardy fellows, who provide our tables with luxuries at the peril of their lives, and for small, very small gain, the oyster season is very much what the harvest is to the field labourer. As for the dainty itself, it is rarely tasted by them, and certainly not valued as an article of food. Perhaps when the Romans discovered the bivalve down here, the natives ate them themselves, but it is almost certain that they used the first opportunity that presented itself of selling the Colne produce, a practice which has been successfully carried on ever since. The Romans were at all times great connoisseurs of oysters, and the discovery of this fertile patch of ostreal marsh-land may possibly account for the extended dimensions of the encampment all about this district. Happily "age cannot wither nor custom stale" the fat, delicate-flavoured mollusc of these winding, shallow rays. The Romans loved and exported them to their own waters; the Virgin Queen fully appreciated the horse-loads of them sent by Walsingham and Leicester; and the luxurious burgomasters of Holland for many a year sent across for the Colchester native, to be washed down, doubtless, by potent schnapps on festive occasions; yet their fame endures even unto this day, and neither green Marennes, Whitstable, nor Blue Point can deflect the real epicure's allegiance from the bivalve of the Eastern Coast.

AUTUMN THOUGHTS.

I LOVE not the time when rough Autumn discloses
The secrets that Summer held hid in her breast,
The fragrance that slept 'midst the leaves of the
roses
Has floated away o'er the blue hill's dim crest;

And the wild breezes sob o'er a small nest half-shattered,
That once was concealed in the creeper-decked wall;
But the mother-bird died: and the young ones are scattered,
And o'er the grass-border the withered leaves fall.

Soft, soft in the morning the dun fog is creeping,
The bindweed hangs white on her pillow of thorn;
And the shiv'ring grey willow for ever is weeping
O'er Summer departed, and lovers forlorn.
The wan river glides twixt the withering rushes,
That sigh in the eve o'er the days that are dead,
And the last hanging leaf on the chestnut tree blushes
Where the hot kiss of Autumn burned angrily red.

The whole world is empty: the whole earth seems dying,
And Silence, with finger laid soft on her lip,
Glides o'er the drear meadows, where swallows are trying
Their wings, ere they give sullen Winter the slip.
The lusty, loud robin, all joyful, is singing
Of frost, and the marvellous whiteness of snow;
He tells us that Christmas is coming, is bringing
The thousand bright pictures he only can show.

Ah! the robin may sing on the bare, brown, stripped branches,
I think of the summer, I pine for the sun!
The storm hustles up, and in fury swift launches
His barbs through the tree-tops: the war is begun;
The trees cry aloud, as their last leaves are falling;
The branches swing low with weird murmurs of pain;
And the ghosts of the past to the present are calling,
And weeping their fate in grey showers of rain.

And I, all alone, waiting, hopelessly wonder,
Did Summer e'er reign o'er this cold world of ours?
Did I ever walk in the garden and plunder
Yon ragged rosebush of its wonderful flowers?
Or was all but a dream? Is there nothing but sorrow?
Are winter and weeping, all, all that are left?
Now yesterday dies in the grasp of to-morrow,
To-day scarcely born e'er it, too, is bereft.

Ah me! past the window swift rain-clouds are drifting;
The Summer is dead, and there's nothing but Death,
Through whose skinny fingers our life-sands are sifting,
His breathing strikes chill e'en to young Love's hot breath.
There is nothing on earth, but King Death, that is certain,
For Spring is a fable, fair Summer a dream;
And the pale hands that draw down our life's heavy curtain,
Are all that are truly the things that they seem.

A CROSS OLD MAN.

A STORY IN TWO CHAPTERS. CHAP. I.

HOW was it that I came to live in Number Six, Bristol Terrace, Carchester? I really don't know. I might have chosen any place under the sun from Newcastle to New South Wales. I cannot say what sudden impulse fixed my uncertain choice on one of a row of small suburban houses with long narrow gardens behind, and a far-stretching view over the Downs in front.

I suppose I was partly influenced by the fact that I did not know a single soul in the dignified, exclusive city of Carchester, and by the exceeding probability that the lofty indifference of its aristocratic society would not stoop to be curious about the insignificant existence of a broken-hearted, soured old man.

For when I left the far-off country home of my forefathers I was running away from myself, from my past, from all that could recall to my outward senses the weariness and hopelessness which had fallen on me, and I shrank alike from the possible curiosity of new acquaintances and the obtrusive sympathy of old ones.

The neighbour nuisance was a much more serious trouble, only to be appreciated by those who have lived without next-door neighbours to the age of fifty and upwards. It was a terrible shock to me when I found that Number Five was let furnished, and that it changed hands continually, with a wonderful variety of trials to my love of quiet. I had no sooner got used to hearing the young married man—who ought to have been ashamed of himself—blunder along the passage and upstairs, swearing at his frightened wife, than I had to begin over again with some people who gave noisy parties every second or third night. Their stay being over, I was assailed by a cantankerous parrot and an irritable pug; then came a large family of loud-voiced children, and so on ad infinitum. In Number Seven lived some young ladies who amused themselves and tortured me by unceasing performances on a very poor piano. I took to playing the violoncello in sheer self-defence, that I might curtain myself round with a noise of my own making, and shut out the hubbub over which I had no control.

Sometimes there was an evening's peace; the young ladies had taken their music and gone out, and the furnished house was enjoying a Sabbath between an exodus and an invasion, and then, when I was quite sure that no noise from either side would break in upon my reverie, I would put my 'cello into its case and hide the case away under the sofa, and get out my old memories instead; and sit over the fire with them, while the hands of the clock crept round and round, and the stars stole past the window in long procession, each in turn looking in on the morbid old man, whose life-hopes had ebbed away, and left him stranded high and dry in a narrow little

house, where, though every one was too near him, no one was near enough.

Far away on the coast of Suffolk an old country-house, long, low, and rambling, with a verandah on two sides, lies back from the top of the cliffs that border the coast, sheltered by a triple row of lime trees from the east winds. Round the house wanders an old-fashioned garden, where each flower used to bloom in a sweet succession of seasons. Beyond the garden is one of park-like meadows, called in the Suffolk parlance "a lawn," from which a "loke" (lane) leads away to the sea. This was my birthplace, the birthplace of my forefathers and of my one little daughter, whom I named Margaret, after her mother, my first and only love.

When we had been married about eight years my wife died, died after so short an illness that the roses which I laid in her dead hands were the buds she had lingered over the last time we had walked together among our flowers. I thought I must have died, too, of my grief; but, as time wore away the first terrible shock, I learnt to live for the child, who was everything to me now.

Little Margaret was a beautiful child, with laughing blue eyes and brown hair; somewhat wayward, perhaps, but so sweet withal that no one could forego loving her. I could not bear to lose sight of her. I even taught her myself, that I might have her always with me. She was so merry that I could not brood over my sorrow when she was with me, and she learnt such womanly ways, that I was sure her dead mother must be very near us shedding her influence over our Margaret. Perhaps I spoiled her a little—I do not know—I did not think of that until too late. Her life passed happily among flowers and birds, and beside the sea. I can see her now, running about under the limes, counting the first daffodils that came out among the grass, or filling her hands with primroses, or watching the bees flying in and out of their hives beside the low-growing medlar tree. When she was tired of play she would come to sit by my feet with a book, or to nestle on my knees for a story. We spent a great deal of our summer time by the sea, on the lonely sands or the grassy "denes," that stretched at the foot of the cliffs. We watched the great ships far out and the fishing-boats close in by the shore. We found birds' nests, and wild flowers, and— but why go ram-

bling on? It was a quiet life of happiness, of which the story is apt to grow wearisome to those who hear it told, but of which those who live it could never weary.

When my child was about seventeen years old she made the acquaintance of a man named Robert Browne, at the house of a friend. I did not like him at all, and I would rather have kept her from him altogether; but accidentally or intentionally (perhaps a little of both) she saw him much oftener than I had any idea. He was a bold, determined-looking man of about thirty, with a certain dash about him which Margaret found very pleasant. But I doubted him, and stories, too, reached my ears which confirmed my doubts. I had already told my child plainly what my opinion of Mr. Browne was, when, one day, he came to me, with her promise already gained, to ask my consent to their marriage.

I refused—at once and decidedly—telling Margaret afterwards that, as she was but a child still, I had decided the matter without consulting her; that when she was older and knew more of the world she would thank me for having done so. Then I looked into her face for her approving submission; instead of which I read there an expression totally new to her and to me—an expression of anger and defiance. Nevertheless, I took her in my arms and, kissing her, I laid a strict command on her never to speak to Robert Browne again.

My poor little Maggie! One morning, a week or so after, I missed the sound of her voice talking to her bantams near my bed-room window; and on my breakfast plate was a note, telling me not to seek her or be uneasy about her. She found, she said, that she and Robert could not live without each other, and so they had gone away together. They would be married, perhaps, by the time I read her letter. She made sure of my forgiveness, and she promised that by-and-by they would come back and see me.

Although the cruel words seemed to burn themselves into my brain as I glanced at them, yet I had to read them time after time before I grasped their meaning. I was stupefied. When at last the hideous truth broke upon me; when I realised that my cherished child, for whom I would have willingly died, had left me to go away she scarcely knew how, where, or with whom—my anger overpowered every other feeling, and I vowed that forgiveness from me they should never have, and that neither

of them should ever cross the threshold of Lingdene again.

They were terrible days that followed! I walked about as one in a dream from which one longs to awake; but for me the awakening was only an increasing consciousness of my trouble. Wherever I turned—in the woods or by the sea, in the house or in the garden—everything recalled my lost Maggie, every remembrance brought a sharper pang, and my anger was even more bitter than my grief.

About a month after she had left me, Maggie wrote. For a moment I held the letter in my hand. I saw that it came from a foreign land; but I did not even look to see from what country it came. For a moment only I hesitated, then I thrust it unopened between the bars of the grate. It burnt away to white ash, and I vowed once more that so deceitful and ungrateful a child deserved no forgiveness. For the future I had no daughter. I shut up Lingdene; kept my movements a profound secret; and went into an exile where I might be unknown, unquestioned, unpitied.

So I found myself in Carchester, where I gradually fell into a regular, quiet way of life, finding some pleasure in digging, planting, and pruning in my narrow strip of garden. But the old wound was still very tender, for the years that slipped away brought me no comfort.

One day last May, after Number Five had stood empty for a week or so, there was a commotion of arrival. I knew that every inhabitant of the terrace—except myself—was looking out of window to scrutinise the new comers; that was the welcome usually accorded on such occasions. I went and seated myself on my garden seat under the trellis of jessamine and Gloire de Dijon roses, saying to myself, as I filled my pipe:

“I shall know enough of my new neighbours before long; any curiosity I may have will be more than satisfied only too soon.”

Presently over my garden wall came the sound of a childish voice, in a high-pitched treble.

“Ah, this is the garden! See, Janet, this is the garden—quite a nice little garden to play in, and there are scarcely any flower borders in it, so I shall be able to run about as much as I like, and build a house for Bridget and Ellen in the corner. And yet, I think it is a pity there are so few flowers; it would be nice to get a bunch for dear mammy, don't you think, Janet?

Isn't it a pity she is so knocked up with the journey? Do you think she will be ill again?"

"I don't know, Miss Daisy; I'm sure I hope not."

"Oh, so do I, Janet; it was so horrible in London when she was so near dying. Didn't you feel unhappy?"

"Yes, Miss Daisy, but perhaps the change will do her good; you see the doctor ordered her to come here. Now I'm in a hurry; I must go in."

"Oh, Janet, dear!" very coaxingly, "don't go in just yet, I do so want to stay here."

"No, Miss Daisy, I really can't, there's so much to be done. I must begin to unpack."

"And may I help? Say yes, there's a dear, Janet; I won't drop anything, or make a mess of anything, or ask a lot of questions. May I, Janet? I won't get in the way."

And then the child and the woman went in.

"A family of children," I said to myself. "That means an incessant trampling up and down stairs, an incessant uproar in the garden, piano practice, and goodness knows what; and if they all have voices as shrill as Miss Daisy—well, Heaven protect me!"

That evening, however, my dread of the numerous family was relieved. My old housekeeper told me as she waited on me at dinner that the new-comers at Number Five were a widow lady, with one little girl, and a maid. The lady, she added, had been very ill, and had been ordered to Carchester for her health.

"And how did you learn all that, Simpson?" I asked sardonically. "I suppose you glued your nose to the window as the cab drove up to the door, and counted them as they got out, and counted their parcels, and jumped to a conclusion about them."

"Oh, dear no, sir, I didn't," was Simpson's answer; she never resented any allusions I might make as to her curiosity. "Gudgeon's man went by as I was taking in the bread and he told me."

Gudgeon being the house agent, there was no disputing the authority with which Simpson spoke.

The next day, as I was smoking in my favourite place in my garden, I heard Miss Daisy on the other side of the wall chattering away to her Janet. Apparently they were having a game of ball, in which Daisy was not very skilful. Her little tongue never ceased the whole time.

"Dear me, Janet," she said, "how very bewily you catch it, and I miss it every time. Do show me how you do it. There, I thought I had got it that time, and I hadn't. Where is it gone? Oh, there it is, under the currant-bush. Now, Janet, throw it very, very slowly, and I'll come a bit nearer, like this." Then came a cry of delight—a perfect shriek—to announce that Miss Daisy's manoeuvre had succeeded. "See, see! I've caught it! I do believe it is the first time I have ever caught a ball which anyone threw me in all my life. I must run in and tell mammy."

"No, Miss Daisy," says Janet, "you mustn't be running in to disturb your mammy. She's not so well this morning, and very like she's trying to sleep."

"Oh, very well; I'll tell Bridget and Ellen instead. Dear things! they bore the journey very well, didn't they? I thought this morning that Bridget was looking a little pale, so I gave her some 'nesia, and she's all right again now. They both look quite well, don't they, Janet dear?"

"Well, yes, Miss Daisy," said Janet, "they look much as usual. Dolls generally do, I think, until someone drops them and breaks them, or their paint gets worn off."

"Oh, Janet! How can you!" cried Daisy. "You talk as if Bridget and Ellen had no feeling; and it's very unkind of you, when you know they understand all you say. Why, mammy says they're quite comp'ny for me."

Then there was a violent sound of kissing—to console the insulted doll, I supposed—before the game of ball was resumed.

A minute or two later I heard a cry of dismay:

"There, Janet, I've thrown my dear ball over the wall into the next garden; it went just here. Oh, Janet, what shall I do? You'll have to go round to the front door, and say that a little girl has thrown her ball over, and may you go to look for it."

"I think I hear someone in the garden," said Janet; "I can call, and save myself the journey."

"Oh," cried Daisy eagerly, "perhaps it's a little girl, like me, who has no one to play with, and we might have a game of ball together over the wall; and then, don't you know, she would never see how often I missed catching, because of the wall."

In answer to Janet's call, I went and looked for Miss Daisy's treasure—a great leather ball—which I found under one of

my rose trees, from which it had broken two beautiful young shoots clean off. Much annoyed, I threw it back.

"Thank you," called Janet.

"Thank you, little girl," screamed Daisy. "Thanks, so much. Shall I throw it back? Shall we have a game together?"

And before I could answer the ball landed on another choice flower.

This was too much for my patience. I called out angrily: "There are no little girls here, only an old man; and if you send your ball again among my flowers I'll throw it into the dust-bin, and you shall never see it again."

"Oh, Janet," said Daisy in an awe-stricken tone, "it is not a little child, it's an old man, and isn't he awful cross?"

"Hush, Miss Daisy, perhaps you've broken something."

"I hope I've broken nothing, old man," cried Daisy; "but you needn't be quite so cross if I have; I didn't do it for mischief. Fancy," she went on to Janet, "saying he would put my best ball, which that kind man in the hotel gave me, into the dust-bin. How I should have cried! And the dustman would have taken it home to his children, and the children would have said: 'What a heap of playthings the child must have who could throw away such a bewful ball.' Dear me, my precious ball, what a narrow escape you've had!"

That evening the young ladies at Number Seven had company. Every now and then a tall, thin curate came to spend the evening with them. On such occasions the piano had plenty of work, and I had a hard time.

They displayed their skill in "pieces," in which were a great many fireworks; the fireworks being generally represented by a crash of false notes. They played duets, in which they constantly left off to "get right." I could scarcely resist the impulse to beat time on the wall between my room and theirs. Then they sang. The curate's principal effort was "Nancy Lee," which he gave solemnly, and rather slowly, as if he were afraid of committing himself if he put any spirit into the performance. After this, with more or less stumbling, came "Tom Bowling," then "Come into the garden, Maud," and then a grand wind-up of vocal duets and trios.

During these musical assaults on my peace I had only one means of self-defence—my violoncello—and to that I was obliged to resort. I was every bit as lame a performer on my side of the partition as they were on theirs, only I never began the

attack. I made my noise to deafen my ears to theirs.

That evening, as they kept up their entertainment until midnight, with only a short break for supper, I was obliged to have a very long practice. I grew more than weary, but I couldn't sit still and listen to them. That would have been too much. I went on as long as they did.

The next morning, as I sat reading my paper after breakfast, enter Simpson, with a "what's-going-to-happen-next?" expression on her face.

"The young person from next door—from Number Five—wishes to speak to you, sir," she said, while the young person followed her into the room.

Janet was a neat-looking maid, not at all like the smart young women who usually followed the fortunes of my nomadic neighbours.

"If you please, sir," she began, dropping an old-fashioned curtsey as she spoke, "I must beg pardon for the liberty I am taking. If you please, sir, my mistress is too ill to bear quite so much noise at night, and if you could leave fiddling a little earlier in the evening it would be a deal better for her, poor thing!"

She spoke very respectfully, but decidedly, as if she had no doubts of her right to make such a complaint. I could scarcely help smiling to think that I should be complained of as a noisy neighbour, after all I had silently endured during the past ten years.

"My girl," I said, somewhat sarcastically, "your mistress has sent you to the wrong house. If she wants quiet evenings, she must let the young ladies at Number Seven know, and see if they will oblige her."

Janet looked incredulous.

"The sounds came from this house, sir; at least, we quite thought so, otherwise I shouldn't have ventured to come in."

"The noise you heard did come from my house," I replied; "but the cause of it came from next door. You must explain that to your mistress, if you can, and tell her I am sorry I must disoblige her."

"I must tell you, sir," said Janet, looking rather red and conscious, "that my mistress has not sent me. I came on my own responsibility. I'll tell you why," she went on, getting a little bolder. "My poor mistress, whom I love very much, has gone through a sight of trouble, and she is all alone in the world, being left by those who ought to have cared for her. Her troubles have broken her health. A shock

she had a few weeks back brought on a nervous fever. She was barely strong enough to be moved, when the doctor ordered her here. The journey has brought on a relapse, which she can't get over if she's to be kept awake at night by that scraping—I beg pardon, sir, I mean your fiddling." Then, as I did not speak, she added: "I hope you won't take it amiss, sir; I'm sure I don't mean any disrespect to you."

"Don't apologise," I answered; "I am glad to think you have so much consideration for your mistress. It is quite rare. As to my 'scraping,' I'll see about it; but I'll not make any rash promises."

When she had gone I called Simpson.

"Simpson," I said, "you know how those young ladies next door plague me with their piano and singing?"

"Yes, sir," was Simpson's ready reply; "I'm sure it's enough to plague anyone; it makes me hate the sound of music. Why, my boy Bob, he make a deal more tune come out of a Jew's harp, he do."

"My good Simpson," I said, ignoring her last little flight of fancy, "has it ever occurred to you to go and say what a nuisance we find this music, and that you wished them to leave off playing, just for my sake, you know?"

"Goodness gracious, sir! Whatever do you mean?" cried my housekeeper aghast. "Why, I shouldn't have the assurance to do such a thing. I'm sure I wish often enough they'd shut up the pianny, but go and ask 'em to—la, sir, I daren't do it. Whatever made you ask me, sir?"

"Nothing particular, Simpson; nothing particular."

LOST IN THE VALLEY.

By the Author of "Driven of the Wind," etc.

A STORY IN SIXTEEN CHAPTERS.

CHAPTER VI.

MAURICE looked very fair and boyish as he stood there, the lamplight falling on his bright hair and the pure outline of his beautiful, stern face, his slight figure in evening dress in full relief against the blue-grey hangings over the door.

M. de Villars was a much taller and stronger man, but French gentlemen do not settle their differences with their fists, and he contented himself by first glaring savagely at Maurice, and then breaking into a most unpleasant laugh.

"Tiens! c'est le petit M. Wilde! No wonder Madame was in such a hurry to get rid of me! I apologise, Monsieur, for my intrusion. I had no idea that Madame kept you in her back drawing-room."

Maurice did not either speak or move. But the contempt and indignation he felt were plainly visible on his face.

"I suppose," continued M. de Villars in a louder tone, "that you are aware of the character of the lady you are so chivalrously defending? If not, I shall be happy to enlighten you on the subject."

"I require no information from you, M. de Villars," said Maurice. "I know Mrs. Douglas well, and I respect her as much as I despise you."

The Marquis looked at him for a moment without speaking. Then he said, very slowly and distinctly:

"I am sorry for you, M. Wilde, for you are very young. But Henri de Villars allows no one to despise him, and my friend, M. de Montmorillon, will call upon you to-morrow morning. You understand?"

"Perfectly."

"Then I will not detain you longer. Make my excuses to Madame Douglas for leaving so abruptly. Au revoir."

He bowed low to Maurice, with a malignant smile, and left the room.

Left alone, the young Englishman sank upon a chair, and, putting his hand to his head, tried to collect his thoughts. He felt sick and giddy. Of one thing he was sure—he had acted rightly. Not even de Villars could say otherwise. He could have done no more and no less than he did. The Marquis meant to kill him, and he probably would carry out his amiable intention.

Maurice's mind, ever intent on details, began to busy itself with the manner of his probable death even more than with the actual event. He was not alone in the room more than five minutes, but by the time the Countess re-entered he had arranged what excuse to make to Trevor for deferring his journey, what to write home, and what to do at the meeting-place itself, wherever that should be.

As yet, indeed, he felt absolutely nothing but a desire to arrange everything rightly and exactly. He wished to get away to his rooms to avoid another scene with Eveline. But she was too quick for him, and as he rose softly and crossed the room to escape upstairs, she pushed aside the curtains from the doorway, and coming swiftly

to him, she turned him with his face to the light, holding his arms strongly with her hands, and gazing into his face—her own deathly white with passionate excitement. The expression in his seemed to unnerve her still more.

Three times she tried to speak, but her voice died away huskily in her throat, while he felt her convulsive grasp tighten on his arms.

"Maurice," she whispered at length, "tell me, for Heaven's sake! tell me everything. What did he say? I could not hear. He is not going—you are not going—?"

She stopped. Her great eyes, fixed fearfully on his face, read there the confirmation of her worst fears. She let him go, and staggered back. He started forward, and supported her in his arms, fearing that she would faint.

He was longing to get away, not feeling himself equal to the tension on the nerves induced by another exciting scene to-night.

He tried to call Hélène, but Eveline prevented him, laying her hand on his lips.

"No, I am not going to faint," she said. "You see, I am quite calm now. Come into the inner salon, where we shall not be disturbed. No, you must not go until you have told me everything."

She drew him into the smaller room, and shut the door. Then, standing beside him, holding his hand in hers, she said:

"M. de Villars has challenged you?"

"Yes."

"But you will not fight him. Maurice, you must not, you shall not. Swear to me that you will not. Remember, you leave Paris to-morrow morning. Your people are waiting for you. You cannot meet M. de Villars."

She was clasping his hand in both hers in a frenzy of excitement. He tried to soothe her, laying his other hand on hers, and gently trying to disengage himself.

"Don't excite yourself in this way; you'll be horribly ill if you go on like this," was all that occurred to him to say. It was so unlike Eveline Douglas to grow violently excited.

"No, I cannot, will not, let you go, unless you promise me that—that—you will not fight him."

"You know you are asking me something that is impossible," he said almost sternly. "I would do a great deal to

please you, but, even to please you, I could not be a dishonourable coward, as you must know perfectly well."

She fell on her knees at his feet, holding his hand against her cheek, and letting her hot tears fall upon it. He tried to raise her, being horribly distressed by her excitement.

"No, no!" she cried. "Maurice, listen. If you do meet M. de Villars, if any harm should come to you, it would kill me—kill me. Do you hear? I have done so much harm, so much mischief—if another death were laid to my account, if you, above all men, died through me, if the shock did not kill me I should kill myself. M. de Villars is a noted duellist; he thinks you are a boy; he does not really mean to meet you. If I go to him, tell him that he made a mistake, that you are no more to me than he is, that you did not understand—"

"Mrs. Douglas," said Maurice quietly, disengaging himself at last. "I must leave you now, and I must really, seriously ask you, if you have any liking or respect for me, not to interfere in any way. I am not in the least afraid of death; I never have been; and it is not your fault at all. It is absurd to think so for a moment. Now you must let me say good-night to you, as I have much to do before I go to bed."

She sprang up and stood between him and the door, holding out both her hands beseechingly.

"At least promise me you will see me again to-morrow, and let me know everything that happens."

She looked almost plain, so worn and drawn with excitement and grief, standing there, her hair disordered, and the tears streaming down her cheeks; but to him, in the sincerity of her womanly distress, she appeared more attractive, more lovable, than she had ever yet seemed.

"I promise," he said, and, stooping his head, he kissed her hands before he left her.

She stared helplessly after him as the door closed upon him. Then, as she turned sadly away, her eyes fell upon the open miniature case upon the table. Although it had been always among her things, she had avoided opening it for nearly three years.

Now she shrank back shuddering. It was ghastly to be reminded of those two dead faces, and of the words she had heard or seen somewhere concerning one of them,

which rang now in her ears like a message from the grave.

"Are you never haunted in your dreams by his dead face, floating on the waters of the Arno, dying with a curse upon his lips for you—?"

Where had she heard them?

They rang in her ears now with maddening persistency. And here was this fair-haired English boy, whom she had grown to love with a tender protecting affection, to be sacrificed for her too. At any cost to herself she must save him.

She flung herself face downwards upon the sofa, stretching out her arms in despairing prayer.

For several hours she lay thus motionless, telling Hélène, when she entered, to go to bed and leave her. Towards morning she rose, looking haggard and grey in the dawning light.

"That will be the best, the only way," she said to herself. Then, leaving a note on the table for Hélène, directing her to wake her at half-past twelve, she undressed at last, and soon fell into a heavy sleep. When the maid awakened her she forced herself to eat some breakfast, and, after dressing with even more than her usual care in a delicate tea-gown covered with filmy lace, she sent a note down to M. de Villars at his club below, begging him to spare her a few minutes' conversation. She waited, pacing restlessly up and down her rooms after Pierre had returned to say that the Marquis had not yet been at his club. She had told Hélène to question Trevor as to what went on on the floor above, and heard that a French gentleman, whose name she knew as one of de Villars's most intimate friends, had called upon Maurice early in the day. Since receiving his visit the young Englishman had gone out, telling Trevor that he should not return until evening, and that their journey back to England was postponed, perhaps for a week longer.

Perhaps for a week! Eveline shuddered as Hélène repeated the message to her. Perhaps he would never return! She became even more restlessly impatient after receiving this news, and, after watching the clock with feverish anxiety for an hour more, at six o'clock she ordered her carriage and drove to the Marquis de Villars's Hotel in the Boulevard Malesherbes.

He was out; but the servant informed her that he would certainly be in at about eleven o'clock, as he was going to give a supper-party that evening.

Eveline stood a moment thinking.

"Shall I tell Monsieur your name, Madame?" the servant enquired.

"No; I will call again later," she said. Then, entering her carriage, she drove home.

"Find me the dress in which I look best, Hélène," she said; "and I want you to dress my hair again and get out my diamonds."

After debating in a serious business-like fashion which of her many beautiful costumes suited her best, she chose a dinner dress of sea-green damask, cut square and trimmed with swansdown at the neck and arms. Over it she wore a long cloak of sapphire-blue plush, edged with dark fur, and, standing before her long glass, with the diamonds in her hair scarcely excelling the restless brilliancy of her shining eyes, she looked at herself critically, and decided that her appearance was satisfactory for her purpose. She had sent Pierre in the carriage with a note to Miss McIntyre, begging her immediate presence; and that little lady soon returned with the man-servant.

"But you are going out, Eveline. Do you wish me to go with you? I am not in evening dress," she said.

Mrs. Douglas took out a handsome fur mantle from her wardrobe, and placed it round the shoulders of her little friend.

"I am going out," she said, "and I want you to go with me. It is a great favour to ask of you; but I cannot go alone. It is, indeed, a matter of life and death. I am going to ask mercy from a villain, a man who pretends to love me, and whom I hate and despise."

Her face looked set and rigid. Little Miss McIntyre—a faded characterless woman, whose life had been one long struggle to preserve a ladylike appearance against overwhelming odds—followed her meekly downstairs. She had very few fixed opinions, and scarcely any likes or dislikes: forty years spent as governess, secretary, and companion having taken all the colour she had ever had out of her. But she would have gone cheerfully to the end of the world for Eveline Douglas, who had been the one brightening influence of her life for many years, and whom she loved with an unquestioning devotion no man could ever have excited in her. Old, and worn, and plain herself, she took a personal delight in Eveline's grace and beauty, and she looked at her now in a glow of genuine admiration and sympathy as they entered the carriage together.

"You know nothing I can ever do for you is any trouble," she said. "Only I hate to see you worried."

In silence the two ladies drove to M. de Villars's house. The windows were now a blaze of light. It was a little past eleven, as Eveline and Miss McIntyre entered the hall. The servant who admitted them stared superciliously at the elder lady.

"Supper is served, Madame. Shall I show you upstairs?" he asked the Countess, "and this lady too?"

Miss McIntyre's appearance did not suggest to his mind a festive element at a fast supper-party.

"No. Take this note to your master," said Evelyn, and tearing a leaf from her card-case, she wrote on it in pencil:

"I shall wait until you can see me.

"EVELINE DOUGLAS."

She followed the man into a great reception-room on the floor above, from which sounds of music and laughter in an adjoining room could plainly be heard. Miss McIntyre sat quietly down to wait in a retired corner of the room; while her companion restlessly paced up and down the polished floor, the many mirrors that lined the apartment reflecting her slight, erect figure in her trailing gown of pale silk, and dark fur-trimmed cloak.

She could hear a sudden lull among the voices in the supper-room as the servant entered to deliver her note. A few minutes later the door of the reception-room was flung open, and de Villars appeared in evening dress, flushed and excited; not absolutely intoxicated, for he regulated his enjoyments too well to do more than exhilarate himself with wine, but in his most audacious mood.

He advanced quickly towards her. She let him take her gloved hand, let him kiss it, and break into expressions of the passionate delight the sight of her caused him, knowing as she did all the time that he guessed the object of her visit, and that he was not likely to mistake her feelings towards him, whatever he might pretend to think on the subject.

"I have come," she said, while he still held her hand, "with a friend"—he started, seeing Miss McIntyre for the first time—"to ask a favour, and I do not mean to go until you have granted it."

CHAPTER VII.

M. DE VILLARS affected much delight at Eveline's announcement.

"But, Madame—Eveline—do I wish you

to go? And why did you bring anyone with you? Do you not know your power over me? Do you not know that your wishes are law?" he asked, detaining her hand in his, and leaning over it with a familiarity that would have made her shudder had she not steeled herself to calmness.

"You can guess what I have come to ask," she said, ignoring his protestations of affection altogether.

"But no; I have no idea. My heart, my fortune, my life are, however, at your service—everything but my honour," he added meaningly.

"Your honour!" she repeated scornfully. "What good can it do your honour to murder a poor, helpless boy! Yes, it would be a murder, not a duel, to shoot down a child of seventeen, whose only offence is that he wished to protect a woman who had been kind to him from insult."

"Ah, Eveline, that is just the point! You are kind, too kind to him. Why are you not as kind to me? If you were, I might even sacrifice to you my just desire for vengeance. If you were now to come to me, to place your arms round my neck, and ask me lovingly what you wish, who knows what I would not do for you?"

"I cannot do that," she said in the same impassive manner, the slow flush that spread over her face being the only sign she gave of her indignation at his presumption. "But, if you refuse me this, I can, and will, go straight to your mother's house, where your fiancée, Mdlle. d'Arbeville, is staying, and tell both ladies how you intend to fight a duel to-morrow morning with an English boy of seventeen who protected a woman from your insolence."

"You threaten me, Madame? You seem to forget that forty mothers and forty fiancées cannot prevent a man from fighting a duel if he chooses. Also, pardon me for suggesting it, but my mother is a De Mornay, the aunt of Jeanne de Mornay—Jeanne Ravelli—and, therefore, it is scarcely probable she will receive beneath her roof the Countess of Montecalvo, or listen to her version of any story."

"I am prepared for that. Miss McIntyre, who accompanies me now, was once Mdlle. d'Arbeville's governess. She will enter the house, and she will be listened to, M. de Villars, while I remain outside in the carriage; and, if your duel is not prevented, your marriage shall be."

"Mon Dieu, Madame, do not speak of this hateful marriage!" he exclaimed petulantly. "I should be too glad to have it broken off, that I might be freer to lay my heart at your feet."

M. de Villars was not quite sincere.

Even had his projected marriage with a plain and ill-tempered heiress been broken off, he was not in the least inclined to lay what heart he might have left, after ten years of dissipation, at the feet of Eveline Douglas. He was horribly in want of ready money, and Mdlle. d'Arbeville was one of the greatest matrimonial "catches" in Paris, so that Mrs. Douglas had judged him rightly when she threatened to expose his conduct to his already jealous and exacting fiancée.

But he admired the Countess as much as it was possible for him to admire any woman, and he wished her to suppose that it was entirely on her account that he would forego his revenge. Like a true "man about town," he was too thoroughly selfish to cherish any strong likes or dislikes outside his evanescent passions, and it was a matter of utter indifference to him whether "ce petit M. Wilde" was shot dead the next morning, or lived to a green old age. Such a boy was certainly beneath him as an antagonist, and, from what he had seen of the young Englishman, he even doubted whether he was Eveline's lover. So now, in a burst of magnanimity, he continued:

"Voyons, Madame, what is it you wish me to do?"

"I want you to go away from Paris early to-morrow morning, and to send off now, in my presence, a note to Mr. Wilde, withdrawing your challenge."

"But it is impossible. You would make me ridiculous—a coward——"

"No living being knows anything concerning this duel except you, and I, and M. de Montmorillon, and Mr. Wilde. No one who knows you, and your frequent 'affairs of honour' would think of attributing cowardice to you. You can make what explanation you like to your friend; surely you are ingenious enough to think of an excuse. And for me—for me, Henri de Villars, I shall bless you for the only good action I have ever heard attributed to you, and for saving my soul from the reproach of another cruel misfortune laid to my account. You know my history—at least, you know part of it—all that can be learned of it from your relations, my enemies. You misjudge me altogether, as most people do; but at least you know

enough to guess that it would kill me to be the indirect cause of another crime. You cannot be altogether bad and heartless. I freely forgive you for any annoyance you may have subjected me to. I shall respect you, be grateful to you, and look upon you as my friend if you let this boy go. And for my sake you will, will you not?"

The tears were filling her beautiful eyes; her voice rang with a pathetic persuasion that made its sweet notes sweeter still. She stood before him clasping her hands in an agony of appeal, a lovely, loving woman, with all her soul in her eyes, begging the life of the man she loved from the man she hated. And her persuasions, together with her threats, gained her point.

"I will grant everything you wish," he said, with an evil admiration lighting his dark eyes, "but on one condition—that you accompany me now for a few moments only to the room where my friends are having supper, and that you speak to me there, before them, as kindly, as irresistibly, as you are doing now."

She turned away coldly.

"You must know, M. de Villars, that you are asking an impossibility."

"Then, Madame, so are you; and you are at liberty to go to my mother and see if she is more amenable to your eloquence on the subject of your love-affairs, than her son."

He moved towards the door. She stopped him by a gesture. In spite of her assumed confidence on the subject, she had really grave doubts as to whether Madame de Villars would listen to any story in which the Countess de Montecalvo's name was concerned; and, even if she were willing to do so, what her son had said was right, and neither she nor his fiancée could prevent him from meeting Maurice Wilde. Eveline was not by nature in the least vindictive; so long as her end was gained, and her friend in safety, she had no wish to revenge herself upon the Marquis de Villars for his impertinence. A bitter contempt for his cowardly treatment of her filled her mind now, however, as, turning to him with a face of deadly paleness, she said:

"As you wish. So much has been said and thought of me without cause that it matters little what handle I may give you or any other generous gentleman," she emphasised the words bitterly, "for further scandal. Speak to you affectionately, either alone or before your friends, I will not; but, since that is your con-

dition, I will walk into the supper-room with you, and listen a few moments while you speak to me, if you will write the letter I spoke of and send it off to Mr. Wilde's house at once, and if you will swear to leave Paris the first thing to-morrow morning."

M. de Villars could see by her face how much this concession cost her. But he did not in the least pity her. He wished to punish her for her indifference and coldness; he had but little belief in the scruples of any woman, and none at all in hers. To the stories against her, industriously circulated in his family, he had lent a ready and amused ear. When he met her again in Paris, he had calculated that she would be an easy prey to his fascinations, and her treatment of him, when she first refused to receive him at all, and then accepted his visits on sufferance, after threats on his part to prejudice Maurice against her, hurt and wounded his vanity deeply.

He could have laughed to himself now, as he turned away from her, and busied himself writing a note at a little table near. When it was finished, he handed it to Eveline. It was addressed to Maurice, and couched in a somewhat patronising and magnanimous style, stating that M. de Villars, upon reflection, had decided that Mr. Wilde's youth and utter ignorance of French manners, excused his language of the evening before, and that therefore the Marquis de Villars would overlook it, and intended leaving Paris for his Château at Fontainebleau early the next morning.

Eveline read it through in silence, then watched him while he gave it to a servant to take to Mr. Wilde's rooms in the Boulevard Haussmann.

As the man left the room she turned to his master.

"I am ready now," she said. "Miss McIntyre, will you wait for me here? M. de Villars, show me the way."

Her voice rang hard and imperiously. He drew her hand through his arm, and led her through the hall to the supper-room on the same floor.

It was a large apartment, brilliantly lighted. Some ten or twelve young men, mostly members of de Villars's club, were talking and laughing loudly over a gorgeously-spread supper table, with half-a-dozen handsome, showily-dressed women, while a band in an adjoining room played exquisite music, to which no one paid the slightest attention. It was an enter-

tainment in which coarseness stood for wit, and noise for merriment.

There was a sudden hush, as the door opened, and Eveline appeared, escorted by de Villars. No one there knew her, although some remembered to have seen her on the stairs of her house or driving in the Park.

But she was a disturbing element in the scene, and every eye was rivetted upon her as she stepped slowly forward, with a rigid look of misery on her beautiful white face. The women watched her with defiance, the men with a compassionate feeling. She was so evidently out of place among them, and there was not one among them but knew what de Villars could not and would not understand—that it was some unexplained accident that had brought a lady so refined, so pure, into their midst.

So de Villars's plan failed entirely. No one present thought Eveline Douglas was in love with him for one moment. In truth it would have been impossible to make such a mistake, while one could note the look of cold indifference with which she gave monosyllabic answers to his playful speeches, her eyes wandering restlessly to the door the whole time.

The bright lights; the shining glass; the bold, inquisitive faces swam before her. In their stead she saw Maurice Wilde's dead face, as he might lie, shot through the heart, in the early morning light; and this nerved her to control herself, to answer calmly, to raise a glass of wine to her lips, to put it down untasted, to bow coldly when de Villars introduced some of his club friends to her, and presently to rise and walk proudly from the room on his arm, while he explained to the wondering company that the Countess of Montecalvo had another appointment, and regretted that she must leave them so soon.

As the door closed upon them there was a sudden hush; then a loud buzz of comment and laughter. But of all this Eveline heard nothing. In silence she let M. de Villars lead her down the broad staircase and into the carriage, Miss McIntyre having joined them in the hall.

As he kissed her gloved hand before giving the direction to the driver, de Villars felt for a moment almost ashamed of himself. As the carriage drove away he could see Eveline start suddenly forward, passionately wrench off the glove his lips had touched, tear it in pieces, and throw it out of the window.

The Marquis laughed rather uncom-

fortably, and returned to console himself in more lively society, while Eveline and her companion drove home in silence.

"You must stay with me to-night, dear," the younger lady said, as they left the carriage, "it is too late for you to go back now."

Miss McIntyre assented, and Hélène, as she let them in, informed her mistress that M. Wilde had been waiting for her in the inner salon for more than an hour.

A light broke over Eveline's face. She could meet him without self-reproach now.

Leading Miss McIntyre into the dining-room—a tiny apartment, decorated with oak furniture, tapestry hangings, and silver mountings—she placed her in a comfortable arm-chair by the fire, and ordered supper to be prepared for three.

Then she left her, and stood hesitating for a moment outside the room where Maurice was waiting for her.

He, too, had passed a restless day. Early in the morning M. de Montmorillon, de Villars's friend, had called upon him, and, in the most courteous and business-like fashion, had arranged the meeting for six o'clock on the following day in the Bois de Boulogne. Maurice, having the choice of weapons, had chosen pistols. Being, in fact, totally ignorant of the use of both weapons, he preferred pistols to swords, as he could at least let off the former, or, at least he hoped so. In his own mind he decided to fire in the air, as the idea of being killed himself was less distasteful to his mind than that of killing his antagonist.

"Though if I aimed straight at him he would be probably quite as safe," he thought to himself.

From his easy and collected demeanour, however, his visitor guessed nothing of all this, and left with the impression that this pretty-faced boy must have been concerned in "affairs of honour" before.

All day long Maurice kept away from home, purposely to avoid Eveline, until the evening. When, at a little before eleven, he came back to the Boulevard Haussmann, he went straight to her rooms, to tell her everything and to say good-bye.

He did not attempt to conceal from himself the fact that his chance of life was very small. His life had been too blameless and his religious principles were too strong, for death to have any terrors for him. But as he lay stretched on the sofa by the fire in Eveline's little salon, waiting for her

return, the thought of his home came upon him for the first time with an overpowering longing to see it again. The dear, stupid old Grange, with its Philistine furniture; the garden, filled in every available corner with fruit and flowers; the beautiful Malvern Hills beyond, which had seen him grow up and his father before him; his father, too, with his cheerful common sense and healthy mind; his step-mother and sisters, with their narrow notions but warm hearts; and his old dog, Graeme. The thought of never seeing Graeme again brought the tears suddenly into his eyes.

He seemed to himself to have been selfish, ungrateful; never to have deserved the affection which he was now leaving.

Lying with half-closed eyes in the subdued light, not awake and not asleep, the picture of his own little room at home rose before him with wonderful vividness. He seemed to see the firelight flickering on the oak wainscot, on his pictures, book-case, and favourite arm-chair, and, as she had always done since he was a child, his step-mother coming softly into the room in her dressing-gown to kiss him and to say good-night.

He longed passionately for the touch of motherly arms, for the kiss of loving lips upon his forehead, before he should go to his death in the cold light of the early morning.

A mist was before his eyes, and through it he half saw, half dreamed, a vision of someone coming to him. Not his mother surely. A beautiful, glorified version of her in truth, but a woman—loving, tender, and pitiful—who bent over him, with tears in her soft brown eyes that dropped upon his face.

And stretching up his arms as he used to when a child, he flung them round the neck of Eveline Douglas.

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A DATELESS BARGAIN.

BY C. L. PIRKIS,

Author of "Lady Lovelace," etc.

CHAPTER XXI.

"JOYCE, why don't you curse me?" moaned Mab, as she and Joyce sat alone together in their sorrow and desolation. "It is my doing—all mine."

A month has passed since the day that was to have been Joyce's wedding-day. During that month Joyce has gone through every phase of passionate grief; in it she feels as if she had lived a lifetime twice told. She is older, she says to herself, now than her mother; than white-haired, placid Aunt Bell; even than that wrinkled, crooning old body she saw the other day at the window of an almshouse as she went by. Like the old face she saw at that window, she feels she has said good-bye to all the bright young things of life, to all the hopes, pleasures, desires, which used to set her eyes sparkling, her cheeks glowing. Only yesterday she found herself looking longingly at a widow's cap in a shop window. If only she could have had the right to wear it, how thankful she would have been! If only some grim churchyard could have held for her a stone with Frank's name upon it, she knows she could go down on her knees even now, and call herself a happy woman!

"Hush, Mab, you pain me when you say such things!" was her quiet reply to Mab's moan; and then the sisters, clasping hands, sat in silence once more.

Uncle Archie came in while they were thus sitting.

Uncle Archie had of late found his rasping, incisive manner, difficult to keep up, towards Joyce at any rate. So he had

dropped it, and spoke to her in soft, tender tones, that came strangely from his cross old lips. Sometimes he would take her in his arms, and smooth her head and curly hair as he used to when she was a little child.

His manner cut Joyce to the heart. She could feel his wordless pity for her, just as he could feel her unspoken despair.

"Don't sit there moaning with your hands before you, child," he said as he came in, "or you'll drive me foolish."

"Uncle Archie, I am not moaning, I am trying to think—my hardest," was Joyce's reply.

The old gentleman shook his head sadly.

"That is what I am trying to do from morning till night; but, Heaven help me, I am at my wits' end now."

At their wits' end! that was where they all were just then. Everything that human intelligence could conceive, that labour or money could execute, had been done; and yet not the faintest trace of Frank, dead or alive, had they come upon. The river had been dragged, the canal likewise. They had yielded up their usual treasures of mud, old boots, and other rotting débris, but never a vestige of Frank or Frank's belongings.

Every police-station in the kingdom had been communicated with. Every newspaper held conspicuous advertisements, offering large rewards for his recovery, and smaller rewards for the slightest intelligence of him.

But though imaginary clues and false trails had been started by the score, not one of them came to anything or answered any purpose under Heaven, save that of buoying Joyce's heart up with hope for a day or two, in order that she might the better afterwards sound the depths of her despair.

Mr. Morton still informed everybody in grandiose fashion that "we are in London, sir, not in St. Petersburg." But beyond full assurance of that fact his acumen did not appear to extend. He had traced Ned Donovan down to his lodgings, questioned him, and also his landlady, closely as to his movements on the 20th of December. The statements of the two were in accord.

Ned stated that on the afternoon of the 20th he chanced to be passing at the end of the blind alley known as Brewer's Court, when he saw Miss Shenstone standing on the doorstep of one of the houses. He did not consider that it was a neighbourhood for a young lady to be waiting about in alone, so he immediately turned the corner, and asked if he should fetch a cab for her, or see her to her home. On the night of the 20th, returning late from the house of a friend at Battersea, Bryan O'Shea, he saw, to his great surprise, Miss Shenstone in evening dress, standing at the corner of a street leading into Eaton Square. She appeared to be in a half-fainting condition. He immediately hailed a cab that was coming into sight, placed her in it, and directed the driver where to take her. Of Mr. Ledyard he had seen nothing.

This statement, in effect, he repeated calmly and unswervingly to Uncle Archie and Joyce, and no cross-fire of questioning on their part could induce him to swerve from it.

The explanation seemed straightforward enough. At any rate, no testimony was forthcoming to controvert it. There was really no charge to be preferred against the man; no excuse whatever, as Morton explained to Uncle Archie, for taking him into custody. There was nothing, so far as appearances went, to connect him in any way with Frank Ledyard's disappearance. Furthermore, even supposing that Ned were in some sort connected with possible Fenian meetings held in the suspected house, there was no proof whatever that Frank had so much as crossed its threshold. The last authentic information they had of the missing man was, that he had turned the corner of the square in pursuit of Mab. After that everything was dubious.

Morton had cross-questioned to his heart's content every member of Mrs. Shenstone's household in succession.

To Mrs. Shenstone he had devoted a scanty five minutes, had shrugged his shoulders, and got out of the room with speed, although the lady could very easily

have entertained him for half a day with her tags and rags of reminiscences of passing events.

To Mab he had given a long hour, and left her convinced that she had gone at least three parts of the road to a lunatic asylum.

To Kathleen, the pretty waiting-maid, off and on he had devoted a good deal of attention, in fact, had seemed to take an especial pleasure in her society.

Uncle Archie had bewildered the police authorities generally by the forcible fashion in which he had insisted that Ned, the Buckingham, or at any rate somebody, somewhere, should be taken up and prosecuted.

"You don't treat my opinions with common respect," he had informed Morton hotly. "You simply ignore my suggestions, just as if I were some irritable, unreasonable old man, with gigantic prejudices, who didn't know what he was talking about."

Morton's eyes had showed a passing twinkle.

"Well, sir, you see we've no case against any one of the parties you name," he had tried to explain.

"Get your case then. Whose business is it if it isn't yours?"

"Now there are the Buckingham. We know they are a pair of adventurers, but at present they've done nothing to bring the law upon them."

"The man writes inflammatory articles for the Irish press. Isn't that enough to bring the law upon him?"

Morton had shaken his head.

"Those aren't the dangerous ones, sir. English law very wisely lets the loud-mouthed democrat alone. He makes a centre, so to speak, for the dangerous ones to congregate to. Let him alone, and we know where to find them, and can put our hands upon them at any moment."

"Yes, but you don't put your hands upon them at any moment."

"We give them rope enough, sir, and they hang themselves."

Here Uncle Archie had jumped up boiling over.

"Confound you," he had cried, "I'll take your word for it. If they do get hanged, it isn't you they'll have to thank for it." And Morton had very wisely bowed himself out of the room.

Mrs. Shenstone had characteristically comforted herself as the one on whom the household sorrow had fallen heaviest.

"Look at me, Joyce; I look ten years older," she had said, when her sobs and hysterics had died of a severe cold and sore throat, which did duty for them fairly well.

"Oh, mother, what do looks matter?" Joyce had replied wearily, shrinking from her mother as she had never shrunk from her before.

"And, Joyce—oh, don't be in such a hurry to run away from me, child—I really think we ought, every one of us, to put on half-mourning—grey-and-black or grey-and-white. You see, if poor Frank isn't dead, something dreadful must have happened. Dear me! She's gone out of the room! How extraordinary! I meant it kindly too."

So Mrs. Shenstone, in becoming grey-and-black toilettes, had sat in her drawing-room every afternoon receiving condoling visitors by the score, telling everybody what an awful blow she had sustained, how fond she had always been of Frank Ledyard, and how she had been looking forward to Joyce's wedding-day as the one bright spot in her own very clouded and troubled career.

With evident enjoyment she would retail to Uncle Archie, Mab, Joyce, anyone who would listen, the remarks of the said sympathetic visitors in response to her confidences. She seemed to think, whenever Mab, Joyce, Aunt Bell, or Uncle Archie got together for a quiet five minutes, that they were bent on excluding her from their conference. The idea ruffled her temper at times, sent her to hunt them up, and generally rout them out of their peaceable corners, whenever there came a lull in the whirl of her afternoon callers.

On the very afternoon that Uncle Archie had confessed himself to his nieces to be at his wits' end, she swooped down upon them with capacity for a good half-hour's grumble plainly written on her face, and an open letter in her hand.

"Nobody comes to me now, saying: 'Mother, dear, who are your letters from this morning?'"—here she looked at Joyce. "Nobody ever says to me now: 'Mother, dear, let me answer your letters for you, I know you detest pen and ink'"—here she looked at Mab.

"Mother dear, who is your letter from?" asked Joyce mechanically, feeling that the sooner she went through the expected formula, the sooner she would be allowed to get back to her sombre thoughts again.

Mrs. Shenstone's voice changed from plaint to pleasure. "Well, dear, since you

ask, it's from Sylvia Buckingham, telling me how glad the poor people at Lough Lea are to get the money I've sent her from time to time."

"Heavens and earth! ma'am," cried Uncle Archie, jumping up in a towering rage, "you don't mean to say you are keeping up a correspondence with that wretched woman?" he began.

Joyce laid her finger on his lips: "Oh! pray, pray don't make a scene, Uncle Archie," she whispered with something of a shudder, for her nerves were not what they had been a month ago.

Mab interposed with the question: "Where does she write from, mother?"

"From the Abbey House, Lough Lea," answered Mrs. Shenstone, looking down at her letter. Here Mab abruptly left the room. "And," the lady went on, in a voice that suggested approaching showers, "she sends all sorts of kind messages to all of you. To Joyce especially, she says 'she never pitied anyone more in her life, and she hopes your brains won't give way under it all.' There, that is what 'the wretched woman' says."

And all this in spite of Uncle Archie's thunderous frown, which most women would have felt at a dozen yards' distance.

But one might just as well have levelled a frown at a parrot or a butterfly, as at Mrs. Shenstone.

CHAPTER XXII.

MAB went straight upstairs to her own room, and wrote down Sylvia Buckingham's address on a scrap of paper.

She was in a complex and miserable state of mind just then. She credited herself, and herself only, from first to last with all the sorrow that had of late visited the household—with Ned Donovan's reckless career, which incidentally it seemed might be laid to her charge; with whatever of mischance had befallen Frank in his endeavour to follow her unconscious footsteps. Worst of all was the fact that she did not see one single thing she could do to remedy the evil she had indirectly wrought.

It was all very well, her sad thoughts ran, for her to be saying to Joyce from morning till night, "My darling, I would lay down my life to get you back your happiness." Her life laid down a thousand times over would do nothing for anybody, so far as she could see.

She threw herself into a chair, and covered her face with her hands, as though she meant to give herself up to steady, concentrated thought.

But Mab's thoughts as a rule were the reverse of steady or concentrated. One half at least of her brain-work was done unconsciously. Her best ideas came to her suddenly, disconnectedly. Seemingly, they were what people are pleased to call "inspirations;" in reality they were the definite product of unconscious cerebration.

Of late—notably since her careful perusal of Marie St. Clair's Autobiography—she had become cognizant of the fact that, when her bodily powers seemed inert and drowsy, her brain was working its hardest and best. She did not fight against the idea. To say truth, to admit it and act upon it seemed to her one step—the first possibly—towards the perfect attainment of the habit of clairvoyante trance which she was cultivating with such evil effect. Where other people would put their hands to their foreheads—as Joyce so often did now—and try to think their hardest, Mab would simply shut her eyes, nurse her drowsiness, make herself as nearly as possible a blank. Then, when renewal of bodily energy told her that her brain was craving its turn for rest, she would jump to her feet, seize her thoughts as they presented themselves, taking it for granted that they were the brightest and best she was capable of.

Half-an-hour's dreamy quiet in her chair left her with a suggestion which, from its mischievous malevolence, might have come straight from the Prince of Darkness, viz. why not write to Captain Buckingham, craving his assistance on a matter wherein it seemed permissible to think he had power to help her? Sylvia's letter to Mrs. Shenstone had in the first instance suggested the idea, her half-hour of dreamy inertion left it paramount and irresistible.

She had surmised the possible enmity that existed between Buckingham and Frank, careful though the two men had been to conceal it in her presence. But it seemed to her that all enmities must die before the terrible sorrow that overwhelmed them now. She knew that of late, for some unexplained reason, her mother's interest had cooled towards Buckingham, that Uncle Archie had forbidden him the house, and was constantly alluding to him as "that scoundrelly American adventurer."

Neither fact counted for much. No one had ever laid stress upon Mrs. Shenstone's

weather-like changes of taste, nor upon the blustering of old Uncle Archie, who was in the habit of consigning large portions of the human race from time to time to condemnation for comparatively light offences. Her own repugnance to the man had died utterly, nay rather, had been pushed out of existence by an opposite feeling, which, as time went on, was rapidly gaining in strength.

In justice, however, to Mab, it must be said that no thought of self was in her mind when she took up her pen to write the letter on which she had resolved.

Never before, it seemed to her, had that pen had so difficult a task set it.

It is not easy to tell a man in one breath that you know he hates a certain person, and in the next bespeak his help for that person. Also, her whole appeal for help was based upon a supposition she had no apparent right to form, the supposition that Buckingham was, one way or another, connected with those secret societies with which she had but little doubt Ned had linked himself.

Her letter took hours to write. When finished, it was scarcely the one she had planned. Somehow her pen, once set going, seemed to run away with her fingers, and brought in another and distinct theme, which a firmer hand would have kept in the background.

Mab was not a brilliant letter-writer; she lacked Joyce's power of terse, idiomatic expression. Her written, like her spoken, sentences were given to halting and mistiness. She generally picked up her subject in its middle, and let it slip through her fingers before her correspondent could well get hold of it.

"You know our sorrow here," she wrote, "nowhere do we see a door of hope. My own fears, I confess, point all in one direction—a direction concerning which I would like to ask of you advice and assistance. Do you know—have you heard—the history of that terrible night of the 20th of December? How that with sealed senses I went wandering out into the dark streets, seeking for one who I feared had joined a gang of conspirators. How I went straight to a house that was most probably used, as a meeting-place for a secret society; how that some man there seized me by the arm, another lifted me out of the house, and after that all became darkness and confusion to me till I awoke to find myself lying on my own bed. Thoughts crowd into

my brain as I write." This was where her pen began to wander. "You, who have taught me to claim as my birthright a power not granted to the generality of mankind, will you not also help me to make use of it now in our great extremity? You told me the last time I saw you—on the night of the terrible 20th December—that I had a gift which might be lacking to the angels. But alas! what avails such a gift if I know not how to make good use of it? I followed implicitly your directions, similar, I suppose, to those you gave to Marie St. Clair. I have attained, in some measure, to the power of trance at will as she did, though not to the like extent. With her, however, the result was clairvoyance in its highest, purest form; with me it has been a mischievous sort of somnambulism which has brought misery upon those I love best in the world. I want the higher, better gift. I do not care what trouble, labour, self-denial I practise, so long as I attain it. And quickly too, for it seems to me I might exercise it now for the lightening, if nothing more, of the terrible suspense which hangs over our home. You have helped me so far on my road, will you not help me to take yet another step?"

Though she shook her head over her letter, she at once sent it enclosed under cover to Sylvia Buckingham, feeling that it was not in her to write a better.

Nearly a week passed before she received any reply. Then it came, dated from a London hotel, and ran as follows:

"DEAR MISS SHENSTONE,—You pay me a very great compliment in consulting me in the trouble that has befallen your family. Assuredly I can help you in the way you wish, and assuredly I will do so. But I must see you. Your letter covers too much ground for me to go over in a sheet of note-paper. Your door is, for reasons with which I am unacquainted, closed against me, but I am glad to say there are other houses in London where I am always a welcome guest. Mrs. O'Halloran's is one of these, and she is good enough to place her drawing-room always at my disposal for receiving those I have the privilege of counting among my friends.

"She is a friend of your mother's, and a most estimable person. Any time, any day you may like to appoint, I will meet you at her house with a great deal of pleasure.

"I remain, very sincerely yours,

"G. R. BUCKINGHAM."

CHARMS, OMENS, AND ANCIENT QUACKERIES.

IN THREE PARTS. PART III.

AN old chronicle of the sixteenth century tells us that it was the custom for "enamoured maydes and gentilwomen" to give to their favourite swains, as tokens of their love, little embroidered handkerchiefs, about three or four inches square, wrought around often in embroidery, with a button or tassel at each corner and a little one in the centre. The first of these favours were edged with gold lace or twist, and then, being folded in four cross folds so that the middle might be seen, they were worn by the accepted lovers in their hats or on their breasts. Tokens were also given by the gentlemen and worn by their mistresses. An old play, alluding to this custom says:

Given earrings we will wear,
Bracelets of our lovers' hair,
Which they on our arms shall twist,
(With our names carved) on our wrist.

Amongst the various superstitions connected with the first step to matrimony, I find that, in some parts of the country, particularly Lincolnshire, the wish-bone of a goose is used for the purposes of divination. Two young ladies, or even two of the opposite sex, must take hold each of one side and pull; who succeeds in pulling the larger portion away will be married first. Or, if a lady and gentleman pull together, and the bone breaks evenly, they will become man and wife; if not, fate is against them. In some other parts they take the blade-bone of a rabbit, stick nine pins in it, and then put it under their pillows, when, during the night, they will be sure to see the object of their affections.

A weekly newspaper, some years ago, gave the following receipt for ascertaining who will be the husband of any given maiden, when in doubt between several lovers on which should fall the choice. Let a friend write their names on a piece of paper in which a portion of wedding-cake is wrapped; then let the experimentalist sleep on it for three consecutive nights, and, if, during the night, she should dream of any one of the names written on the paper, him she is certain to wed; if not, she had better sether cap elsewhere. During the marriage feast at Burnley, a wedding-ring is put into a posset and the unmarried person whose cup contains the ring after the drink is served out, will be the first of

the company to be married. Sometimes, too, a cake is made, into which a wedding-ring and a sixpence are placed. When the company are about to retire, the cake is broken and distributed amongst the unmarried ladies. She who finds the ring in her portion of cake will shortly be married; but she who gets the sixpence is certain to be an old maid.

The Cleveland girls adopt this method of ascertaining whether or not they will be married: Take a tumbler of water from a stream which runs southward; borrow the wedding-ring of some married friend and suspend it by a hair of your own head over the glass of water, holding the hair between the finger and thumb. If the ring hit against the side of the glass, the holder will die an old maid; if it turn quickly round she will be married once, if slowly, twice. Should the ring strike the glass side more than three times after the holder has pronounced the name of her lover, there will be a lengthy courtship and nothing more; if less frequently, the affair will be broken off; and if there is no striking at all, the affair will never come off. A more simple plan is to look at the new moon through a silk handkerchief which has never been washed, when, as many years will elapse before marriage takes place, as many moons as are seen through the intricacies of the silk.

German girls who are anxious to ascertain what will be the colour of their future husband's hair, stand at the door between the hours of eleven and twelve on the eve of St. Andrew's Day (November 30th), take hold of the latch and say three times: "gentle love, if thou lovest me show thyself." She must then open the door quickly and make a rapid grasp through it into the darkness, when she will find in her hand a lock of her future husband's hair.

"The Universal Fortune Teller" provides a receipt for obtaining an actual glimpse of the lover. The girl must take a willow branch in her left hand, and without being observed, slip out of the house and run three times round it, whispering the while: "He that is to be my goodman come and grip the end of it." During the third circuit the likeness of the future husband (particularly if he knows the experiment is to be made) will appear and grasp the other end of the wand.

There is a charm of much simplicity for conciliating a lover's affections. This charm is so potent that it will also reconcile man and wife. Inside a frog is a certain crooked

bone, which, when cleaned and dried over the fire on St. John's Eve, and then ground fine and given in food to the lover, will at once win his love and admiration. A timely hint may here be given to anyone going courting. Be sure when leaving home to spit in your right shoe, if you would speed in your wooing. If you accidentally put on your left stocking inside out, nothing but good luck can ensue.

In Leicestershire, they who are unfortunate in their wooing, have only to wish, on the first appearance of the new moon, and what they desire will be granted. In Ireland, possession of the mythical four-leaf clover will secure to the happy possessor the love of whomsoever she will.

On St. Catherine's Day, November 25th, the young women of Abbotsbury, a small town in Dorsetshire, used to repair to the well nearest St. Catherine's Chapel, Milton Abbey, where they made use of the following prayer:

A husband, Saint Catherine!
A handsome one, Saint Catherine!
A rich one, Saint Catherine!
And soon, Saint Catherine!

This duty having been performed, the maiden, in order to dream of her sweetheart, had only to put a piece of wedding-cake under her pillow and her wish would be gratified, provided the cake had been passed through a wedding-ring.

Midsummer Eve is considered a good time for ascertaining who will marry whom, and the charms for the purpose are many and varied. One is to gather the rose, St. John's wort, vervain, trefoil, and rue, all of which are believed to possess divinatory power. An orpine is set in clay upon pieces of slate, and called a Midsummer man, and as the stalks on the following morning are found to incline to the right or to the left, the enquiring maiden will be able to ascertain whether her lover will prove false or true towards her. If to the left, she must beware; if to the right, well and good. The orpine is a wild plant common enough in some parts. Another charm is to place under the pillow a piece of the dead root often found beneath the mugwort, in order that the maiden may dream of her lover. "The Cottage Girl," a poem published at the end of the last century, says:

The moss rose that, at fall of dew,
Ere eve its dusky curtains drew,
Was freshly gathered from its stem,
She values as the ruby gem—
And guarded from the piercing air,
With all an anxious lover's care.

She bids it, for her shepherd's sake,
 Await the New Year's frolic wake;
 When, faded, in its altered hue
 She reads—the rustic is untrue.
 But if its leaves the crimson paint,
 Her sickening hopes no longer faint;
 The rose upon her bosom worn,
 She meets him at the peep of morn,
 And lo! her lips with kisses preat,
 He plucks it from her panting breast.

According to Mr. Jones, a charm or divination is practised in the North of England to the present day, on St. Faith's Day (October 6th). A cake of flour, spring water, and sugar, is made by three girls, each giving an equal hand in the composition. It is then baked in a Dutch oven, silence being strictly preserved, and turned thrice by each person. When it is well baked it must be divided into three equal parts, and each girl must cut her share into nine pieces, drawing every piece through a wedding-ring which has been borrowed from a woman who has been married seven years. Each girl must eat her piece of cake while she is undressing, and repeat the following lines :

O good Saint Faith, be kind to-night,
 And bring to me my heart's delight;
 Let me my future husband view,
 And be my visions chaste and true.

All three must then get into one bed, with the ring suspended by a string to the head of the bed. They will then, if fortune favours them and fate decrees that they shall be wed, dream of their future husbands. Doubtless the dream will come to pass, because every girl has some one in her thoughts, and

In sleep, when fancy is let loose to play,
 Our dreams repeat the wishes of the day;
 Tho' further toil his tired limbs refuse,
 The dreaming hunter still the chase pursues.

The saints have their flowers—such as St. John's Wort, in remembrance of St. John, though where the connection comes in, it is difficult to say. In respect of flower superstition the Germans have the credit of being quite as superstitious as any nation. The young people of the country are not above the practice of love-charms on the night of St. John's. Referring to this divination custom a German poet has said :

The young maid stole through the cottage door,
 And blushed as she sought the plant of power;
 "Thou silver glowworm, oh, lend me thy light,
 I must gather the mystic St. John's wort to-night—
 The wonderful herb, whose leaf will decide
 If the coming year will make me a bride."
 And the glowworm came
 With its silver flame,
 And sparkled and shone
 Through the night of St. John;
 And soon has the young maid her love-knot tied.

With noiseless tread,
 To her chamber she sped,
 Where the spectral moon her white beams shed:
 "Bloom here, bloom here, thou plant of power,
 To deck the young bride in her bridal hour!"
 But it droop'd its head, that plant of power,
 And died the mute death of the voiceless flower;
 And a withered wreath on the ground it lay,
 More meet for a burial than a bridal day.
 And when a year was past away,
 All pale on her bier the young maid lay;
 And the glowworm came
 With its silvery flame,
 And sparkled and shone
 Through the night of St. John,
 As they closed the cold grave o'er the maid's cold
 clay.

"The Connoisseur," a magazine of the last century, published an amusing sketch of some Midsummer Eve divinations. "I and my two sisters," says the writer, "tried the dumb-cake together. You must know that two must make it, two bake it, two break it, and the third put it under each of their pillows, without speaking a word all the time, and then you will dream of the man you are to have. This we did, and to be sure I did nothing all night but dream of Mr. Blossom. The same night, exactly at twelve o'clock, I sowed hempseed in our back yard, and said to myself :

Hempseed I sow,
 Hempseed I hoe,
 And he that is my true love,
 Come after me now.

"Will you believe me, I looked back and saw him as plain as eyes could see him. After that I took a clean shift and wetted it, and turned it wrong side out, and hung it to the fire at the back of the chair, and very likely my sweetheart would have come and turned it right again—for I heard his step—but I was frightened and could not help speaking, which broke the charm. I likewise stuck up two Midsummer men, one for myself and one for him. Now, if his had died away, we should never come together; but I assure you his bowed and turned to mine. Our maid, Betty, tells me if I go backwards without speaking a word into the garden upon Midsummer Eve, and gather a rose and keep it in a clean sheet of paper, without looking at it, until Christmas Day, it will be as fresh as in June, and if I then stick it in my bosom he that is to be my husband will come and take it out."

This is much the same idea as is embodied in the poem, "The Cottage Girl," only here it is more definitely expressed. On this night, too, a watch was formerly kept, and lights were burned to prevent gnomes and evil spirits from taking advantage of the streets being deserted to

work harm. Our great-grandmothers believed that if a maiden, fasting, laid a cloth on the table, and spread bread and cheese thereon, and then sat down to eat with the street door open, her future husband would enter the room, bow, drink to her, bow again, and retire to whence he came from.

In Gay's poetry the following strange charm is given to be used on May Day :

Last May Day fair, I searched to find a snail
That might my secret lover's name reveal.
Upon a gooseberry bush a snail I found,
For always snails near sweetest fruit abound.
I seized the vermin; home I quickly sped,
And on the hearth the milk-white ashes spread.
Slow crawled the snail, and if I right can spell,
In the soft ashes marked a curious L.
Oh! may this wondrous omen lucky prove,
For L is found in Lubberkin and Love.

All Hallow E'en, in Scotland, is the night for the testing of love-charms, and is kept up even to the most remote parts of the Highlands. Burns, reverting in his notes to the superstitions, says: "The first ceremony of Hallow E'en is pulling each a stock or plant of kail. They must go out hand-in-hand, with eyes shut, and pull the first they meet with. Its being big or little, straight or crooked, is prophetic of the size and shape of the grand object of all their spells—the husband or wife. If any yird, or earth, stick to the root it is tocher, or fortune; and the state of the custod, that is the heart of the stem, is indicative of the natural temper or disposition. Lastly, the stems, or, to give them their ordinary appellation, the runts, are placed somewhere above the head of the door, and the Christian names of the people whom chance brings into the house are, according to the priority of placing the runts, the names of the future husbands or wives."

Then, first and foremost, through the kail,
Their stocks maun a' be sought ance;
They steek their e'en, an' graip an' wale
For muckle anes and straight anes.

So says the poet when referring in poetry to the superstition. Another custom is to go into the barnyard and pull each, at three several times, a stalk of oats. Burning the nuts is a famous charm.

The auld guidwife's weel-hoordet nits,
Are round and round divided,
And monie lads' and lasses' fates,
Are there that night decided:
Some kindle, couthie side by side,
An' burn thegither trimly;
Some start awa' wi' saucy pride,
And jump out-owre the chimlie,
Fu' high that night.

They name the lad and lass to each particular nut, as they lay them in the fire,

and accordingly as they burn quietly together or start from beside one another, the course and issue of the courtship will be. Here is another charm: take a candle and go alone to a looking-glass, eat an apple before it, and the face of your conjugal companion will be seen in the glass as if peeping over your shoulder. Some traditions say you should comb your hair all the time. Another, by Burns, says they who would enquire into futurity must "steal out all alone to the kiln, and, darkling, throw into the pot a clue of blue yarn, wind it in a new clue off the old one, and, towards the latter end, something will hold the thread; demand 'Wha hauds?' (i.e. who holds?) An answer will be returned from the kiln-pot by naming the Christian and surname of your future spouse." "Steal out unperceived and sow a handful of hemp-seed, harrowing it with anything you can conveniently draw after you. Repeat now and then:

'Hemp-seed I saw thee,
Hemp-seed I maw thee.'

and him (or her) that is to be my true love come after me and paw thee.' Look over your left shoulder and you will see the appearance of the person invoked in the attitude of pulling hemp." Some traditions say, "Come after me and shaw thee;" that is, show thyself, in which case it simply appears. Others omit the harrowing, and say, "Come after me and harrow thee."

The next charm must be performed alone and unperceived, or its efficacy is gone. You go to the barn and open both doors, taking them off the hinges if possible, for there is danger that the being which is about to appear may shut the doors, and do you some mischief. Then take the instrument used in winnowing the corn, which in our country dialect we call a "wedht," and go through all the attitudes of letting corn down against the wind. Repeat it three times, and the third time an apparition will pass through the barn, in at the windy door and out at the other, having both the figure in question, and the appearance or retinue, marking the employment or station in life. Only three more charms and I have done with Scotland. Take an opportunity of going, unnoticed, to a bean stack, and fathom it three times round. The last fathom of the last time you will catch in your arms the appearance of your future conjugal yoke-fellow. Or you go out, one or more, for this is a social spell, to a south-running spring

or rivulet, where "three lairds' lands meet," and dip your left shirt-sleeve in the water. Go home, go to bed in sight of a fire, first hanging your wet sleeve before it to dry. Lie awake, and some time near midnight an apparition, having the exact figure of the grand object in question, will come and turn the sleeve as if to dry the other side. Lastly, take three dishes, put clean water in one, foul water in another, leave the third empty. Now blindfold a person and lead him (or her) to the hearth where the dishes are ranged; he (or she) then dips the left hand, and if it is in the clean water the future husband or wife will come to the bar of matrimony a maid; if in the foul water a widow; if in the empty dish it foretells, with equal certainty, no marriage at all. It is repeated three times, and every time the arrangement of the dishes is altered.

All Hallow E'en is called by the Welsh *Nos galau giaf*, "and," says Howell, "the credulous go to hear and see goblins, but those who are not so fond of these un-earthly beings remain at home to enjoy the 'flowing bowl,' and burn nuts to ascertain who shall die. The less superstitious commemorate this eve by apple-biting, diving, etc., as the English do St. Clement's. But the *chef-d'oeuvre* is, they have a vessel styled the puzzling jug to increase the hilarity, out of which each person is compelled to drink. From the brim, extending about an inch below the surface, it has holes fantastically arranged, so as to appear like ornamental work, and which are unperceived, except by the perspicacious; three projections of the size and shape of marbles are around the brim, having a hole of about the size of a pea in each; these communicate with the bottom of the jug through the handle, which is hollow, and has a small hole at the top, which with two of the holes being stopped by the fingers, and the mouth applied to the one nearest the handle, enables one to suck the contents at ease; but this trick is unknown to everyone, and consequently a stranger generally makes some mistake, perhaps applying his mouth as he would to another jug, in which case the contents (generally ale) issue through the fissures on his person, to the no small diversion of the spectators." In some parts of Wales this is the night to dance round bonfires and then to jump through them, and run off to escape "the black short-tailed sow;" and in England seed cake was formerly provided for the labourers after wheat

sowing, as we find from the following words by the poet Tusser, about 1550, put into a farmer's mouth:

Wife, sometime this week, if ye weather hold clear,
An end of wheat sowing we make for the year:]
Remember you therefore, though I do it not,
The seed cake, the pasties, the fermenty pot.

All superstitions of this class are of Pagan origin, and were retained in the Middle Ages with many others, which belonged more particularly to the spirit of Christianity. People then had recourse to all kinds of divination, love-philters, magical invocations, prayers, fastings, and other follies, which were modified according to the country and the individual. A girl had only to agitate the water in a bucket of spring water with her hand, or to throw broken eggs over another person's head, if she wished to see the image of the man she should marry. A union could never be happy if the bridal party in going to church met a monk, a priest, a hare, a dog, a cat, a lizard, or a serpent, while all would go well if it were a wolf, a spider, or a toad.

I now come to an entirely different class of superstitions in which divination plays hardly so prominent a part, though perhaps the oracular is present, as in the superstition which led young women into the fields early in the morning that they might hear the cuckoo's notes. If they succeeded they would take off a shoe (the left) and looking inside would find a hair, the colour of the head of the man they were to marry. When in early spring-time the voice of the cuckoo is first heard in the woods every German village girl kisses her hand and asks the question: "Cuckoo! cuckoo! when shall I be married?" As many times as years will elapse before the object of their desires will come to pass does the bird continue singing its note. The services of the ladybird in affairs of love are pretty well known by this time. Gay records one of the old traditions respecting this insect, that in his time young girls on discovering a ladybird would say:

This ladybird I take from off the grass,
Whose spotted back might scarlet red surpass.
Fly, ladybird, north, south, east, or west,
Fly where the man is found that I love best.

In Westphalia little girls set these insects on the tips of their forefingers, and, invoking it in rhyme, demand to know when they shall be married. They then begin to count the years from one onwards, and grow very impatient if they are able to count many before it takes its departure. The same thing prevails in a

measure in rural England, the rhyme used being :

Ladybird, ladybird, tell me true,
The years how many or how few,
Shall elapsee ere I am wed ;
Now fly away home and go to bed.

The counting then commences as just mentioned.

It was counted unlucky, and with superstitious people the notion still survives, to give to another anything with a point or an edge. Milton in his "Astrologaster" observes that "it is naught for any man to give a pair of knives to his sweetheart, for feare that it cuts away all love between them." Thus Gay, in one of his pastorals, says :

But woe is me ! such presents luckless prove,
For knives, they tell me, always sever love.

There are some pleasing verses addressed by Samuel Taylor, Master of Merchant Taylors' School, to his wife, on presenting her with a knife fourteen years after their marriage, which begins thus :

A knife, my dear, cuts love, they say,
Mere modish love perhaps it may.

Grose also says that it is of unfortunate omen to give a knife, scissors, razor, or any sharp or cutting instrument to one's mistress or friend, as they are apt to cut love and friendship. To avoid the ill effects of this it was necessary to give in return a pin, a farthing, or some trifling recompense. Lord Byron gave Lady Blessington a gold pin which he usually wore in his breast for a keepsake, and we afterwards find him requesting her ladyship by letter to return it, and he would present her with a chain instead, "as memorials with a point are of less fortunate augury."

Of all the unromantic modes of securing a meeting with a sweetheart perhaps the most is by cutting the finger-nails, which is thus told :

A man had better ne'er be born
Than have his nails on Sunday shorn.
Cut them on Monday, cut them for wealth ;
Cut them on Tuesday, cut them for health ;
Cut them on Wednesday, cut them for news ;
Cut them on Thursday for a pair of new shoes ;
Cut them on Friday, cut them for sorrow ; [row.
Cut them on Saturday, see your sweetheart to-mor-

The ancients attached good or ill omens to a sneeze. From the right it was auspicious, from the left the reverse. When the gods sneezed on the right in Heaven it was supposed to reach earth on the left. An ancient poet wrote :

Cupid, sneezing in his flight,
Once was heard upon the right,
Boding woe to lovers true ;
And now upon the left he flew,
And with sporting sneeze divine
Gave to joy the sacred sign.

In his translation of the eighteenth Idyllium of Theocritus, Creek mentions this custom :

O, happy bridegroom ! Thee a happy sneeze
To Sparta welcomed.

And in another Idyllium :

The loves sneezed on Smichid.

Dryden also wrote :

To thee Cupid sneezed aloud ;
And every lucky omen sent before
To meet thee landing on the Spartan shore.

Thus it will be seen that under certain circumstances sneezing has its significance in love affairs. Fortune-telling is one of the chief resorts of love-lorn maidens, though servant girls are the great patrons of fortune-tellers. Newspapers from time to time give accounts of the incredible things they are induced to do in order to have a clear idea of the ruling of their planet and of their future destiny. An old fortune-teller is reported to have said to an interviewer : "Oh, sir, what has passed he (the friend of the interviewer) is well acquainted with ; what is in the future he knows as well as myself. But if people will cross our palms with silver we must say something to please them."

There is a very old saying, peculiar to no part of the world, and generally accepted as correct, that "happy is the bride that the sun shines on." Nor is it only an important matter to choose the wedding day carefully, the Feast of St. Joseph was especially to be avoided. It is supposed that as the day fell in mid-Lent, it was the reason why all the councils and synods of the Church forbade marriage during the season of fasting ; indeed, all penitential days and vigils throughout the year were considered unsuitable for these joyous ceremonies. The Church blamed those husbands who married early in the morning, in dirty or negligent attire, reserving their better dresses for balls and feasts, and the clergy were forbidden to celebrate the rites after sunset, because the crowd often carried the party by main force to the ale-house, or beat them and hindered their departure from the church until they had obtained a ransom. The people always manifested a strong aversion for badly-assorted marriages. In such cases the procession would be accompanied to the altar in the midst of a frightful concert of bells, saucepans, and frying-pans, or this tumult was reserved for the night, when the happy couple were settled in their own house.

Marry in Lent,
And you'll live to repent.

a common saying in some parts of the country is, doubtless, the remnant of the same priest-ridden times. There is another old saying :

To change the name and not the letter
Is a change for the worse and not for the better.

That is to say, it is unlucky for a woman to marry a man whose surname begins with the same letter as her own. A curious custom with regard to marriages existed until a very recent period in Suffolk, that, if the younger sister married before the elder, she must dance in the hog's trough. In the West of England, where the custom also existed, it was a fixed rule that the lady should dance in green stockings.

June was the month which the Romans considered the most propitious season of the year for contracting matrimonial alliances, especially if the day chosen were that of the full moon or the conjugation of the sun and moon. The month of May was especially to be avoided, as under the influence of spirits adverse to happy households. According to a proverbial maxim :

Marry in May,
You'll rue the day.
To marry in May,
Is to wed poverty.

This sentiment is as old, if not older than, the days of Ovid, for as he says :

Let maid or widow that would turn to wife,
Avoid this season, dangerous to life;
If you regard old saws, mind, thus they say :
" 'Tis bad to marry in the month of May."

In Babylon, five hundred years before the Christian era, the custom of holding an annual auction of unmarried ladies prevailed generally. In every year, on a certain day, each district offered all its virgins of marriageable age; the most beautiful were put up first, and the man who paid the highest price gained the prize. The second in personal charms followed her, and so on, so that the bidders might gratify themselves with handsome wives according to the length of their purses. After this there would probably remain some for whom no money was offered, but the provident Babylonians managed that. When all the comely ones were sold, the crier ordered the most deformed one to stand up, and, after demanding, "Who will marry her for a small sum?" she was adjudged to him who was satisfied with the least, and in this manner the money raised from the sale of the handsome served as a portion to those who were not so favoured, or had some imperfections.

It was on the contrary one of the wise laws of Lycurgus, that no portions should be given to young women in marriage. When this great law-giver was called upon to justify the enactment, he observed that "in the choice of a wife merit only should be considered, and that the law was made to prevent young women being chosen for their riches or neglected for their poverty."

MARTIN THE MONK.

"THE dim cathedral arches o'er my head,
The fretted aisles where the long shadows play;
Gold-barred by sunbeams, through the summer
day;

Why do they seem less calm and sweet?" he said,
Pacing the solemn-sounding nave at will,
Martin the Monk, at Lincoln-on-the-Hill.

"Was it but yesterday I knelt within
My quiet cell, that looks across the hill,
And saw the city, mist-wreathed, hushed, and
still,

Nor dreamed a thought that might be called a sin?
For my desire seemed but then to be
Of praising God through all eternity.

"Was it but yesterday I paced so late
The cloister cool, and watched the shadows fall
Upon the moulded stone-work of the wall;
When one who came cried: 'At the outer gate
A kinsman, brother Martin, waits for thee,
And prays that thou would'st pass to Galilee.'

"In the carved porch, the lovely Galilee,
From which a glimpse of roofs and courts is seen,
Sun-touched, with many a bright-clad form be-
tween;

I greeted him with gladness, for that he,
My kinsman, brought me from my distant home
Tidings from lips to me a long time dumb.

"He spoke of home, of parents, and the pain
That one had borne, of love, and joy, and life,
Told of success, of triumph, and of strife;
Then turned him to the busy world again.
And I, the monk, back to my cell did go,
With downcast face, and footsteps sad and slow.

"Ah! what a narrow cell is mine, and bare;
Could I have triumphed in the outer world?
Loved, and the banner of success unfurled?
Is my long life to be one constant prayer,
Bounded by grey cathedral arches still?"
Sighed the young monk at Lincoln-on-the-Hill.

Lo! as he drew adown the holy choir,
Where the glad angels wait, upon the wall
Where hung the crucifix, a ray did fall,
Touching the Saviour with a crown of fire;
And Martin seeing this, was fain to kneel,
For that his soul a reverent awe did feel.

"Martin! I bore upon the cross, for thee,
Loneliness, pain, and sorrow, and wilt thou
Forsake me—shrinking from thy burden now?
Martin, canst thou not bear thy cross for Me?"
And Martin, kneeling, saw that gracious Head,
Thorn-crowned and weary, and with tears he said:

"Lord! I will follow Thee! my cross is light,
My heart is Thine!" and with these words the
ray
Slipped from the wall; and Martin passed away
Back to his cell; and from that summer night,
No man sang praise to God with lustier will
Than Martin, monk, at Lincoln-on-the-Hill.

A CROSS OLD MAN.

A STORY IN TWO CHAPTERS.—CHAPTER II.

EVERY day, and all day long as I worked in my garden, or sat and smoked under the rose tree, I used to hear Miss Daisy over the wall chattering. It made no difference to her whether or not she had a listener. She talked to herself in default of any other. By degrees I learnt a good deal of the family life of my new neighbours. There was an old man who used to occupy a little of his time as gardener and general servant at Number Five. He and little Daisy were great cronies. It was a red-letter day for her when she had him to answer her questions. I happened to hear the beginning of their friendship. She had come into the garden without Janet, and was evidently delighted to find a companion ready to her hand. She asked him his name and where he lived at once.

"My name" he replied (he was fond of a joke), "is Tom Lloyd, England is my nation, Tower Lane is my dwelling-place, and Christ is my salvation."

"Dear me!" said Daisy. "What a funny man you are! I didn't know you were saying poetry at first until you finished up like a hymn. What shall I call you, Mr. Lloyd or Tom?"

"Just which you prefer, missy," he answered gallantly.

"Then," she said, "I'll begin with saying Mr. Lloyd, and when I know you better I'll say Tom. My name is Daisy. You ought to like that name 'cos you're a gardener. Do you like daisies?"

"Some sorts, missy. For instance, I like daisies with curly hair, and pink cheeks, and big, brown eyes."

"But real daisies, Mr. Lloyd, real daisies?"

"They're well enough in their place, miss, but it's hard to keep 'em in it. They're a rare nuisance on a lawn."

"Ah, there we don't agree then, Mr. Lloyd. I wouldn't care to have a lawn where there were no daisies."

"All right, missy; then I'll leave all the daisies that grow here, and you shall have them to your heart's content—so there!"

"Thank you," said Daisy solemnly; "and now, Mr. Lloyd, I want you to make this garden very pretty as quickly as you can; as pretty as the cross old man's next door. I can see his flowers when I go up into Janet's room and look out of the window; these are most bewful roses, and

lilies, and pinks, and all sorts. You must put us some like that. Will you, Mr. Lloyd? My mammy has been ill, but she is getting well, and she will soon be able to come out in the garden, and she is so fond of flowers."

"Well, missy, we must see what can be done, but them things cost a sight o' money, and take a deal o' time to grow."

"Do they?" said Daisy dubiously. "Do you think the roses next door have taken a long time to grow so pretty?"

"Yes, missy, for sure they have."

"More than a month?"

"Yes, missy, a many months and years too."

"Dear, dear," said the child sadly, "that's a great pity. I should like to have a garden like that cross old man's."

"Why do you call Mr. Graham a cross old man, missy?" asked the gardener in his turn.

"'Cos he is cross," said Daisy emphatically, "that's why."

"Well, I don't know that he's crosser than other folk. He's a bit queer, but he ain't bad-hearted."

"I call him cross," returned Daisy, still more decidedly, "very cross; he has scolded me, and so he must be cross. Nothing you can say will make me think he isn't."

I do not know when I first began to be aware how much interest I took in Daisy and all that concerned her. At first I had heard (willingly or unwillingly) all that she said on her side of the wall. At last I found myself listening to her attentively when she was within hearing, and for her when she was not. If for any reason she passed a whole day without coming into the garden, I missed her terribly. I was surprised at myself, when I found myself listening with pleasure to that shrill little voice, whose first tones had filled me with dread—when I found that my last neighbour- nuisance had become my daily enjoyment. Yet whenever she spoke of me or of my garden she always called me "that cross man next door."

When my Marshal Niel roses came out, their soft buds swelling among the dark slender leaves, she was in ecstasies. Her continual cry to Janet, to the old gardener, to her dolls, and even to her ball was: "Oh do look at the cross man's roses, ain't they bewful, ain't they 'licious?"

One day I snipped one off so that it fell on their side of the wall, and I called out:

"I've cut you a rose, Miss Daisy."

Her thanks came back directly :

"Thank you, cross man, thank you. What a lovely rose! How very good of you!"

Another thing surprised me very much besides my interest in this talkative and outspoken little creature, which was, that since Janet's visit I had never once touched my 'cello. I can't explain why I had abstained, for my provocations from Number Seven had rather increased than otherwise. The tall thin curate was getting on a more intimate footing with the musical young ladies, and he used to come and sing "Nancy Lee" to them oftener each week. I suffered excruciating torture while he and the alto young lady enquired into the meaning of the "Wild Waves," or made fond assurances of constancy to the "Gypsy Maid." Nevertheless, my 'cello remained in its case, and I more than than once found myself congratulating the delicate widow lady (in imagination of course) that she was spared the trial I was enduring. I even went so far as to hope that her neighbours in Number Four had no musical instruments at their command.

At last one day when the sky was clear blue and the sun was warm, I learnt from the preparations that Janet and Daisy were making in the garden that "mammy" was going to venture out.

"We'll put the chair here, Janet, just under these yellow roses, now the footstool for her precious feet, and the shawl and a sunshade; there now, I shall go and fetch her."

In a couple of minutes Daisy returned escorting her "mammy" to the place she had arranged close to where I sat on the other side of the wall. What did I do, do you think? Why, I actually put out my pipe, lest the tobacco should drive them away, and I should lose my chance of making the acquaintance of Daisy's mother over the garden wall.

"See, darling," said Daisy; "this is the rose-tree I told you about, and he cut me off the bud from there, just by that snail-shell on the wall. Oh, mammy! wasn't it funny? It startled me so. I was watching the sunshine on the roses and thinking that if I were only tall enough to reach, and if it wasn't wicked to steal things, I'd take one to smell and to give you, when up popped a pair of scissors which snipped off off the very nicest bud there was, and the cross man cried out: 'There's a rose for you, Miss Daisy.'"

Then a faint voice asked: "Did you thank him, Daisy?"

"Oh yes, mammy, I called out: 'thank you, cross man.'"

"Daisy, did you say that?"

"Why not, darling? You know he is a cross old man; but I won't say it again if you don't like me to. Only I've rather got into the way. Now, mammy, I s'pose you're too tired to tell me a story to-day, aren't you?"

This last was in a very coaxing voice.

"I'm afraid I'm not up to much talking, Daisy; but suppose you tell me a story instead. You like that quite as well."

"Not quite, mammy. Let me see. I'll tell you my favourite, which I should have asked for if you could have told me one, because it's so long since you have been able to tell it me, and Janet doesn't know it. I mean about when you were a little girl."

And this is the story that Daisy told, and to which I, who had such a lofty scorn for neighbourly curiosity, listened with eager ears and ever-increasing interest.

"When you were a little girl, long before there was a me, you lived with your father and mother in the country by the sea. Like me, you had no brothers or sisters to play with. You had only one doll, and you were not so very fond of that, because you didn't think she understood what you said to her. Dear me, mammy, what a pity she was such a stupid doll! But you had some dear little bantams, which used to come and eat out of your hand and perch on your shoulder. It was very nice living in the country, much nicer than when we lived in Brussels or in that nasty hotel where you were ill; for you had a bewful big garden to run about in, and where you could gather flowers for your mother; and then you could go down to the sea and pick up nelians and seaweed, and dabble in the water and see the big ships and the little ships. And many birds used to sing by the sea on the cliffs, and the rabbits used to run about among the yellow gorse, and you used to clap your hands to make them run faster."

My newspaper had dropped from my hands; my heart was beating with long-forgotten eagerness. By what wonderful witchcraft had this child found and read the record of my old memories, that she should prattle them out like this in her gay, shrill voice? In and out of my sacred places she went at will, perfectly familiar with each and all. She went on :

"Then your dear mother fell ill, and she died very soon, and you couldn't have her any longer, 'cos the angels wanted her. I hope they'll never want you, my darling, for I couldn't spare you. You were left alone with your father, and he was dreffally sorry, and so were you. Oh mammy! how dull it must have been without her. However did you manage? Who heard you say your prayers, and tucked you up in bed? and who told you to be good when you felt naughty? and who gave you your physic when you had to take it? I couldn't possibly take physic without you. Tell me how you did, mammy?"

And, as Daisy's little pleading voice ceased, I listened for the answer with eager ears.

"I don't think I missed my mother so much as you would miss me, my darling," spoke a voice, that thrilled my every nerve as it grew a little stronger and clearer. "My father was so good to me; he was father and mother in one, while you, my poor little Daisy, never saw your father."

"Go on, mammy, go on, you're able to talk now; do talk about your father to me, and about all you used to do."

"Do you want to hear again, my child, about the tall yellow flowers that came out among the grass under the trees, and the pale primroses in the hedges, so large and soft, and the bluebells and anemones in the woods, and how the bees used to work all the long warm days in and out of their hives by the medlar-tree? It was such an old, old medlar-tree, and it had been trained to grow down to the ground, and I used to climb among the low branches."

"Go on, mammy, go on; tell me all you 'member, it's so long since we had it all over."

And "mammy" went on, and each time she paused Daisy pleaded for more, and each word she spoke made the wonderful truth more clear to me that only a nine-inch brick wall separated me from my lost Margaret, and that she was lonely, and sick, and sad.

"And then, mammy," said the child at last, "you went away and left that pretty home."

"Yes, my darling, when I was a big girl, and ought to have loved my dear father too much to give him one moment's pain, I went away and left him without even saying 'good-bye' to him."

"I 'spect you didn't want to see how sorry he'd look," suggested Daisy consolingly.

"I'm afraid it wasn't that, Daisy. I'm afraid I didn't think about him at all when your papa and I went and left him all alone."

"Dear me! dear me!" said Daisy thoughtfully and mournfully; "and then comes the part of the story I don't like, which says you have never seen your pretty home again."

"No, Daisy, that's not the end of the story now, it has quite a new ending. Should you like to hear it?"

"Oh yes, mammy, go on, go on; how bewful to have a new end to the story."

"It is quite as sad as the old ending, Daisy; however, you shall hear it. When we left Brussels in March last, I had made up my mind to go and see my father again. I wanted so much to ask his forgiveness. You remember that I left you and Janet in London for a day. Now I will tell you where I went and what I saw that day. I took the early train and went to the station nearest to my old home in Suffolk. When I reached the end of my railway journey I made up my mind to walk home, though it is rather a long way. I took the road by the sea. On my left hand were the bare brown woods, on my right the gorse-covered cliffs, with a few yellow blossoms. On the dunes below the fishermen's nets were spread out to dry, the red sails that I knew so well dotted the sea, and far out I saw the line of white foam where the sand-bank rises, and the red light-ship to mark the "Gat." The village far on before me seemed unchanged, and the long headland stretched dimly out to the north, with its shadowy towers and windmills. All I saw was unchanged; but the people I met were strange to me, and I was strange to them. I cannot tell you how eager I was to reach the drive which leads from the cliffs to the house. I ran the last few hundred yards. I found the gate hanging off its hinges, and broken in several places. I went through.

"The drive looked as if it had been unused for years. There were no wheel-tracks, no footprints; the grass and weeds had grown up over the gravel; in one place a fir tree had been partly blown down, the under branches were dead, the upper ones green. It must have lain unheeded for years. I passed on. I could see a little of the house through the leafless trees. It was weather-stained and chilly-looking. The gate leading into the shrubbery was locked; it had been spiked at the top to keep out trespassers, but the hedge was broken down

in many places, so I went in through a gap.

"There was no one to be seen—not a living creature, except some rabbits, which started up from the rank grass and ran away as I passed. I saw some shrubs which I remembered my father planting the year I left him; some of them had grown up into great, straggling, untrimmed bushes; some were dead, and still stood in their places, with grass and weeds clinging to them.

"Then I came to the garden—it was also desolate and overgrown with weeds; gravel-walks, flower-borders and lawn were undistinguishable. But still I went on to the door, the trellis-work of the verandah was blown down, the paint had peeled off with long neglect, the handle of the door-bell came off in my hand. The shutters were all closed, the place was utterly deserted. But I went still further, to the conservatory door, by which I had left the house ten years ago. I saw a few flower-pots lying in the conservatory, and on the edge of the fountain, which was now dried up, sat a huge toad.

"I crouched down on the steps and buried my face in my hands. I dared not think what had become of my dear, loving father. I kept saying aloud to myself the words of penitence I had meant to say to him. At last I looked up and saw the red light through the trees that always shines in that garden when the sun is sinking. It was shining just as it had shone when I was a happy child, and when the garden was bright and full of flowers. I thought how each sunset had come and found the home more and more desolate, till now it was a mere desert. Suddenly the light died out, and I started from my seat and ran away in horror. I hurried back to London, and you remember how soon after I fell ill and all that has happened since."

"Oh, mammy," cried Daisy, who had remained marvellously quiet all this time, "what a drefful thing, and what do you think has become of your father? Shall we try and find him again?"

"I don't know, my pet," she answered sadly, "what has become of him. The only person I questioned was a stranger, who knew nothing about him. I had not courage to ask again. When I am quite strong you must help me to look for him." Then, speaking more to herself than to Daisy, she said: "It was a dreadful going home; after all my repentance and prayers

to find no forgiveness. I wonder it did not kill me."

No forgiveness! My poor repentant darling. Who needed the most forgiveness? I wondered. And yet my very hiding-place had found me out. This was the why and wherefore of it all. Thus a divinity had shaped the end for me in spite of my rough-hewing, and, in the movings and changings of nomadic humanity, the wilful daughter had drifted back to the side of her perverse old father.

Lingdene is almost itself again now, and my widowed Margaret has recovered her strength and courage again in the bright sea air of her native home. Daisy runs in and out of her mother's old haunts, and amuses herself in the old garden she loved to hear of. She has left off calling me the cross old man, though she sometimes reminds me of the name when she is in an unusually saucy humour.

VILLAGE INDUSTRIES.

NOT very long ago the readers of this journal were made familiar with the painful results of overcrowding in the East End of London, but there is a converse side to this question which is not less to be deplored—a great and growing evil, whose removal would do much to relieve the pressure upon the large centres of population in England. It is a sorrowful thing to one who loves his country to witness the gradual merging of the rural Arcadia of this country in the sordid and unlovely existence of cities; yet the decay of agriculture is forcing the inhabitants of agricultural districts to the large towns, and many who have spent their youth in the open fields will find their manhood and their age chained to the close precinct of the factory or the mill. Year by year the farmer sows his grain, watches it ripening through the summer, and harvests it at last with fainter heart. The pleasant sights and sounds of the autumn, the merry laugh of the harvest-men, the corn standing in sheaves with the crows wheeling round it, the carrying of it home with heart-felt rejoicing, and the beating of it with the noisy flail—all these are surely giving place to an irksome round of labour necessary to a speculation rarely of much profit, and often doubtful altogether.

Anything, then, that tends to set the

pulse of rural life in motion once more, and to give a new impetus to country life, should have an interest in these days, and should be eagerly welcomed and closely examined; there should be no lack of endeavour to bring back what unhealthy influences are taking away. Let it not be overlooked then, that, though agriculture is the proper work of the peasant, he has not always been bound to agriculture alone. There are other things he can take up, as he used to do, in which he can be profitably employed if agriculture partially fail; there are occupations that his wife and daughters can follow, more suitable for them than some of the rougher work of the farm. Even now, indeed, in out-of-the-way places, there are some few peasant women who can still spin flax for the loom, and ply the busy shuttle, and who are as proud of its products as Evangeline herself was.

Simple that chamber was, with its curtains of white,
and its clothes-press

Ample and high, on whose spacious shelves were
carefully folded

Linen and woollen stuffs, by the hand of Evangeline
woven.

This was the precious dower she should bring to her
husband in marriage,

Better than flocks and herds, being proofs of her
skill as a housewife.

But spinning, weaving, and other operations connected with the manufacture of home-spun fabrics, have not been the work of women alone amongst the peasantry; for, in the old times, many a farmer had a hand-loom in his farmstead, and often, when weather was bad and the winter long, the passer-by would hear the quick sound of his treadle. All over the Midlands and the West of England, and elsewhere too, there were thousands of farm-houses where the busy shuttle sped through the loom, and in the Eastern counties were peasant inkle-weavers who sat elbow to elbow at their narrow frames, so that yet to be "thick as inkle-weavers" is a phrase amongst us. In the North this peasant-industry was thoroughly organised and had its chief seat; and the writer of this paper knows many an old farm-house where remains of hand-loom are, at which former inhabitants laboured, until machinery drove them to the towns.

Is it not possible that we have here some ground for hope that, by the practice of certain domestic arts, the rural life of England may acquire fresh life and vigour? It will at once be urged that home-spun fabrics can never compete in price with the

machine-work of the toiler in manufacturing centres, and this is partially true. Partially only, because, though the needy will always buy in the cheapest market, good hand-workmanship will constantly fetch its price from the wealthy, who can afford to select what is best. Already, indeed, in certain villages of Westmoreland an interest has been raised in the question of spinning and weaving by hand; and, at an exhibition held not long ago in London, a spinning-wheel, such as the poor women in those parts have been encouraged to use, was shown in actual work. From the threads spun on these wheels beautiful linen is woven by hand, as durable as that our great-grandmothers produced. We may be sure that, if the peasants of England would take to the weaving of such fabrics, there would be no great lack of buyers.

There are, however, certain kinds of home work, now actually carried on in a few country places, which, unlike weaving, have little to fear from the competition of the steam-driven machines of the factory-worker. One of these is lace-making, practised both in England and Ireland, a most charming art, whereat many peasant-women are exceedingly apt and ready-fingered. Hand-made lace is expensive now, not solely because the work is slow, but because there are few in these days who can do it well.

In other countries such peasant-industries have had, and have still, a wider direction and a more artistic aim, where machine-work scarcely can follow them. Anyone could see in the Indian Section of the Exhibition and at the Japanese Village, the inhabitants of those countries engaged at their time-honoured industries, and producing without difficulty exquisite works that command a ready sale. The writer, too, has seen the turbaned dweller on the Lebanon—his chibouk ever by his side—with his back leaned against a wall, working with his feet the treadles of a most primitive loom that he himself had made, dexterously passing in and out, through its silken warp, the threads of varied dyes, and making, without any pattern whatever, a design of singular merit, either out of his own consciousness or out of some traditional knowledge. Thus, in the bazaars of Cairo, Damascus, and Bagdad, and all over the East, indeed, do peasants turn out saddle-bags and apparel, with handkerchiefs, slippers, and many another thing, such as Shemselnihar herself might

have worn. Mr. Charles G. Leland saw children in Miss Whately's school at Cairo working *vis-à-vis*, with a frame between them, the most beautiful double embroidery "out of their heads" and without patterns; and subsequently he found them similarly employed in the bazaar, where the boys, too, were making exquisite jewellery with tools as rude as those of English tinkers. "I had before," he says, "in Switzerland, Bavaria, the Tyrol, and Italy, found children carving wood with exquisite skill. I learned that it was the same as regards papier-mâché in Persia, pottery in Spain, and soap-stone and varnish work in India."

If, then, even children can do so much, and their elders are equally well employed in other countries, why should not the peasantry of this kingdom also betake themselves, with profit in winter-time, or when occupation fails them, to certain useful arts or handicrafts in which experience shows they can succeed? It is well known, in fact, that in many parts of Europe, especially the Tyrol, the Black Forest, and the Rhine Provinces, the winter employment of the farmers and their families is generally wood-carving, and, to some extent, carpentry; and the product of their labour has a ready sale all over the Continent and in England. Recently we have learned that, through the earnest endeavours of Mrs. Ernest Hart and of some other ladies, peasant-industries, revived in Ireland, have taken vigorous root there, and promise to prosper greatly. The conditions were precisely those now found in England, but in increased degree. The small farmers in Donegal could no longer support themselves on the land; they suffered under foreign competition, had lost their stock, might no longer graze on the moorlands, and misery awaited them and theirs. But their wives and daughters had still the old, far-famed skill in spinning and knitting beautiful soft stockings from the wool of the mountain sheep, which their husbands and fathers possessed no longer; and, when wool was given to them, they were eager to undertake the work, and their productions are now to be bought in the London shops. In the same way the peasants were inducted into the processes of carding, spinning, and weaving wool on hand-loom into serges, friezes, and tweeds, unadulterated with cotton or other fibre, and almost of everlasting wear. But Mrs. Ernest Hart was not content to make the peasants compete successfully with the

productions of the power-loom; she put them to work at a new handicraft—the making of a beautiful kind of needlework, called "Kells embroidery," because its designs are founded on those of the celebrated "Book of Kells." Here the flaxen thread, and the unfinished linen upon which it is worked, are both of Irish manufacture, and the designs are Celtic too, so that we have a genuine national industry. The most satisfactory part of this admirable experiment is not, perhaps, that such sound work is executed, but that the social position of the people employed is greatly improved, and that they are protected from want, though agriculture has declined with them. Already, it is said, some six hundred knitters, one hundred and twenty embroiderers, and sixty spinners and weavers, are employed in about twenty villages.

The difficulty of introducing hand-industries into the agricultural districts of England, at least as an experiment, should not be very great, and a little earnest endeavour would go a long way. There is, indeed, established in London at the present time, a society—"The Home Arts and Industries Association"—which, while specially encouraging the practice of minor arts by the young, extends its interest and its care to all good hand-work whatever, and it has a particular mission to foster and extend the growth of domestic industries in agricultural districts. Mrs. Jebb, who has done much in connection with this work, has, indeed, confirmed the experience of Mr. Leland in America, that such arts as wood-carving come as readily to, and may be followed as profitably by, peasant children of the West as by those of the East; and many labouring men and boys are advantageously employed in various parts of England under the auspices of the association. It would be an excellent thing if carpenter-guilds, formed throughout the rural districts, could induce those who suffer from agricultural depression to turn their attention at spare times, properly directed, to wood-carving and the making of art-furniture as a work of profit. Repoussé brass-work may be added to wood-carving—or combined with it—as an art, under new methods, easily practicable; and it has been largely executed in various places, notably by labourers at Keswick. There are many other arts also, which, after a short training, may be successfully practised by the rural population, such as

decorative modelling in clay, stamped leather work (*cuir-bouilli*), and mosaic setting; but it is needless to go through them here.

Other advantages, besides that of giving employment to the unemployed, would proceed from the practice of such arts as these; for there is a moral education in such systematic labour, and the faculties are sharpened in the work. The eye is taught to observe, and the hand is that of a good handicraftsman. Every piece of work, it must not be forgotten, is no phenomenon, but the embodiment of an idea, the result of a train of thought; and, if the fingers are trained in producing it, the mind also is strengthened and rendered self-reliant by the exercise, and by witnessing the visible creation of the shapes it has conceived. If, then, we can picture to ourselves a state of rural society in which co-operative guilds, established by the peasantry throughout the country, should encourage local talent, should develop the resources of districts, and create arts and trades springing naturally from the capabilities and products of the soil, we shall see what a large part such industries may have in the village economy of the future. They would give a great place to the work of women; they would be an occupation to the labourer entirely different from the continued round of land tilling, and, therefore, a healthful change, which would relieve him from the pressure of absolute or occasional want; and they would help to knit together the interests of the rural community. Thus Village Industries may be commended to the consideration of social economists and political reformers as a healthy and natural solution of a growing difficulty.

LOST IN THE VALLEY.

By the Author of "Driven of the Wind," etc.

A STORY IN SIXTEEN CHAPTERS.

CHAPTER VIII.

THAT was the happiest evening of Maurice's life. His natural reserve and diffidence were so strong that, but for the fact that he believed this to be probably his last meeting with her, and that in truth he was not thinking of Eveline Douglas at all, but of his mother, he would never have indulged in the sudden outburst of affection that broke down the barrier of friendship between them, and

established them as something dearer to each other than mere friends can ever be.

Maurice had once or twice in his life been mildly "spooney," but never absolutely in love before. Consequently, he was not an adept at love-making, and he remained quite silent while Eveline knelt at his side, and, drawing his head upon her shoulder, smoothed his fair hair, caressing and comforting him as though he had been a tired child. For each was innocently deceiving the other.

She thought that he was a boy of seventeen; he thought that he was to risk his life the next morning; and these delusions made them both more tender and more demonstrative than they would otherwise have been.

At length Eveline, with a pang of self-reproach, remembered poor Miss McIntyre waiting for her supper, and, slipping her arm in Maurice's, she took him to the dining-room, to find the worthy little lady asleep over the fire. She woke to see the two standing before her arm-in-arm, a handsome pair surely: he, with his beautiful boyish face; she, with her delicate loveliness set off by the richness of her dress. Both were in a smiling, ecstatic state, which puzzled Miss McIntyre at first.

Then they all had supper. Maurice was in general extremely particular as to the quality of his meals; to-night, however, ambrosia would have been wasted upon him, as bread and butter would have tasted ambrosial. He found himself always with his eyes fixed on Eveline, in those restful, protracted looks which only a lover can give, and years afterwards he remembered her as he saw her then, seeing her, as it appeared to him, for the first time, with the creamy tints of her fair face flushed, and her brown eyes shining with a wonderful happiness. She sat in a high-backed carved oak chair, the dark frame of which, and the sombre tapestry beyond, dimly lighted by the pink candles, formed a perfect background for her shimmering gown of sea-green damask, and for the diamonds sparkling in her red-brown hair.

Maurice looked at her, and looked again, and for the first time in his life he felt an unaccountable longing to throw down his knife and fork and, regardless of Miss McIntyre and Hélène, to fling himself at Eveline's feet, and cover her delicate white hands with kisses. But the only outward effect this feeling produced was to reduce him to absolute silence,

which Eveline apparently understood, for she did not try to break it.

The Elysian meal was over at last, and Eveline asked him to sing one song before he left them. "Miss McIntyre has never heard you," she said. A hollow pretext for detaining him, as, in fact, Miss McIntyre had ceased to exist for either of them. So he sang, and the passion that had been wanting so long, thrilled in his voice now as, with Eveline's hands upon his shoulder, he sang Walter Austin's "Closed Door."

"As one who stands alone
Beside a closed door,
Before thy heart of hearts, my own
I stand and knock once more.
Sun, moon, and stars arise and set,
The great world hurries by;
The light that shone when first we met,
Is gone from earth and sky.

"One day we two shall meet,
For I shall come once more,
As one who treads an old, old street
Stops at the well-known door.
And then I know at eventide
I shall not knock in vain,
Thy heart of hearts will open wide
And take me home again."

He raised his head as he sang the last words, and saw that Eveline was weeping. But she bent down and kissed him, regardless of Miss McIntyre.

"Thank you," she said; "it is a very sad song, but I like it better than any of yours. Good-night, dear boy."

"Good-night, and good-bye," he said.

Then he took his leave of Miss McIntyre; he could never remember how. In fact, he stopped on the stairs to wonder whether he had kissed her, too. Up in his own room, de Villars's note was on the table; but, in spite of his usually quick eye for details, he did not notice it for a long time.

He paced up and down the room thinking, or rather dreaming, for to himself he hardly seemed awake. One thing he was sure of: that if he died the next day, he had at least learnt what it was to live; unlike the heroine of De Musset's lines that rang in his ears now:

She has lived not, yet is dead,
... From her hands the book has fallen
In which she naught has read.

Perfect happiness, that only comes from loving as one is loved again, was clear to him for the first time, and, but for that waking dream by Eveline's fireside, he felt he might never have known it.

At last he remembered that Trevor must wake him at half-past five, to be in time for his meeting the next day. So he rang and told the man so.

Trevor was aggrieved. He hated getting up early only a little less than Maurice himself did.

"Ave you seen this letter, sir?" he asked, taking up de Villars's unopened note.

Maurice stamped his foot impatiently as he read it.

His first feeling was annoyance. All this fuss about nothing! It was like writing your will, and then finding you had only a cold in your head.

"Oh, Trevor, you need not wake me till nine!" he said, and then proceeded to read de Villars's note again before burning it.

How would it affect his relations with Eveline? he wondered. It seemed really almost a pity that exquisite interview would not be their last.

Such happiness would be a fitting prelude to waking up in Heaven; and nothing is ever so nice the morning after. Sentiment at night seems sentimentality in the disillusioning light of dawn; pathos, bathos.

One thing he had made up his mind about: he and Eveline must be engaged before he left Paris. He wondered how she would take the suggestion, and how he should make it. Had she been anyone else—one of the girls he knew down in Worcestershire, for instance—the thing would have been simple enough.

The fact that he had kissed her would be the natural forerunner of a proposal of marriage on his part, and a "please speak to papa," on hers. Then he would proceed to buy her a ring amidst general felicitations.

But Maurice entertained an extremely low opinion of his own power of fascination; and that a lovely and wealthy Countess should be really in love with him, and ready to marry him, seemed to him most unlikely. When he thought of it, too, she had been dreadfully motherly. She had kissed him no doubt, because she thought he was going to be killed, and because she thought he was seventeen. He must put her right on that point the first thing, though it would be dreadfully absurd, he felt, to walk into her sitting-room, and say:

"If you please, Eveline, I am not going to be shot at, and I am not seventeen, and I have come to ask you to marry me."

"Almost better have let de Villars kill me and Eveline regret me," was his last reflection as he put his light out.

But he dreamed of happiness and her sweet brown eyes all night long.

At half-past ten the next day he was shown into the Countess's dining-room.

She was sitting by the fire in a morning-gown of fawn-coloured velvet, having breakfast.

She held out both her hands to him, and he bent down and kissed her cheek.

"Ah!" she cried, "then your meeting is over, and you are not even wounded!"

"I did not meet him at all, I am ashamed to say," he said, sitting the other side of the fire. "Last night I got a letter to say that I wasn't worth shooting, and that de Villars has gone to Fontainebleau to save himself the trouble."

"I am so thankful," she said, with tolerably well-acted surprise and relief; "it is too dreadful to talk about, so we won't allude to it again. And now I suppose you are longing to see your people, and will be hurrying back and leaving us!"

"Yes," he said, "I must be getting back soon." He paused. "I have a great deal to tell them," he continued; "I have to tell them that I am going to be married.

Eveline put down her cup.

"Married! My dear child, it is impossible! You are much too young."

"There is very little difference between our ages," he said, leaning forward and taking her hand in his.

She laughed a little unsteadily.

"Maurice, dear, what are you talking of? I am twenty-seven, and you——"

"And I am twenty-three. And I love you, and I hope you love me."

She was silent. The colour came and went in her beautiful face.

"It is impossible," she said at last with a sigh, but without disengaging her hand from his. "Let me keep on being fond of you, as the boy I thought you were."

"You may treat me as a boy until I am fifty, if you please," he said; "I like it. But you must marry me in the meantime. I know it is most presumptuous of me to suppose that you who are rich, and titled, and lovely, can be fond of me. I've only about a hundred and fifty a year of my own, and even at my dear father's death I shan't be rich. But I've got the offer of a pretty good Government appointment for next spring, and I shall take it, and that will bring me in a little more. And when I see how lonely and friendless you are, I can't help forgetting the difference in our positions and longing to have a right to comfort and protect you."

"But what will Dr. Grantley say?" she

said; "and the O'Haras, and your father and mother?"

"Why, that I have done nothing to deserve such good fortune," he answered cheerfully, but not quite sincerely. In truth, he did not expect that his people would like the arrangement at all. But he did not intend to consult them, and they had never yet been able to prevent him from doing anything he wanted to do.

"I shall go home in three more days," he continued, "as it is not fair to keep away any longer. And then I shall tell them all about you, and bring you back with me in about a fortnight's time to spend Christmas with us at The Grange."

He knelt beside her chair, and put his arm round her waist. But his last words had brought a startled look into her face.

"Not to England!" she exclaimed. "I don't like England. I have been so unhappy and have so many enemies there."

"Well, we'll talk it over," he said soothingly. "Perhaps I'll bring my father over with me first, to fall in love with you and give you courage to face the rest of them.

And now you must lend me a ring of yours that I may know the size; and then you must be very sweet and loving to me, just as you were yesterday evening, for we have only three more days together, and I want them to be as long as possible."

"I am absurdly older than you," she said, as she pressed her cheek to his. "Four years in fact, but forty in mind. But I do love you, Maurice, with all my heart. And, if you will only love me, and never believe anything against me, I shall be much happier than I have ever been, or than I deserve to be."

So they were engaged, and Maurice spent all the money he had been saving for a very long time in buying her a beautiful ring, a daisy in diamonds. He took it to show to the O'Haras, in a fever of anxiety to let someone know of his good fortune.

He found Dr. Grantley calling there, having just returned to Paris.

"We were talking of you at this moment," said Mrs. O'Hara, after the Doctor had welcomed him genially, "and of a friend to all of us, Eveline Douglas."

"Ah, how do you like her?" Dr. Grantley asked Maurice.

"Oh, I like her—very well," said Maurice with an amused smile.

"That's tepid praise," remarked the older man, "to apply to such a woman. She's weak, but a very loveable creature,

and much more sinned against than sinning."

This was scarcely the criticism Maurice cared to hear passed upon his future wife. He remembered that at one time he had been most anxious to hear what Dr. Grantley knew and thought of her. Now, however, all he cared to know concerning her he decided he would learn from her own lips. It seemed profanation to hear her discussed in this cold-blooded way.

"I have brought something to show you," he said, crossing to Mrs. O'Hara; "a ring I have just bought for the lady I am going to marry."

"You are very young to think of marrying," she said, smiling kindly.

"Not a bit too young," said the Doctor briskly. "I don't myself believe in a man taking the edge off his affections before he settles down to enjoy them. As soon as a man is old enough to love and rich enough to keep a wife, let him marry a nice girl, and gain his first experience of women from the best. Man was not meant to live alone."

"Sure, Doctor, you do," said Kathleen slyly.

"Yes, but that's my misfortune, not my fault, Miss O'Hara."

"And may we know the lady's name, Mr. Wilde?" his hostess asked, when she had admired the ring.

"Yes," said Maurice. "You all know her. Her name is Eveline Douglas."

CHAPTER IX.

MAURICE'S announcement was received by all present in a manner not particularly flattering to himself.

First, dead silence; then surprise from all; and quite violent indignation from one at least.

"It is impossible! absurd! You don't know what you are talking about, young man," exclaimed Dr. Grantley, in a fit of uncontrollable excitement. "Eveline Douglas, marry you! I never heard of such a thing. To begin with, she's years older than you are——"

"Eveline's only six-and-twenty, Doctor," interposed Kathleen.

"Seven-and-twenty," corrected Maurice, "and I am twenty-three. If I find there's not too much difference between our ages, surely no one else has a right to object."

"And how long have you known her, pray?" Dr. Grantley inquired. "Just

about five weeks. Do you think it is wise to choose a companion for a lifetime from five weeks' acquaintance?"

"I have not known you five days, Dr. Grantley," said Maurice coldly. "When I have, possibly I may recognise your right to catechise me as you are doing now."

Dr. Grantley turned very red, and began to walk up and down the room. Maurice rose to take his leave. As he did so, Norah jumped up impulsively:

"Sure, it was a surprise to us," she said. "We none of us thought Eveline would marry again. But she is the sweetest woman that ever lived, and I am certain she will make you happy. Never mind the Doctor. I believe he was in love with her himself," she whispered confidentially.

Kathleen and Mrs. O'Hara joined in Norah's congratulations, and Maurice left, a little comforted, bowing coldly to the Doctor, who, as soon as the door closed upon him, turned upon the ladies.

"That's just like you women. Congratulating him indeed! Why, you must know you are sorry for him in your hearts. What will his parents say, and what will he say himself when it all comes out? And, of course, she has told him nothing. Eveline is the greatest coward I know. And she is so ridiculously weak-minded that, in any case, this boy would be the worst sort of husband for her. If she's such a goose as to want to get married again, after her first experience, it's not a child like that she ought to choose, but a man of the world, who knows her history, and is capable of guiding her, and——"

"A man like yourself, for instance, Doctor," suggested Norah archly.

"Well, Miss Norah, she might do worse," said Dr. Grantley, and seizing his hat, he left the house, to vent his ill-humour upon a dyspeptic patient.

During the two ensuing days Maurice found being engaged far more interesting than he had ever anticipated, and, now that he was going to marry her himself, he found Eveline's total silence on the subject of the merits or demerits of her former husband an unmixed blessing. He had a horribly bad face certainly, in his picture, Maurice thought, and was probably a great brute to her.

He himself grew fonder of her every moment. If she had been fascinating as a friend, she was simply irresistible as a

fiancée. Had he been less unsophisticated, Maurice might have suspected the many tender and graceful ways by which she demonstrated her affection for him to be the result of long practice. She had indeed been married seven years to a man who alternately adored and neglected her, but, although loving and submissive, she had been always more or less afraid of him.

Her nature, less passionate than affectionate and clinging, had been chilled and cowed by her first husband's variable humours, sometimes harsh and sullen, sometimes wildly demonstrative; and now, for the first time, she felt she could give way to all the tenderness that was in her, to meet only tenderness and gentleness in return.

She never quite dropped the playful, semi-motherly manner she had before assumed with Maurice, but, under the new influence of love and happiness, she seemed to grow younger every day.

"You must not talk of going away until I absolutely see you off at the station," she said, "or I shall spoil all our enjoyment by crying now. And I must keep my tears until you are really gone; you shall have only my smiles, for you have brought me nothing but happiness. Only——"

She rose, and crossed to where he was sitting before the piano, idly playing an accompaniment to a song with one hand, while he turned on his seat to watch her.

"Only what?" he asked, drawing her arm round his neck.

"Only, Maurice, I feel you are loving me under false pretences. I have always been afraid to tell you all my story, lest you should like me less. But it is much better you should hear it from me than through others. Don't frown, dear; there is nothing in it I mind your knowing, but——"

"But you look unhappy, darling. You must tell me nothing to make you unhappy while we are together, now. I can guess you must have had the most awful trials during your married life, but you must forget all about that now."

"But, if someone should come to you, and say——"

"If anyone should come to me, and say anything against my future wife, I should listen to nothing, believe nothing, until I heard it confirmed by her. You shall tell me all your past troubles when I come back to fetch you to The Grange in a fortnight's time."

"As you like," she said, with a little sigh. She was indeed intensely relieved that the disagreeable recital was postponed.

He, on his part, did not think she had anything more important to tell him than that she had been married to a scamp, and he did not want to be reminded of the scamp at present. He and Eveline were so peacefully happy together. Why should the shadow of a dreary past be invoked to sadden them both?

He was always with her during those last three days. Miss McIntyre was staying with Eveline, but she was not in the least in the way. She rather liked Maurice, as she could see he loved Eveline, and she went peacefully to sleep while he sang after dinner in the little salon.

Not that she interrupted them much when she was awake. Eveline and Maurice appeared to have very little to say, and spent most of their time in looking at each other in silent contentment.

The end came at last, and Maurice, full of hope, Eveline, full of forebodings she could not express, were both driving to the station for her to see him off on the first stage of his journey home.

She clasped both her hands round his arm.

"Don't let them turn you against me. Don't leave off loving me. Come back to me quickly. I cannot lose you," she whispered, half-sobbing.

"You silly darling!" he said, putting his arm round her protectingly. "Why, I am just planning out how I can persuade my mother and sisters to make your room at least more like what you are used to, when you come to spend Christmas with us at The Grange. I could manage it if I could run up to London, and go to Liberty's, though I doubt even then whether my mother would sacrifice her anti-macassars. Your rooms will frighten my father when I bring him back in a fortnight. By-the-way, Trevor inquired just now whether we should bring him back with us to Paris, as he had grown 'like as one might say acclimatised to the city.' I think Mlle. Hélène has had something to do with his conversion. She is probably giving him a finishing lesson now in the cab with the luggage."

Eveline tried to smile, but she was terribly unhappy.

"Good-bye, Maurice. I don't believe they will ever let you come back to me."

These, her last words, and her loving, tearful face, as he kissed her and said

good-bye at the station, haunted Maurice all the way home.

During the whole journey he was considering how best he should break the news of his engagement to his parents. It would certainly be a shock to them, as he had not said a word about it in his letters.

If he had only a portrait of Eveline, that they might see how beautiful a wife he had chosen!

It seemed quite impossible good fortune to him, as he thought it all over in the train. That he, little Maurice Wilde, with no great abilities or fascinations, and no fortune at all, should have gained the love of a Countess, young, wealthy, and dazzlingly lovely!

He wished his people had had no one staying with them, as he would have liked to talk the whole thing over quietly with them, to explain his unaccountable silence and his sudden decision; though, of course, he did not mean them to know anything about the projected duel.

So at last, in such reflections, his journey came to an end, and at the station, which was three miles from The Grange, he found the carriage waiting for him, with his mother and his sister Ethel inside.

They were wrapped up in furs, for the last days of October were very chilly; both fine-looking women, his mother five feet nine, majestic and stout, and her youngest daughter five feet nine, lanky and angular. They were both a little taller than Maurice, and they precipitated themselves upon his neck now, half-smothering him with embraces, as they pulled him into the carriage.

"But you surely haven't brought back all your things, darling. Where is your brown portmanteau?"

"I've left it in Paris," he replied. "Jack is going to winter in the south of France, so I may use his rooms till the spring, and I propose to take my father over there in a fortnight."

This announcement provoked, as he had expected, a chorus of remonstrances.

Off again in a fortnight, when he had only just come back. How absurd! Where was the attraction about Paris?

"You haven't lost your heart surely, Maurice?" said Ethel.

"You shall hear all about it by-and-by," he said, which enigmatical answer filled his mother and sister with anticipative tremors. But they saw that they could elicit nothing further from him at present, and so, to change the subject,

Ethel began to dilate upon the charms of her new friend, Madame Ravelli, or Jeanne, as she called her.

"And her mother-in-law is staying with us, too," she said. "She arrived the day before yesterday. A most beautiful old Italian lady, with dignified manners, looking just like an old French Marquise. You will like them immensely. And they have been so cruelly treated."

The carriage was driving through the lodge gates by this time, and soon the well-known red chimneys of The Grange met Maurice's eye again. It was a large, comfortable-looking, unpretentious house, built of warm red brick, with large French windows opening on the velvety lawn which sloped down from the slight elevation on which the house was built.

Maurice's father was standing on the steps: a tall, handsome man, with a florid complexion, and grey moustache and beard, and his sister Mary ran down the broad drive to meet the carriage.

Then there was more embracing, more joy over the return of the family pet, and, from the shadow of the wide dining-room doorway in the hall, Ethel brought forward a tiny, fairy-like little creature, very pretty, very French-looking, and introduced her as "Madame Ravelli the younger."

She appeared to be about twenty, and was extremely attractive-looking, despite the skinny little figure, and sallow skin, peculiar to many young French women. Pretty, through a quick birdlike grace of motion, sweetness of expression, and brightness of eyes and teeth. Her mother-in-law, Madame Ravelli the elder, must have been far more regularly beautiful in her youth.

"Lady Macbeth in the sere and yellow leaf," Maurice decided, as he noticed the rigid lines of the handsome mouth, and the piercing brilliancy of the long, black eyes. He did not like her face, but he had little time allowed him for reflections of any kind.

As soon as they could, Mrs. Wilde and Ethel brought Maurice down from his room to his father's study. Instructed by them, old Mr. Wilde was already there. Having the young man fairly at bay, his mother and sister proceeded to pour questions upon him, entreating him to explain his recent vague hints.

"Papa, Maurice is going to get married!" cried Ethel. "And he's going to tell us all about it now; aren't you, Maurice?"

His father pushed up his spectacles, and looked at his son. Mrs. Wilde dropped comfortably into an arm-chair and looked at him too, and Ethel fluttered round him as he stood, with his back to the fire, facing the round of affectionate and inquisitive relations.

"You know, father, you were always worrying me to marry," he began, apologetically.

"Yes, but Maurice——" broke in his stepmother pathetically, "not a French woman, and not a Roman Catholic."

"She's not a French woman and she's not a Roman Catholic. You've often heard me speak of her in my letters. She is an English widow, and her name is Evaline Douglas."

"What! the old widow lady on the next floor, who was so kind to you?"

"She's not old at all," said Maurice, colouring deeply; "I don't know what put such an idea into your head, Ethel."

"She's older than you are, anyhow," said his sister, decisively.

Maurice did not answer.

"Come, my boy, out with it," interposed his father, amused at his son's discomfiture.

"Or is the lady's age a state secret?"

"Nonsense!" said Maurice, pettishly; "she is twenty-seven, though she doesn't look it."

Old Mr. Wilde whistled reflectively.

"A widow! owing to twenty-seven, living in the same house with you; and you've only known her a month! My boy, we oughtn't to have let you go, or I ought to have warned you first. Never trust a widow——"

"Your wife trusted a widower; didn't you, mother?"

"My dear child, this is quite a different sort of thing," said Mrs. Wilde solemnly; "there is nothing in the least foreign about me, and I had known your father several years. Besides, he was not a mere boy as you are. He was twelve years older than I, whilst with you——"

"The difference is the wrong way about. I don't like the sound of it, my boy," said his father, clapping him on the back; "if you thought we should approve of the affair, why didn't you write and tell us about it? It sounds as if she had got hold of you somehow at the last moment; and we all know what these fascinating widows of doubtful age living abroad are——adventuresses and all that sort of thing."

Mr. Wilde, having been once as far as Boulogne and back, was qualified, in his own mind at least, to speak concerning the manners and customs of the dwellers in foreign countries. When his wife and family had made their annual excursions he had always declined to accompany them out of the British Isles, being an extremely bad sailor, and detesting a style of living to which he was not accustomed. A good old Conservative, narrow-minded gentleman, of few ideas and rooted prejudices, he had even looked with secret alarm upon the introduction of the pretty French widow into his house, lest by any chance his son should take a fancy to her. And now to have him engaged to some got-up old French woman whom his parents had not even seen!

"I really don't think any of you know what you are talking about," said Maurice at last, "and I should much like to know where the 'adventuring' comes in. I am not rich, I am not highly born, and there is nothing about me to make it worth anyone's while to get hold of me. The lady I have the good fortune to be engaged to is not only all that is gentle and loveable, but she is extremely wealthy—a Countess, and the most beautiful woman I have ever seen. As to being foreign, she was born in England, of English parents, and brought up there by her stepfather, who was a Scotchman. She married an Italian, and has lived a good deal abroad, but all the friends she has in Paris are English or Irish. And if it had not been that I was very fond of her, I should never have dared to ask her to marry me, she is so much above me in every respect. And now, if you please, I am going to dress for dinner."

And, slipping past Ethel's detaining hands, Maurice left the room, and did not reappear until the second dinner-bell had rung.

The younger Madame Ravelli was placed next to him, looking most bewitching in one of the untrimmed, perfectly cut, black dresses that only a French woman can wear, with a sprig of scarlet geranium in her dark hair.

But almost her first words awakened painful memories in Maurice's mind.

"Ah, you come from Paris!" she said. "Dear Paris! All my relations live there. I wonder if you have met them. My maiden name was Jeanne de Mornay, and Henri, Marquis de Villars, is my cousin."

"THE STORY OF OUR LIVES FROM YEAR TO YEAR"

ALL THE YEAR ROUND

A Weekly Journal

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PRICE TWOPENCE.

A DATELESS BARGAIN.

By C. L. PIRKIS,

Author of "Lady Lovelace," etc.

CHAPTER XXIII.

CAPTAIN BUCKINGHAM stood, with his watch in his hand, at Mrs. O'Halloran's drawing-room window, in a tolerably contented frame of mind.

For to this man, in the midst of his storm-tossed, adventurous course, there had seemed to come land in sight, and the promise of a haven at last.

His career had been a chequered one from boyhood till the verge of his fortieth year—his standpoint now. His father's course in some sort had determined his. A beggared Buckinghamshire farmer, he had crossed the Atlantic with his son and daughter, the only survivors of a large family. In succession he attempted a variety of callings, failed in all, and died in middle life, bankrupt once more, leaving his two children, George at twenty, Sylvia at ten, with his large ambitions and roving tastes for sole legacy.

George's thirst for notoriety and love of adventure drove him into the ranks of the Northern army, then at war with the South. Prior to this, however, he had dropped his English patronymic, adopted the name of his county for surname, and become a naturalised American subject. One or two brilliantly brave things he did during the campaign, for the man had plenty of animal courage; also one or two detestably brutal things, for his moral nature was about on a par with that of a stoat or weasel. Under the latter head must be classed his elopement with the daughter of a rich Southern planter, and his abandonment of her afterwards, when he found

the family estates had been confiscated. She, poor child, died broken-hearted within a year of the marriage. Nemesis fell asleep, and George Buckingham heard no more of his girl-wife.

Soon after this, travelling through Boston, chance threw him across the path of Marie St. Clair, then an assistant in a glover's shop. He speedily detected in her the hyper-sensitive organism which lays its possessor at the mercy of the mesmerist.

Mesmerism and clairvoyance just then chanced to be the rage in Boston. In this girl, duly trained and "developed," he saw the prospect of a good income. Towards her he played the part of a gentleman Barnum, with a fair amount of pecuniary success. When eventually the girl's health and intellect collapsed, under the artificial conditions of life imposed upon her, his biography of her, written with the occasional help of her pen, brought him in dollars enough to start him on a new career.

He had left Sylvia a child, in New York, living as an adopted daughter with some homely tradespeople. He returned thither to find her grown into an attractive young woman, the centre of a second-rate and somewhat fast set. Her ambition had probably kept her clear of perils that would have wrecked a weaker woman. This set numbered among its members not a few loud-voiced ultra-Democrats, and George Buckingham at once took up the rôle of scribe to them, for which a ready pen qualified him.

Among sparrows a chaffinch is a brilliant bird. Buckingham soon became king of his coterie, and, wielding a certain amount of power, attracted the attention of a political society connected with the Irish Nationalistic movement. He was speedily enrolled first a member of the executive,

subsequently a member of temporary councils appointed for specific purposes. With a purse frequently at a low ebb, and no principles at all, he was precisely the man to have dangerous or difficult enterprises entrusted to him. In Sylvia he found a willing coadjutor. A capable one also.

Her qualifications for the work she undertook were wariness, a quick eye for character and the weak side of human nature, a good manner, a clever tongue, a capability for adhering to the letter of given orders.

The brother's stock in trade consisted of an infinite audacity, a love of adventures with a spice of danger in them, and a strong sympathy with the rowdy side of everything, Republicanism included.

All successful villainy is more or less based on the sanguine assumption that the unit is swamped in the million. Captain Buckingham, when he endeavoured to combine with his political work in England the equally interesting task of finding a wealthy bride for himself, must have taken it for granted that his early career had been outshone, and consequently thrown into oblivion, by the careers of more brilliant adventurers. And this notion Mab's eccentric conduct at the moment assuredly tended to confirm.

CHAPTER XXIV.

"No, Aunt Bell," Joyce had said, in response to the kind old lady's sobs and kisses, "it won't kill me, I'm too strong and healthy. I shall most likely live on for another forty years."

It was not said hysterically, passionately, between outbursts of wailing and tears, but quietly, assuredly, as a simple statement of a simple fact. It was none the less pathetic.

Yet hope dies hard in young hearts. On the slightest of diets it nourishes a tough, strong life. In Joyce's heart it kept itself alive on nothing at all, for weeks and months after it had died in everyone else's.

It was all very well for her to say to herself night and morning, as she did: "My darling, I know nothing but death would keep you from me." She never turned the corner of a street without a quick movement of her head right and left, seeking, enquiring, expecting; never heard the postman's knock without a throb at her heart lest a line of news of Frank might come in some letter; never bowed her

knee in prayer without Frank's name being first and last on her lips.

The blank silence, the agony of never-lifted suspense, the comparatively enforced idleness at a moment when perhaps gigantic effort was needed, were something awful to bear at times. It was not to be wondered at if Joyce looked, as her friends were in the habit of saying she looked just then, "the very ghost of herself."

What she had said to Aunt Bell in effect she kept repeating to herself, from the time she lifted her head wearily from her pillow in the morning till she laid it there wearily at night.

She was just twenty-one years of age. There was nothing unreasonable in the supposition that she should live to be past sixty. That meant forty years more of a life which, if the choice had been given her, she would not have prolonged for as many days.

It meant long years of ceaseless, yet always futile effort, of agonised suspense, of a desperate clutching at phantom hopes till fingers were too weak or old to clutch at anything. It meant a heart vibrating to every passing rumour of calamity or mischance, till, like a slackened stringed instrument, it lost power to vibrate at all.

Only physical incapacity in this world ever gets a day of its sentence remitted. Of physical incapacity Joyce knew nothing, so the weary treadmill of life went on for her. Petty cares, duties, annoyances had to be carried in addition to the weightier burdens. Business matters had to be discussed with Uncle Archie, for the proper management of the Gloucestershire estates; frivolities had to be entered into with Mrs. Shenstone. She had to be amused, played with, petted like any captious child, so as to be induced to remain contentedly in London instead of setting off for the Continent in search of new excitement and amusement, which of late she had seemed to consider a necessity to her health.

Beyond signing her cheques, Mrs. Shenstone could not be persuaded to do anything in the way of business.

The cheque-signing, however, she performed with remarkable ease and pleasure. She would sit for ten minutes at a time gazing admiringly at her own signature. "Ernestine Shenstone!" she would repeat complacently. "I don't believe there's a prettier name to be found in the kingdom."

It had had to be broken very gently to her that her house had been made a ren-

devious for members of Fenian and other associations. Even then the consequences were, to say the least, uncomfortable. Hysterics went on for half a day, all sorts of wild and foolish plans were propounded during the other half. She would put advertisements in all the newspapers, saying how she had been imposed upon; she would never, no, never, shake hands with an Irishman or an American again to the end of her life; never so much as enter a room where one was seated. She would call at every police station in London, and put herself and her family under the protection of the police; that is to say, if she were compelled—here she threw a bitterly reproachful look at Uncle Archie and Joyce—to stay on in this terrible city of dynamite and conspiracies, when she would give worlds—yes, worlds—to be in lively, delightful Paris, beautiful Rome, or Florence.

The only course with any approach to wisdom in it which the lady at this time decided upon, was, at once and for ever, to drop her correspondence with Sylvia Buckingham.

The immediate result of the cessation of those weekly big packets between Sylvia and Mrs. Shenstone, was to send the latter once more to Joyce with her confidences and cravings for sympathy.

"Mine is a clinging, dependent nature," she would say. "Sympathy I must have, or I shall die. Come upstairs, Joyce, to my room, and help me to read and answer my letters."

A revelation to Joyce's astonished brain was to follow the reading and answering of these letters. Her mother was developing into that pitiable specimen of womanhood, the middle-aged flirt.

In Sylvia Buckingham's sympathy with these ridiculous flirtations had possibly lain the secret of her influence over Mrs. Shenstone; also they afforded a ready explanation of the lady's easy indifference to the transfer of Captain Buckingham's attentions from herself to Mab.

Joyce in the old days would have scented the fun of the whole thing, would have seen nothing but the humorous side of it, and would have given her mother no rest until she had made her, to some extent, see it also. To-day, however, she had no heart for such doings. Everything in life seemed to her now to have more of pathos than of fun in it.

To think that her mother, after twenty years of dignified married life with such a

man as her father, should condescend to listen to the inanities of some juvenile subaltern, or the platitudes of an ancient club habitué, seemed pitiful to the last degree.

"Mother, is it possible?" she cried in her indignation, letting fall to the ground a letter from an elderly General who addressed Mrs. Shenstone as "my dear child" once or twice in the course of his brief epistle, and paid her a succession of those high-flown compliments which, with elderly gentlemen of a past generation, were the coin current in their intercourse with women.

"Is what possible, Joyce?" asked Mrs. Shenstone, in that much aggrieved tone in which she generally rebuffed her daughter's rebukes. "Do you mean, 'is it possible' for a gentleman with eyes in his head to see that my hands are white and slender? or, having ears to hear with, to discover that my voice is like Cordelia's, soft, gentle, and low?"

Joyce's voice was not like Cordelia's as she answered:

"Mother, 'is it possible' that you don't know when you are insulted? Why, even a child of fifteen could tell you that flattery and respect don't come hand in hand."

They were fated to hear more of this elderly General later on.

CHAPTER XXV.

So the year grew older. Brown winter greened into spring, spring grew golden under summer's magic touch, but there came never a word of Frank Ledyard, never a sign of him, living or dead.

Mab, in jerky, troubled fashion, contrived to keep up a series of uncomfortable meetings with Captain Buckingham unknown to any of her family.

Mrs. Shenstone made the golden hours fly with a continuation of her small epistolary flirtations and a round of trivial amusements; and Joyce made them linger with the dreary load of thought, profitless speculation, or wild surmise she put into them.

Uncle Archie's pastime just then seemed to consist in dealing out a series of snubs with fine impartiality to everybody—Joyce alone being excepted. Aunt Bell naturally came in for the lion's share of these favours; Mrs. Shenstone's claims being admitted next in order. Even Mab at times had to stand still, be lectured, threatened with a doctor and physic, as

though she were a school-girl of thirteen instead of a young woman of three-and-twenty.

Frank's step-step-father—if that degree of relationship be allowed to him—coming up to London at that time to put in his claim of distant kinship to Joyce's lover, thought that outside Colney Hatch there wasn't to be found such another cranky, irritable old gentleman. Uncle Archie compelled him to remain seated while he stood over him, like a schoolmaster with a switch in his hand haranguing a refractory pupil.

"I tell you, sir," he said, rounding his periods in true pedagogue style, and making his fore-finger beat time to his periods, "that I charge myself with my friend, Mr. Ledyard's, debts and responsibilities. I also charge myself with the safe keeping of his private and personal property. His rooms are locked up. His banker's book is in my desk. Not a soul shall lay a finger upon it."

It was possibly the words "debts and responsibilities" as much as Uncle Archie's oratory which sent the step-step-father back again into Gloucestershire, and kept him there.

Morton, the detective, took his share of Uncle Archie's benefits stoically enough.

Off and on, Morton was a good deal about the house in those early summer months. One never knew when, or where, his white face and solemn eyes would make their appearance. He buzzed about the kitchen quarters, made himself free of the housekeeper's room, and once or twice visited the breakfast-room, where Mab and Joyce as a rule spent their morning hours. Nothing inside or outside the house seemed to escape his eye.

It was about this time that a circumstance occurred which greatly troubled Joyce, and which left behind it rankling a miserable feeling of a chance just missed.

In her morning's packet of letters there came one addressed to her in an unknown hand—evidently a disguised hand also, for it was rounded, even, and regular until individuality it had none.

The letter was brief, containing only one or two lines, as follows:

"Will Miss Shenstone meet the writer of this letter on the Albert Bridge, Chelsea, at ten o'clock to-night? Please come alone."

No initials were added. There was nothing to indicate whence the letter had come. The paper was simply schoolboy's

quarto, all in keeping with the handwriting. The post-mark was merely "London, W.C."

Joyce hid the letter hurriedly and carefully away. A wild rush of hope for the moment filled her heart. She was possibly on the verge of some clue, it might be of some valuable piece of information. Meet the writer alone! Not a doubt she would. There was no man living she would not have met alone at any hour of the day or night, on the chance of getting the news for which her heart ached. How she got through that day she did not know, it seemed of interminable length. She could not eat, drink, talk, or remain in one place for five minutes at a time. Directly dinner was over, she made an excuse and went up to her room. Then putting on a long dark cloak and simple hat, she crept down the stairs and let herself out by a side gate at the back of the house. Her movements were slow and cautious, and she satisfied herself that they were unnoticed by anyone.

It was a fine night, the streets were crowded. King's Road was especially so, and Joyce, unaccustomed to the evening traffic of the streets, felt herself jostled in all directions. She attempted no side thoroughfares, but went straight along the busy road to the broad street which leads direct to the Albert Bridge. Here the traffic seemed suddenly to cease. There was a long, quiet cab-stand; a few well-dressed passers-by; a policeman; one or two respectable-looking workmen.

Joyce knew she was before her time, so it did not surprise her to find no one waiting on the bridge whom she could with any show of reason identify with her correspondent of the morning. She walked up and down the length of the bridge two or three times before the old church clock struck ten.

After that every five minutes had its length doubled by her impatience and anxiety.

Could it have been nothing but a hoax after all? she asked herself, wistfully scanning every passer-by, or gazing drearily into the black shadows lying athwart the murky river. Yet it seemed hard to believe, in spite of her lately-increased experience in the world's wickedness, that anyone could be base enough to find a pleasure in playing off even the mildest of jokes upon her in the midst of her grief. No, it was not to be thought of. So she waited patiently, her hopes dying one by one

as the church clock chimed the quarters and eventually tolled the hour—eleven o'clock. During the last half-hour of her waiting, she became aware of the fact that a hansom cab was pulled up on the embankment close to the bridge, so that its occupant, if there were one, could get a complete view of her as she waited out the weary hour. How long the cab had been there she did not know, but it was only during the last half-hour that she noticed it.

When at length, tired and sick at heart, she turned her steps homeward once more, it was to see the same hansom driving away from the doorstep of the house.

The back gate was locked when she tried it, an emergency for which she was unprepared. To say truth, her appointment and its possible results had so filled her mind, that she had taken no count of any difficulties which might lie in the way of her getting back unnoticed to the house.

So she was compelled to ring at the front door, which to her surprise was opened to her by Uncle Archie.

He showed no astonishment at her appearance outside at this unusual hour. He only kissed her, and shook his head at her as she went past him straight up to her own room again.

But Joyce, as she passed the library door, had a glimpse of Morton seated within, and in a moment, with a pang of bitter disappointment, guessed the possible reason why her unknown correspondent had failed in his appointment. He had possibly seen Morton on the track of her footsteps, and, dreading detection, had himself remained in hiding.

Had she heard Morton's words when Uncle Archie re-entered the library, she would have found her surmise confirmed.

"I see every one of the household letters, sir, before they leave the postman's hands," the detective said, "and this morning I noted one addressed to Miss Joyce in a disguised hand. I noted, also, the young lady's disturbed manner throughout the day, and putting two and two together, concluded that she had received a piece of information which she was keeping to herself, and that an appointment would be the probable result. Now, sir, amateur detectives are all very well in story books, but out of story books——!" here an expressive shrug finished the sentence; "consequently I have had my eye on Miss Joyce all through the day. When she left the house by the back door, I followed her through the

front; when she arrived at Chelsea Bridge I called a hansom, and sat in it watching her all the time, and if anyone had turned up I should have had my hand on him in a moment. No, sir, I haven't served in my profession for twenty-five years for nothing. He must be a 'cute one who'll take John Morton in. Now, sir, if you'll get the young lady to hand over that anonymous letter to me, I may be able to read between the lines, and something may come of it."

But though Joyce, in helpless, weary fashion, gave over her letter into the detective's hand, nothing ever came of it beyond that long hour of waiting on the dreary bridge.

CHRONICLES OF SCOTTISH COUNTIES.

EAST LOTHIAN.

SURELY in this case the old name is the best, a name at once descriptive and historic; those who first called the county Haddington were wanting in a sense of the fitness of things. The name is well enough for a town, and speaks of early settlers who were Danes, likely enough, and who girt their dwellings about with ditch and mound. But how can it be fitly applied to the varied country about us? whereas the very name of Lothian calls up visions of fat cornfields, rich pastures, gentle hills, and fertile dales. And in this case we have the defence of a bold and rocky coast, whose every commanding crag and point of vantage bears the relics of ancient fortifications, as befits the border country of an ancient kingdom—ancient, perhaps, when as yet Scotland and England were still vague and unformed.

Still at the present time there is good reason for the pre-eminence of Haddington town, altogether one of the brightest and best of Scottish towns, which boasted once of its strong walls and gateways and flanking towers, with cannon mounted on its ramparts and stout burghers within, ready to defend their ancient town—ancient, that is, in essence, for, as in many other places, the monuments of its antiquity have been destroyed in the course of its stirring history. Thrice burnt and thrice drowned was Haddington, according to the old adage. The drownings were due to the sudden floods of the ordinarily placid little river Tyne, a humble relative of its greater namesake in Northumberland. But the

burnings thereof are due to the hand of man—of the Englishman once, at all events, and once to the hand of woman, as will be seen later on.

The first notable conflagration was in 1244, when on the same night Aberdeen, Perth, Stirling, and Lanark were also set fire to, surely as the result of some incendiary plot.

The next burning may be put to the account of the English, who, having won the battle of Pinkie under the leadership of the Protector Somerset, marked their homeward track with the smoke of burning villages and towns. Haddington was in the main line of road between England and Edinburgh, a track still followed by the old coach road. The road thus avoided the desolate routes and dangerous hill-passes of the Border regions; but it necessarily crossed the range of the Lammermuir hills, which reach almost to the sea-coast by Dunbar.

The English army under Somerset marched from Leith, after setting fire to the town, and presently "they burnt a fair town of the Earl of Bothwell's, called Haddington, with a great nonry and a house of freres." The "great nonry" had been a famous convent in its time, and was originally founded by Ada, daughter of William de Warenne, a grand-daughter, probably, of the Conqueror's daughter Gundrada, whose remains were discovered some forty years ago in Lewes Priory, Sussex. Ada had married Earl Henry, the son of David the First, and was the mother of two Kings of Scotland—Malcolm the Maiden and William the Lion; and thus the de Warennes had a sort of family interest in the royal line of Scotland, which was remembered, no doubt, when a century or so later another de Warenne was appointed one of the administrators of Scotland, while the claims of rival aspirants, Bruce and Balliol among the rest, were being discussed.

Even before Ada's time, however, Haddington had been a favourite residence of the Scottish Kings, and it is mentioned in a charter of David the First's, so that the Princess Ada's claim to have given her name to the place must be disallowed.

Neither nunnery nor monastery has left much trace of its existence in records or in ruins, but there is a curious tradition about a certain nun of Haddington some time in the fourteenth century. During a time of flood, it is said, when the invading waters had almost surrounded the convent walls, a pious sister who had prayed long

and devoutly to a famous image of the Virgin for the abatement of the waters, but without the smallest success, irritated at her failure, snatched up the sacred image, and pointing to the advancing flood, threatened to throw it into the water unless something were done on the instant. This high-handed proceeding proved effectual; the flood was stayed at once, and the image was restored to its shrine in greater credit than ever for miraculous powers.

The old Franciscan friars have left a more permanent monument in the fine auld kirk o' Haddington, which was long known far and wide through the country as the lantern of the Lothians—*Lucerna Laudoniæ*—either from its massive tower where a light may have burned to guide the pilgrim through the wastes, or, more probably, from the appearance of the choir with its many windows lighted up with the glow of candles innumerable about its altars and shrines, and reflected the dark river beneath. The choir is sad enough and desolate now, a ruin and place of sepulchre—"the very centre of eternal silence, silence and sadness, world without end." The words are those of Jane Welsh Carlyle, and few who have read her "Memorials" will have forgotten the strange, pathetic description of her pilgrimage to the scenes of her youth, unvisited since her marriage three-and-twenty years before.

Somehow, that visit of Mrs. Carlyle's to Haddington seems to form an epoch in the life of the town, and, as she describes it, brings the place before us in outline vigorous if indistinct. And especially that old graveyard, where the names that she missed on the signboards turned up on the tombstones, while there still remained the tombs that were memorable to her as a girl—the white marble monument of a child who had been burnt to death, and another of "the young officer Rutherford shot in a duel."

Other graves had been memorable to an earlier generation, among them the uncommemorated grave of a parricide, to which pedagogues would bring their pupils as a sort of moral lesson; for, strange to say, upon this grave and nowhere else in all the country round, grew a dismal kind of fungus in the shape of a human hand, which was believed to spring up there as a perpetual testimony to the awful guilt of the murderer: a testimony quite as cogent, indeed, as that upon which the poor youth was condemned to a shameful death, and his name handed down to the execration of succeeding generations.

Sir James Stanfield was an Englishman of an old North-country family connected with the rising manufactures that were already, towards the end of the seventeenth century, beginning to spread wealth and comfort through the land. He had established works at Newmills, near Haddington, which afforded welcome employment to the thrifty peasantry of the neighbourhood; while it is probable enough that as a foreigner and innovator, he excited feelings of jealousy and dislike among others whose business he may have interfered with. Anyhow, one day Sir James was found drowned in a pond near the Newmills, under circumstances that were compatible with suicide, although the general opinion pointed to foul play. The knight had a son named Philip, a wild and headstrong youth, who had an ill reputation among the quiet country folk, and suspicion at once fell upon him.

It is a curious feature in the criminal jurisprudence of countries which derive their laws directly or indirectly from the Roman Empire, that overweening importance is attached to the confronting of an accused person with the body of his supposed victim. In this case the son was brought into the presence of the corpse of his father, and made to touch it, whereupon, according to the evidence of those present, blood gushed forth from the mouth and nostrils of the dead man. Upon this sole evidence the youth was condemned and hanged at Edinburgh. His body was hung in chains at the Gallows Lee, on Leith Walk, while his head and hand were fixed upon the East-port of Haddington, and remained there till the gate itself was pulled down. Robert Chambers, who was acquainted with the place in the early part of the present century, relates that there were those still living who remembered to have seen the hand, black and withered, as it showed upon the top of the old East-port.

But the hapless youth had left behind him relatives and friends who felt the disgrace that the body of one belonging to them should be exposed to the galls and corbies on the gallows, and thus one night the gallows were robbed and the body was privately interred in the auld kirkyard, where, as has been said, the grave was long regarded with a kind of superstitious awe, and used by the teachers of youth "to point a moral or adorn a tale."

All this time we have left unnoticed the third burning of Haddington, an event which was due to no recondite historic

causes, but simply to the careless hand to a nursemaid—or, it may be said, to the too careful hand in question—for it was in her zeal to thoroughly air the linen that she had in charge that this unlucky young woman set the whole in a blaze, a blaze that went on spreading and increasing till little was left of Haddington but smoking ruins. To commemorate this event and guard against its recurrence, the baillies of Haddington instituted an annual celebration known as coal and can'te, when a town's officer went round and addressed a long public exhortation to all and sundry the "maids and nourices" of the good town, showing the care they should take and the responsibility that rested upon them, concerning the safety of all within its walls. The fire happened some time in the middle of the seventeenth century, but the ceremony went on till within living memory.

Barely a century ago occurred the last of the three drownings, when the river, rising with the sudden vehemence of its nature poured into the town so rapidly that people were obliged to escape through their upper windows. In this connection a gigantic soldier known as Big Sam, whose regiment was stationed in the town, proved of invaluable service, as he could wade where ordinary folk would have drowned, and so he brought many out of their houses and carried them to a place of safety. But ungrateful Haddington has erected no statue to Big Sam. Neither has she built a worthy monument to her great son John Knox, who was born in Haddington in a house long since destroyed, although the croft that once was his father's is still pointed out. The inference, however, that the father was a crofter is not altogether just, for we have already seen that the Knox family was of worship and consideration in the county of Lanark.

Close by Haddington rises the massive old tower of Lethington House, the nucleus of the modern mansion surrounded by the park with its far-stretching wall, that was long considered one of the wonders of the district. Tradition has it that the wall was built by Lauderdale, the wicked Duke, if not in the course of a single night, anyhow with the marvellous rapidity that marks the work of "auld Hornie." The Duke of York, it is said—afterwards James the Second—being about to visit Scotland as its governor, spoke slightly to Lauderdale of his native country as having no parks worth speaking of in its limits.

Lauderdale hurried home, Lethington then being one of his principal seats, and before the Duke of York reached Scotland a massive wall enclosed a lordly park where, shortly before, all had been open common and forest glade.

Within sight of Lethington is the ancient house of Coulstoun, inhabited, time out of mind, by the family of Browns. And at Coulstoun is still preserved one of those family talismans, or fetish tokens, the origin of which may be traced in the superstitions of a very early age. In this case, the heirloom is a pear, which came into the family through the marriage of the heir of Coulstoun to Jean Hay, daughter of John, third Lord of Yester. The Lords of Yester were a race of wizards and enchanters, and the daughter's portion was the pear in question, which was duly enchanted and warranted to bring good fortune to the house of Coulstoun, and keep it among them, as long as they kept the pear. A century or two ago, one of the ladies of the family had a strong, and perhaps not unnatural, longing for a taste of the forbidden fruit, and bit a piece out of the pear, after which, for a while, nothing but misfortune happened, with the loss of some of the best farms in the estate. And from that time the pear was kept with greater precautions than ever for its safe custody.

The Wizard's Castle, too, is to be found to the south of Haddington, close to the pleasant village of Gifford. The ruins of the Warlock's Tower are higher up the stream than the more modern Yester-house, and occupy a rocky peninsula above the rivulet. Here was Hobgoblin Hall.

Of lofty roof and ample size,
Beneath the castle deep it lies;
To hew the living rock profound,
The floor to pave, the arch to round,
There never toiled a mortal arm,
It all was wrought by word and charm.

The wondrous hall still waits for some adventurous wight to brave the demons that protect it, and reveal its treasures. A less formidable task would be to discover the "old camp's deserted round," where the Scottish King, and later Marmion himself, ran a course against the Elfin knight. It is said, indeed, that Walter Scott borrowed the legend from the traditions about Wendlebury Hill, a long way to the south; but although it was very well to hold such an opinion while we were in Cambridgeshire, it would be held as rank heresy in these parts. No! the camp is no doubt to be found on one of the barren

heights that stretch over from the Lammermuir range.

The Pictish race

The trench long since in blood did trace.

There is no lack, indeed, of ancient entrenchments upon the hillsides, for the pass through the Lammermuir Hills is the key to the possession of this part of Scotland, and many and fierce have been the combats fought among these green hills, where now the sheep graze quietly in countless flocks.

Along the old London road, about four miles to the east of Haddington, lie the noble ruins of Hailes Castle, less famous than the other great strongholds along the coast, but more interesting and picturesque in themselves. Here Mary and Bothwell dwelt together for a time, in the course of their ill-omened amours. A tall, isolated summit in the neighbourhood, called Traprain Law, is said to owe its name to some circumstance connected with the sojourn of the ill-matched pair. Perhaps they were caught in the rain while ascending the lofty mound, which, till then, had been known as Dunder Law. Anyhow, the Queen would have been rewarded on reaching the summit by a grand view of some of the fairest parts of her dominions—the Lothians, spreading below; the indented coast of Fife fretting the silvery Firth; the woods about Lochleven, her future prison-house; the dark masses of Tantallon and Dunbar; the Bass Rock rising boldly from the waves; and the illimitable ocean beyond stretching out to the far north.

Even then the dark wreaths of coal-smoke hung about the towns and villages, for in the Lothians coal was worked as early as in the thirteenth century, and strings of pack-horses with their burdens from the pits wended their way to Auld Reekie. It is told about the famous fray in Edinburgh, known as "Clear the Causeway"—fought in the days after Flodden, between Angus, who had lately married the royal widow, and Arran, the chief of all the Hamiltons—that the latter, with his son, made his escape from the general clearance by springing upon a coal-horse, from which they flung its load, and so got away. In more recent days, there would have been no lack of coal-carts at the disposal of the fugitives, strings of which, in twos and threes, are continually passing along towards the town. East Lothian has always had its full share of this traffic. The old coal-workings about Tranent honeycomb the ground in

all directions, and it is recorded that once a poor woman lost her way among the labyrinth, and was vainly searched after for a fortnight, when she was found still alive, although fasting all the while, in a distant gallery, which she declared was under the kirk of the parish, for she had been comforted by hearing the psalms and the distant murmur of the prayers as she lay thus entombed. And it proved that the old woman was right, although nobody had then any notion that the workings penetrated thus far.

Half-way between Haddington and Dunbar stands the pleasant village of Linton, and nearer Dunbar is the hamlet of Spott, once, perhaps, Yspytty, the Welsh name for the Roman hospitium, a guest-house, a conjecture which is the more probable from the number of slightly-corrupted Welsh names that occur in this East Lothian. And this fact seems to suggest the existence of a British principality in this corner of the land, perhaps an offshoot from Strathclyde, and one which probably outlasted the parent stem.

Spott is connected with the story of a terrible crime, which happened so long ago as the latter part of the sixteenth century, but which, as far as motive and action are concerned, might have happened only yesterday. The minister of Spott, the Reverend John Kelloe, was a married man with a comely, commonplace wife, who had brought him a small dower that had been welcome enough when he was a humble probationer, but that was pitiful enough in his present position; for the minister of Spott was a powerful preacher and expounder, well thought of by the leaders of his party, and in high favour with their well-born dames and daughters. The minister was heartily tired of his wearisome, humdrum wife, all the more that he knew he was well regarded by the clever and handsome daughter and heiress of a wealthy laird in the neighbourhood. He determined to rid himself of his burden, and laid his plans with terrible calmness and caution. He chose the Sabbath morn for the deed, when the bells were ringing for church, and the goodwife was on her knees by the bedside at her devotions. He threw a cord about her neck from behind, strangled her, and then hung her by the noose to a staple he had carefully adjusted for the purpose in a beam overhead. Then he crept out of the parlour window of the manse and made

his way to his pulpit, where he held forth with much fervour and acceptance. The minister dined with one of his flock, and it was not till after the second service that he returned home accompanied by some friends. The silence and gloom that overspread the house was noticed; the minister presently raised a cry of alarm and distress. His unhappy wife had hung herself, the neighbours were witnesses of the sad event, and the sympathies of the whole parish were with their much-afflicted pastor, while the horror and detestation with which suicide is regarded in Scotland hung about the grave of the poor murdered woman.

All had gone as the minister had desired: no hitch had occurred in the business; no suspicion attached, or could possibly attach, to the criminal; he might have married the daughter of the laird and shone as one of the lights of the age. But now began the terrible pangs of remorse and despair; tortures that ceased not by night or day, and that drove him to make a full confession of his guilt. The law took its course, and presently the minister expiated his crime on the gallows, attended in his last moments by a crowd of brother ministers, among whom he raised his voice to the last, magnifying the grace of God and his own wickedness, and exhorting the crowd to repentance.

Between Spott and Dunbar rises the height of Doon, where the hills of the Lammermuir range sink into the narrow belt of level shore about the castle and harbour of Dunbar.

On Doon the Scottish army were encamped under David Leslie, the skilled and wary leader, the victor at Philiphaugh; while below in the narrow plain was cooped up Cromwell's veteran army in a position almost desperate. It was a strange course of events that had brought the Presbyterian and Covenanting army of Scotland in hostile array against their former allies in the cause of the young King, Charles the Second, who, though he had taken the Covenant as one takes a pill, with a wry face, had little in common with his fanatical supporters. But although there was little enthusiasm for the King, national feeling was as strong as ever, and so was the determination that Scotland should settle her own affairs, and order King and Kirk as she pleased.

So far as the campaign had gone, Cromwell had been out-generalled and out-manceuvred by the cautious Leslie, who

standing on the defensive, had frustrated every attempt of the enemy to strike a decisive blow. And now the English, in full retreat, were held and cut off by Leslie's masterly dispositions. The one line of retreat, the narrow pass of the Lammermuir Hills, Leslie had strongly occupied. This pass was variously known as the Peaths, or sometimes Cockburn's Path, from the family name of those who in earlier days had been put in charge of it. Cromwell calls it Copperpath, "through which we cannot get without almost a miracle." But for the fleet which accompanied the movements of the English army, there would have been nothing left but surrender, or a blind and desperate attack on the overwhelming forces on the hill of Doon; for the country about was almost desolate, and Dunbar was inhabited only by old men and women, half wolfish and famished, while disease was decimating the English ranks. As it was, Cromwell had almost determined to embark his infantry on shipboard, and with his cavalry essay to cut his way through the passes to England, when a movement among the Scottish host revealed their intention of descending into the plains and offering battle to the foe. Then it was that Cromwell exultantly exclaimed, "The Lord hath delivered them into our hands," and made ready to attack the Scottish line at daybreak.

The sun rose clear and bright out of the sea on the morning of the 3rd of September, and glinted on helmet and breastplate, on spearhead and flashing sword. It was the sun of Dunbar, as memorable to Cromwell as the sun of Austerlitz to Napoleon; and when it set, the whole Scottish host had been scattered or destroyed, cut down as stubble by the swords of the stern Ironsides, chase and execution going on for eight miles, with thirty guns and ten thousand prisoners left in the hands of the victor. Long was the memory of this fatal day for Scotland preserved under the name of Tyesday's Chase.

Even in Cromwell's time the Castle of Dunbar was a ruin, as it had been dismantled by the Regent Murray after the flight of Bothwell and the fall of Queen Mary. Its site upon a shelf of rock projecting over the sea, and inaccessible except by a narrow approach from the land, marked it out for a natural stronghold; and the castle was in existence in the early days of the Scotch monarch, and was given by Malcolm Canmore to the exiled Earl Patrick of Northumberland,

soon after the Norman Conquest. The powerful Counts Patrick became eventually known as Cospatricks, and in this guise are remembered in the early history of Scotland. But about the Castle of Dunbar the tempest of war was constantly raging, as it fell into the hands of Scotch or English alternately. Edward the First captured the castle, and his son here found shelter from his pursuers in his flight from Bannockburn. In the next reign there was a famous siege, when Black Agnes, Countess of March, defended it successfully against Montague, Earl of Salisbury.

She kept a stir in tower or trench,
That brawling, boisterous Scottish wench;
Came I early, came I late,
I found Agnes at the gate.

But it was as the stronghold of the wicked Lord Bothwell that Dunbar Castle acquired its principal interest; for it was to Dunbar that he brought the Queen, with or against her will, after capturing her at the Bridge of Cramond, and it was here that the pair took refuge after their marriage, when the confederate lords just missed capturing them as they feasted in Hailes Castle, when the Queen rode after her lord in the disguise of a page, and so entered Dunbar at full gallop.

Taking it in its dramatic aspect, there is something attractive and complete in this episode of the loves of Mary and Bothwell. They are Antony and Cleopatra over again, and they sally forth to battle in company; they fly from the field, and part, to meet no more, amid the clash of arms and the cries of victors and vanquished.

Bothwell in his flight galloped back to Dunbar. His ships were lying in the harbour, he hoisted sail, and away, to haunt the Northern seas in piratic fashion, and to end his stormy life in a Danish dungeon.

North of Dunbar, the mouth of the river Tyne opens out to the sea, with its dangerous sands, memorable for the shipwreck of the royal ship, the "Fox," with a large amount of specie on board for the supply of the Duke of Cumberland's army. The crew were lost and the ship swallowed up in the quicksands. Since then more than one attempt has been made to reach the treasure, but without avail.

On the further shore of the river-mouth lies Tynninghame, the seat of the Earl of Haddington. Ten or more successive Earls have each added a piece to the composite mansion, which is surrounded by trim gardens and noble holly hedges, which would

have done to show against the famous one of John Evelyn's, through which the Czar Peter drove his wheelbarrow. A few miles northwards again is a curious chasm in the rock-bound coast known as Baldred's Cradle, the said Baldred being an ancient anchorite of Columba's days, who built his cell upon the wonderful Bass Rock. The rock itself is here in full view, with its clouds of sea-birds that hover round with strident, incessant cries—"Solangooseifera Bassa," as Hawthornden has it in his "Macaronica."

The ruins of the castle on the Bass Rock, built in a niche in the enormous rocky buttress, have suffered more from storm and tempest, and the assaults of howling winds, than from the hand of man. The chief associations of the castle are with the persecuted Covenanters who were imprisoned in its dungeons; but it is also notable as the last place in the kingdom to acknowledge the revolutionary Government of 1688, having held out for James the Second long after his cause was lost altogether in the neighbouring island of Great Britain.

Tantallon Castle and the Bass are connected in popular sayings, and form essential parts of the grand and gloomy land and seascape. The enormous walls of Tantallon rise grimly over the sea, rude and monstrous in form, the mere skeleton of the once mighty hold.

Tantallon vast:

Broad, massive, high, and stretching far,
And deemed impregnable in war.

The ruins owe their present forlorn condition to the destructive force of gunpowder, applied by General Monk, who dinged down the once mighty stronghold of the Douglas without the smallest compunction.

Next comes the breezy watering-place of North Berwick, with its snug sea-port, and the conical hill known as Berwick Law. And there is Long Niddry by the sea, and Gulane with its ruined church, and Seton, which was lost by the Earl of Winton in 1715; and old salt-making places scattered along the coast—Portseton, Cockenzie, and the more famous Preston Pans, where Johnnie Cope and his dragoons took to flight before the fierce onset of the Highland clans.

SOME NARROW ESCAPES.

IN AFGHANISTAN.

It is only those who formed part of the army under General Nott at Candahar, from October, 1841, until June, 1842, who

are able to form a true idea of the great difficulties with which the force had to contend during that time. We were completely cut off from British India, and it was only now and again that we got any letters or news. So much so was this the case that on one occasion, when a small party of our native cavalry contrived to push through the Bolan Pass, no fewer than seven overland mails reached us together. We had the enemy on our front, on our rear, and on each side of us. If any of our soldiers, whether English or native, or any of our camp followers happened to stray from our lines, they were certain to be captured by the Afghans, who, after mutilating them horribly, invariably put them to a cruel and lingering death. We knew that our army under General Elphinstone had been murdered wholesale, but of all details we were utterly ignorant. All day and all night we were kept on the alert by alarms, which were generally false, and got up by the enemy in order to worry us. Sometimes they were real, when attempts were made by some seven or eight hundred of the Afghans to enter our lines and slaughter us. The weather, although on the whole fine, with a clear sky, was bitterly cold at night. The corps to which I belonged, the 40th, was the only English regiment with the force; all the rest, consisting of two troops of horse artillery, two cavalry and five infantry regiments, were natives of India. And very well indeed they behaved. I don't remember hearing of, nor do I think there was, during the whole of that terrible winter, a single case of cowardice; nor did any of the men, British or Sepoys, grumble when called upon to do very heavy extra duty, which was by no means uncommon. Officers as well as men had by no means an easy time of it. In addition to the regular brigade and regimental guards, one-half of each corps had to be on what is called inlying picket every night of their lives. It is true that those who took this duty were allowed to sleep, but they had to be fully dressed, with their muskets by their sides, and ready to turn out at a moment's notice. And seldom a night passed without an alarm being given. Sometimes it was the enemy who fired a few shots in order to annoy us; on other occasions the sentries posted well to the front saw, or thought they saw, a number of the enemy coming towards our lines, and therefore passed the word to the rear, in order to give warning. Nor were these signs of the enemy being near always

imaginary. Hardly a morning passed without our finding signs both of mounted and dismounted men having been close up to our lines of sentries during the night. The Afghans had frequent communication with Cabool, and knew all that had happened to our unfortunate troops there long before we did. At one time our enemies showed a much bolder front than usual, and used not only to come close to our sentries every night, but invariably rode at our men with their swords and lances, trying their very best to cut them down. They only succeeded in killing any of our men on one occasion, when two sentries of the 43rd Bengal Native Infantry were cut down, and their bodies mutilated. And this must have been done in the course of a very few minutes, for no sooner was the firing at the outpost heard than the picket moved out in double quick time; but by the time it reached the spot where the outlying sentries had been posted, the unfortunate Sepoys had been cut down.

By degrees these attacks on our troops became more and more frequent; but the Afghans had great fear of us when anything like a number of our men were together, and more particularly did they always avoid our artillery. Thus on one occasion, some three hundred of their horsemen appeared within a couple of hundred yards from our sentries. They halted, and began shouting out the abuse which they invariably used whenever they had an opportunity. It was then about two p.m., and we began to hope that we were at last going to have a skirmish with the enemy in open daylight. But they did not remain long in the position they had taken up. A squadron of the irregular cavalry corps, known by the name of Skinner's Horse, were quickly in the saddle. The Afghans outnumbered them by at least three to one, and for a few minutes everyone thought the latter would show fight. But our expectations were doomed to be disappointed. The enemy allowed our men to come within fifty yards of them, and then they turned and fled in the most ignominious manner; two of their number being very badly mounted, their horses fell, and they were made prisoners and brought into our lines. One of them died from the effects of the fall he had, but the other was not hurt, and was by the special orders of General Nott very kindly treated, in the hopes that when he was set at liberty he would induce his companions not to murder in cold blood

any of our men whom they might come across.

But it was all in vain. After being detained and well fed, with a comfortable mattress to sleep on, he was, at the end of a fortnight, set at liberty, and escorted to where his friends were known to be by a small party of our irregular cavalry. When the latter perceived a party of Afghan horsemen a short distance from them they halted, and told their prisoner, or rather made signs to him—for our Indian soldiers could hardly speak a word of Pushtoo, which is the language of Afghanistan—that he might join his friends, which he did at once. My readers will hardly credit me, yet such is the fact, that, after this man, who had been so kindly treated in our lines, was set at liberty, and after he had had plenty of time to tell his friends of the manner he had been fed and lodged when he was with us, the party of Afghans he had joined got upon their horses, and, shouting their war-cries, rode at our men and tried hard to take them prisoners. Our cavalry was very much inferior in numbers, and so had nothing left them but to ride hard and make the best of their way to their own camp. They were well mounted, and, having a start of some two or three hundred yards, experienced no difficulty in getting away. But the Afghans kept firing at them as long as they could, evidence of which was given by the fact that one of our horsemen and two of the horses of the party were wounded. Nor was this all. About a week after the above incident occurred, three young soldiers of the 40th Regiment, contrary to the strict orders that no one was to go beyond a certain distance from our lines, took it into their heads that they would go out for a stroll, and see for themselves what the country was like. Their absence was only discovered when the roll was called at evening parade, and a party of cavalry, with a European officer, was sent out to try and find them. They discovered the poor fellows' bodies a short distance beyond our lines. They had not only been foully murdered in cold blood, but the medical men who examined the corpses said that the brutal mutilation which had been practised upon them had taken place before the men were killed. And this only a very short time after the release of the Afghan, who had been so well treated whilst he was a prisoner of ours.

The winter at Candahar was a very cold, wet, and uncomfortable season in every

sense of the word; and for troops that were continually under arms, without any means of occupation when not on duty, it was very much the reverse of pleasant. As the days got shorter, and the nights longer, the enemy became bolder, and tried to annoy us in every possible manner. Hardly an evening passed without our hearing of camels belonging to our commissariat department that had been carried off, or, if not taken away, hamstrung and rendered useless when out at grass. During the night, when we believed everything was quiet, our sentries—even those stationed close to our lines—were fired at, and often wounded. To add to our discomfort, our stores began to show that they were coming to an end, and, so far as we could see, there seemed to be no hopes of their being replenished. Of meat and flour there was always plenty to be purchased in the Candahar market; but of vegetables, wine, beer, and other small luxuries, we had little or none.

In order to lessen the number of continual alarms by the enemy being close at hand, General Nott very properly resolved upon having regularly organised patrols, which were to proceed every day some three or four miles in one or other direction, so as to show the enemy that we were on the alert, and cause them to keep at a greater distance from us than they were in the habit of doing. As a general rule these patrols consisted of a field officer in command, with a subaltern who acted as his aide-de-camp, a couple of field guns, and about fifty or sixty troopers of our irregular cavalry under a European officer. After a time it was found that guns were of little or no use in these expeditions, and that they often hindered the party from exploring certain roads, or rather paths, where it would have been impossible to take anything that moved upon wheels. It was when forming part of one of these expeditions that I had a very narrow escape from certain death.

The party had started from Candahar in the early morning, and had proceeded in an almost direct line northward for some five or six miles. A field officer was in command, and I was acting as his orderly officer. We had with us a hundred native cavalry, under the command of a European officer. A surgeon belonging to one of the regiments of the force accompanied us, as did also a conductor or non-commissioned officer of the commissariat department,

who was sent in order that he might see whether there was any good grazing-ground for our camels and cattle to be found. This last-mentioned member of our party, who had not a little to do with my escape, was a tall, strong man, very active, and, having formerly served in an English cavalry corps, a good rider in every sense of the word.

We had reached our destination, or rather the end of the distance we proposed going, which was on a small hill, whence there could be seen several miles of the Cabool road on the one side, and the domes of the mosques in Candahar on the other. As a matter of course, both in going and returning, the greatest caution had been observed. We had horsemen preceding us, others on our flanks, and three or four brought up the rear at some distance behind us. After partaking of what slight refreshment we had with us, the order was given to mount, and we started, but not by the route we had come, to return to our lines.

There is all over the southern parts of Afghanistan, and more particularly in the neighbourhood of Candahar, a very curious peculiarity in the land, which I don't remember having seen elsewhere. In many places the ground is so undulating, that whereas anyone would believe he is looking over a large continued plain, there may be, and there very often is, between him and the portion of the plain that looks quite close, a valley or undulation, where any number of men might remain, and not be seen by others until they were close upon those who were so hidden. Such was the case with us about a couple of hours after we had turned our horses' heads towards home. All of a sudden the English officer in command of the native cavalry escort, who was riding with the advanced scouts of his men some three hundred yards in front of the rest of our party, came to a halt, and riding back at full gallop to the officer in command, called out that the enemy was in great force in one of those undulations of the ground, which prevented them from being seen until close upon them. The officer commanding the party ordered a halt, and rode forward to see where the Afghans were, and what they were doing. I went with him, and, when we came to the place where the enemy could be seen, we were convinced that they were waiting for us and intended to cut us off from Candahar, and kill or make prisoners of the whole party. They were

evidently much stronger than we ; so far as we could make out they mustered about five times the number of fighting men than those who formed our whole party. They were in line, and covered every inch of the road by which we could return to our lines.

The field officer commanding our party did not hesitate for a moment about what we ought to do, or rather what was the only means by which we could escape from the enemy.

"Gentlemen," he said, addressing the only three Englishmen present, "there is but one chance for us to get away from the enemy. We must ride at and through them, each one of us doing the best he can for himself, and if surrounded sell his life as dearly as he can, for God help those who are taken prisoners. I will ride in front. We will start at a walk. When I throw up my hand the first time let us trot ; when I do so again we must break into a canter, which must become a gallop when I throw up my hand the third time. This last I will only do when we are close upon them."

What our commander said was quickly explained to the native horsemen who formed our escort. It was very evident that every man amongst us was ready and willing to follow our commander's directions, and determined to die rather than be taken prisoner.

We started, each one of us, natives as well as Englishmen, carrying a pistol in his hand, and leaving our swords in their scabbards. This we did by order of the commanding officer, who certainly knew what he was about, and was quite equal to the difficulty before us. In about ten minutes we came in full sight of the enemy.

As our irregular cavalry scout had told us, there were some five or six hundred of them, and it was very evident that their intention was to cut off our return to Candahar. They had amongst them three or four of the large religious banners which, as we knew very well, were never taken into the field unless on some special occasion, when they feel certain of striking a heavy blow at their enemies, and of getting the best of any fight in which they are about to engage.

As our chief had directed us to do, we started at a walk. On coming in sight of the Afghans, the latter set up a shout of triumph which was evidently intended partly to intimidate us, and partly to show how

confident they were of victory in the coming fight. We, as a matter of course, obeyed our chief to the letter. We kept our eyes on him, and the first time he threw up his hand commenced to trot. In two or three minutes he repeated the signal-sign, and then, as agreed upon, we all broke into a canter. In the meantime the enemy's balls were whistling about us, and a very unpleasant sound they made. The Afghans do not, or did not in the days of which I write, cast their bullets in moulds, as is the practice of civilised nations, but take, or used to take, a piece of lead, and often a piece of iron, and hammer it until it is small enough to go down the barrel of their match-lock guns, for it is, or was, very rare to find a gun with a flint-lock, whilst percussion fire-arms were absolutely unknown. The consequence was that their balls were anything but round in shape, made a very loud noise, caused by their irregular form, while the wounds they caused were extremely painful and very difficult to heal, as the present writer knows from experience, having a few months after the affair near Candahar, been very badly wounded at Goin, near the celebrated fortress of Guznie.

A very few minutes after we had broken into a canter I felt my horse make a bad stumble, and then, after trying to recover itself, fall forward on its head and lie perfectly still. By intuition, as it seemed, I knew that the unfortunate animal had been shot, and that the chances were a thousand to one that I should be made a prisoner by the Afghans. I happened to be riding quite in the rear of our party, and felt certain that no one had seen me fall, every man being taken up in looking out for his own safety, as in such circumstances was only natural. Were I to live a thousand years, I should never forget my sensations during the few minutes I remained on my horse after it had been shot. I remembered, as a bad dream, all I had heard of the manner in which the enemy treated their prisoners ; and there was, I came to the conclusion, but one way out of my difficulty, and that was to make away with myself before the savage brutes of Afghans could make me their prisoner, and I began handling my pistol with a view to blowing out my brains. The rest of our party had by this time got some distance off, and, by the sounds of firing that I heard, it was very evident they were having a hand-to-hand fight with the enemy.

All of a sudden I heard a voice behind me call out in English: "Loose your feet from the stirrups, sir; loose your feet from the stirrups." I was in a kind of daze, but had the sense to do as I was directed. Turning my head half round, I saw that the speaker was the English conductor, or warrant officer of the contingent, of whom I have made mention before. In far less time than it takes me to write this account of what happened, he had taken a firm grip of my jacket collar, pulled me off my dead horse, and had flung me on to his own nag, in front of his saddle, as if I were an empty sack. "Hold on, sir; hold on, sir," he shouted. "It is not an easy seat for you; but we must make the best of it." Fortunately, I was then a light, active lad. I was barely eighteen years of age, and had sense enough to remain where he had flung me, although my head was hanging down on one side of the horse and my feet on the other. We started at a hard gallop, and—how it was managed I am utterly ignorant to this day—in very few minutes I could make out, by those around us speaking in English and Hindostanee, that we were in the midst of friends. With the exception of two of our native cavalry, who were killed, all our party had escaped. A few, perhaps a dozen, including the English officer in command of the party of native cavalry, had been wounded, but only one of them severely so. There being no spare horse to be got, I had to ride on to our lines in front of the gallant fellow who had saved my life at the risk of his own.

We have in England a very absurd notion—which only prevails, I am happy to say, amongst those who have no practical knowledge of our soldiers—that our men don't care for praise, and only value something in the shape of substantial reward. But as regards the circumstance I have related, the warrant officer who saved my life was publicly thanked at a parade of the whole force, by General Nott himself. And when the parade was over, I heard him say that he would run the same risk a dozen times in order to be honoured as he had been. In those days the Victoria Cross did not exist, or the brave fellow would most certainly have had it given him. I was in hopes, if I ever got back to England, I might have done something to reward him as he deserved. But I am sorry to say that he was carried off by dysentery at Ferozepore, and did not live to see home again.

"THE TROUBLESOME TURK."

THE Turk is "troublesome" or "unspeakable" in the eyes of a great many people who have the dimmest possible idea of his ancestry. They are anxious to get rid of him, "bag and baggage, with his zaptiehs, spahis, delhis, resaidars, and duftardars," out of Europe; but they have hardly yet mastered the initial fact that there are Turks and Turks—that the Seljuk (sometimes called Eastern) Turks who took Jerusalem from the Saracens in 1094, and whose bigoted cruelties (succeeding the humane selfishness of the Saracens, who opened the Holy City to all pilgrims that could pay) caused the first Crusade, are quite distinct from the Ottoman (or Western) Turks, at least, as distinct as those Babylonians and Assyrians whose alternate ups and downs are so puzzling in Bible history.

Everybody knows that the first Mahometan conquerors were Arabs. They founded the Caliphate, their capital being Bagdad, where they had one foot on their ancestral desert. But their empire fell to pieces—chief after chief tried to set up a new dynasty, each boasting that he was nearest of kin to the Prophet, kinship to whom was the source of all dignity. And each new Caliph strengthened himself (after the fashion of the Greek Emperors of Constantinople, and, in more modern times, of the French Kings) with a body-guard of strangers, composed, in this case, of Turcomans from that Turkestan which Russia annexed not so long ago, and which the Arabs had conquered and converted to Mahometanism during the eighth century. Caliph Montassem, in 833, was the first who employed this body-guard, which very soon became as troublesome as the old Roman Prætorian Guards. Its leaders (called Emirs, i.e. commanders) gradually took to themselves all the real power, leaving the Caliph a puppet king, a roi fainéant under a Mayor of the Palace. Caliph Rahdi thought to improve matters by making the head of the Bowide clan his Emir al Omra (Commander of Commanders); but the Bowide chief, thinking that he might as well have the title, in addition to the real power, deposed the Caliph (945) and left him only the spiritual hardship.

What one chieftain has done, however, another, in a country made up, like modern Afghanistan, of rival clans, is sure to think he can do. Seljuk, also a Turcoman, ac-

customed, like all his countrymen, to yearly descents during the winter cold from his fastnesses beyond the Oxus into the warmer lands where he could find fodder for horses and flocks, felt that the Caliphate was worth fighting for, and fixed his standard in Khorassan. He was soon at the head of a formidable force, half Cossack, half gipsy; and his party did not break up at his death. His grandson, Togrul Beg (1038), proclaimed himself Sultan (sovereign) in the capital of Khorassan. The Arabs were divided—besides the deposed Caliph at Bagdad (still looked on as grand Imam, or sovereign pontiff of Mussulmans) there were the Fatimite Caliphs in Egypt, and the Ommiade Caliphs in Cordova. These divisions not only lessened their power, but weakened a prestige based on religion; for every Caliph ought by rights to have been Mahomet's nearest descendant.

Alp Arslan, Togrul Beg's nephew and successor, got a large part of Syria, beating not only the Bowide Caliph, but also the Greek Emperor Romanus Diogenes (1071); and his son, Malek Shah, put an end to the Bowide dynasty, and wrested from the fainting Caliph Cayem the title of "Commander of the Faithful." Under him culminated the power of the Seljukian Turks. He was temporal master of the Bagdad Caliphate; he even limited considerably the Arab Caliph's purely spiritual functions. His sons divided his empire (1092), and, though they took Jerusalem in 1094, the power of the Seljuks gradually decayed; and, before long, the Crusaders drove the southern branch of them out of their capital, Nicea in Bithynia, and thenceforth this branch is known in history as the Sultans of Konieh, or Iconium, to which place they retreated. The other branch, the Seljuks of Iran (Persia) split into a number of petty states, between whose weakness and the victories of the Crusaders over the western branch, the Arab Caliphs were able again to recover Bagdad (1152) and Irak-Araby, the district round it. Jerusalem, too, which had got into the hands of the Egyptian Caliph, was conquered by the Crusaders, and held by them for ninety years, till Saladin and his Saracens recaptured it in 1189. Before very long, Zinghis Khan (i.e. "the most great conqueror," his real name being Temudgin, or Demutchin) was conquering Central Asia, at the head of hordes of Mongol Tartars. From China to the west of Persia he seemed to have consolidated an empire, and in the

north-west his generals pushed on and established themselves as far as Hungary.

The Turks of Turkestan and the Mongols did not agree. Wild clansmen, accustomed to freebooting, hated a rule which kept every tribe in its place; and about 1229, a number of them, under Khan Suleiman, broke away and settled in Armenia; and after Suleiman's death, they pushed further west, and, under his son, Ertogrul, got leave from the Sultans of Konieh to hold land near Broussa, on condition of paying tribute. Ertogrul died a mere khan, without power of raising money or of saying the Friday prayer; but his son, Osman, or Othman, felt himself strong enough to seize part of the territory of the Konieh Seljuks, when that empire fell to pieces under the attacks of the Mongol Kings of Persia. Bithynia was the country he claimed, and a good part of it he had to conquer from the Greeks; and the last news which greeted his dying ears was that Broussa, one of its capitals, had surrendered. He deserved his title of Ghazi, and from him the Turks of to-day (a "later wave" than the Seljuks, but from the same Turkestan) are called Osmanli or Ottoman. Orkhan, his son, surnamed Bone-breaker, succeeded him in 1326. In old Turkish fashion (so unlike their later usage), he wanted to divide the kingdom with his brother, Aladdin; but the latter said: "No; our father wished the Turks to have only one ruler. Give me only a single village where I can live at peace." So Orkhan made Aladdin his Vizier, and a very wise one he proved himself. The Janissaries owe their origin to him. Of all captured Christian children, one in five was to be trained as a Turk and put into the army.

"And what shall they be called?" asked Orkhan of his spiritual adviser.

"Let them be the new warriors (jenitcheri), and let their head covering be white," replied the holy man. And thenceforth this body of chosen troops was chiefly instrumental in winning the Turkish victories.* Orkhan, who got to wife Theodora, daughter of Emperor John Cantacuzene, the usurper, who first gave the Turks a footing in Europe, could neither read nor write; but he was an able warrior, and he loved justice.

* There was always great ill-feeling between the Janissaries and the Ajabi (irregular infantry), because once, in a civil broil, a Janissary having taken two Ajabi prisoners, passed a butcher's shop and, seeing a number of sheep's heads, changed his two prisoners for one of them.

Murad (Amurath, as Westerns call him), the third son (the other two had died), succeeded him, and took Angora (Ancyra), a town famous in Roman times, at the cross roads from north and south and east and west. He then pushed on into Europe and took Adrianople (1361), making it his capital, and gave a thorough defeat to Louis the First, King of Hungary.

He settled his soldiers in fiefs, and arranged how booty should be distributed, and made himself so popular that, when one of his sons revolted, he rode alone, at night, to the insurgents' camp, and promised them pardon if they would return to their duty. There are many stories of his magnanimity. A princelet of Teké had revolted. Amurath at once refused to annex his land. "He owns only two cities; the lion does not chase flies." Bulgaria, however, gave trouble then, as it has been doing since. Sisman, its chief, whose daughter Amurath had married, stirred up against him the Servians, Poles, Bosnians, Albanians, and Hungarians. All these, a huge host, gathered on the "black-bird plain" (Amsfeld, the Germans call it) of Kassova, in Servia. They were more than three to one, and Amurath doubted whether it would be well to risk all on a single battle. His favourite son, Bayazid Ilderim (Lightning), said, not to fight would be to doubt the God of battles. So the Sultan took a Koran and pricked a verse, just as a seventeenth century Englishman might have done with a Bible or a Virgil. His first trial gave him "fight with unbelievers"; his second, "often a great multitude will be beaten by a few." But Amurath still doubted, though the enthusiasm roused by his twofold appeal to the Koran was immense. He went to his tent and passed the night in prayer, begging that, if a sacrifice was needed, he might be taken. So confident of victory were the Christians, that they rejected the proposal of a night attack, for fear some of their foes should escape. The Turks were at another disadvantage; rain drifted in their faces, and their left wing was giving way, when Bayazid Lightning-flash rallied them and routed the Christian right, capturing Lazarus, King of Servia. Then the whole Turkish host swept forward; but, in the moment of victory, Amurath was killed. A Servian noble, who had lain in ambush among the dead, rose up as the Sultan passed, and stabbed him to the heart.

Bayazid succeeded, and (unlike Orkhan) began the since proverbial cus-

tom of killing his brother to get rid of a possible competitor. Then, pushing on into Lesser Asia, he subdued all the principalities which still remained from the old Seljuk Empire; and, finding that the Greeks were fortifying Constantinople—almost their only remaining possession—he vowed to conquer that city. Manuel, the Emperor, appealed for help to King Sigismund of Hungary, afterwards Emperor of Germany, son of Charles the Fourth, and husband of Mary of Hungary. He with a motley host of a hundred thousand men—Poles, Germans, French, Crusaders from all parts—laid siege to Nicopolis, in Bulgaria; but Bayazid gave him a total defeat, and then completed the conquest of Greece.

The affair of Tamerlane (Timur the Tartar) is but an interlude in Ottoman history. Timur, a sort of later Zinghis Khan, was urged by the Greek Emperor to turn his arms against Bayazid. So he wrote him a letter, couched in Chinese magniloquence: "Know thou that my armies cover the earth; princes are my servants, Fortune is my slave, and the world's destiny is in my hands. Who art thou, poor Turcomanant, to dare attack the elephant? If timid Christians have taken flight before thee, thou hast Mahomet to thank, and not thine own valour." Bayazid was more daunted by Timur having twice defeated the Sultan of Egypt, and destroyed Bagdad, than by his letter; however, he plucked up courage, and on the plain of Angora, met, with one hundred and twenty thousand, the host of Timur, nearly a million strong, commanded by a little army of his sons and grandsons. The Turks might have beaten (the Servians, whom they forced to fight for them, fought so well), had not the troops of the newly conquered provinces of Lesser Asia gone over in a body to Timur. Their treachery decided the day. "Fly," said Stephen, Prince of the Servians, who had cut his way through to the hill on which Bayazid stood, surrounded by his ten thousand Janissaries. "Never!" retorted the Sultan; so Stephen went off, and so did Bayazid's sons, with what troops they could save; while the Janissaries remained to die, like James's Scots at Flodden, and Bayazid to be captured just as, under cover of night, he was at last thinking of mounting his horse. Timur treated his captive with generous kindness (the iron cage story is a myth), but Bayazid only lived two years. His conqueror went off to subdue China,

and died there; and of his conquests nothing remained but the "Empire of the Great Mogul," in India.

Then Bayazid's sons fell to fighting one another, and at last Musa defeated Suleiman, who was helped by the Greeks, and laid siege to Constantinople. But the Janissaries deserted him, and he had to give way to his brother Mahmoud, who made friends with the Christians, and was always pardoning rebellious Princes, and was not even roused to reprisals by having his fleet destroyed by the Venetians. Yet he crushed out with somewhat savage energy the followers of Bidr'uddin, a mystic socialist whose doctrines have been compared to those of the Wahabees, and who got many Christian converts (the anchorites of Chios among them) by declaring for community of worship as well as of goods. The leader of these "sectaries of Mt. Stylarios" (their stronghold) was at last captured, nailed to a board in the shape of an X, and hewn to pieces before his disciples. They remained steadfast. "Father, Lord, may we come into Thy kingdom," said each, as he went to his death. So much for Mahmoud's peace-loving generosity when anything really alarmed him. Soon after this panic he died (1421), and was succeeded by his son Amurath the Second, who at first was worried by pretenders, raised against him by the Greek Emperor. To avenge this, Amurath besieged Constantinople (1422), having with him a very holy Sheikh, who said that when, after seven days, he waved his sword thrice, the walls of the city would fall down. In spite of his Sheikh, he was beaten off after a terrible struggle, the Greeks asserting that the Panagia ("All-Holy"—the Virgin Mary) appeared in person in a violet robe and struck terror into the Turks. After this he became very peaceful to all except the Venetians, from whom he took Salonica, peopling it with Mussulmans, and turning into a mosque the church in which St. Demetrius's coffin used to distil a wonder-working balsam.

But there was little peace in those days even for the most peace-loving Sultan. Servia and Wallachia grew restless, and were egged on by Albert, Sigismund's successor in Hungary. Albert made a dash upon Nicopolis, but was disgracefully beaten, losing so many prisoners that a man was sold for half-a-crown, and a handsome girl exchanged for a pair of boots. The Hungarians had always fought badly under their German Kings; but now John Hunyadi,

a Magyar of the Magyars, came to the front, and seemed for a time very likely to drive the Crescent out of Europe. Ladislas, King of Poland, elected as Albert's successor, made him Captain-General, and wherever he met the Turks he beat them. In one battle, the Turkish General offered an immense reward to whoever should bring him Hunyadi dead or alive.

"We can't lose you," said his friend Simon Kemeny, who had heard of this plan, "and you will persist in leading the foremost charge, so you must change horse and armour with me."

For a long time Hunyadi held out; at last he was persuaded to exchange. The Spahis (Turkish cavalry) fell furiously on the supposed Hunyadi, and killed him and his body-guards, of five hundred men, only to find that the real Hunyadi had wholly defeated the rest of the Turkish army. Two or three such victories made the Pope think that the time for action was come. Sinking the differences between the Greek and Latin Church, he sent Cardinal Julian Cesarini to Ladislas, and called on the Christian world to unite against the Ottoman. A great host was assembled, with Ladislas for its nominal, Hunyadi for its real commander. Dashing forward in his usual style, Hunyadi successively annihilated three bodies of Turks which were drawing together to form an army, and marched on Philippopolis. His march across the Balkans may be compared with that of Schuvaloff in the last Russo-Turkish war. It was the depth of winter, and the Turks every night poured water on the trees with which they had blocked the passes, turning the barriers into masses of ice. Even Hunyadi was beaten off at "Trajan's Gates," as the Russians were the other day at Plevna; but he broke through another less guarded pass, and won a great victory on the southern slope over the army that ought to have been ready for him on the northern side of the Balkans. This was on the last day of 1443; and where was Amurath while his troops were being thus driven out of Europe? He was kept away by a revolt in Lesser Asia. The Seljuks did not know when they were beaten; and in rugged Kerman (Caramania) they had for some time been in full revolt, and to the Ottoman the loss of Lesser Asia meant banishment to his ancestral home in Turkestan, so to thoroughly reconquer Kerman seemed to Amurath even more important than to hold his own on the Danube. The divisions of the Chris-

tians would stand him in good stead there, but in Lesser Asia success was a matter of life and death. At last he forced the mountaineers to submit, and then turned his thoughts to Europe. Here he at once made peace, giving Wallachia up to Hungary, handing over their fortresses to the Servians, and paying a vast ransom for some of his captured nobles.

Such was the peace of Szegedin, immediately after the signing of which in July, 1444, Amurath, heart-broken at the death of his eldest son Aladdin, abdicated, at forty years old, in favour of Mahmoud, who was only thirteen, and retired to a village in Lesser Asia.

The Christian leaders got the news just ten days after they had signed the treaty; and at the same time came a strong appeal from the Cardinal Commander of the Pope's fleet, and also from the Greek Emperor, begging them to take advantage of Amurath's absence, and to drive the Turk out of Europe. The Cardinal Legate and the Venetian Ambassador urged Ladislus to break his oath; and to Hunyadi the title of King of Bulgaria was offered as a bribe for his perfidy. The "infidels" had kept their word—Turks generally do; let a Turk lay his right hand on his heart when he is making you a promise, and you may trust him with your life. All the strong places that they had agreed to surrender were given up; when, on the first of September, six weeks after the treaty was signed, the Hungarian army dashed across the Danube, hoping to be joined by George Castriota, Prince of Epirus, nicknamed Scanderbeg ("Prince Alexander"), who, having been brought up as a Turk and highly favoured by Amurath, had taken this opportunity of revolting and turning Christian. Ladislus went on, burning and destroying, till he met Amurath's army near Varna. There ought to have been no Amurath there, for the Venetians and Genoese fleets were guarding the Dardanelles; but the Sultan offered a ducat per man to get his troops taken across, and the two Italian Admirals, instead of remaining true to their charge, actually vied with one another in a work which decided the fate of the Turkish Empire.

"Shall we fight him?" asked the Christian commanders; "he is more than three to one, and he has stuck the broken treaty on the spear which is planted in front of his tent."

"No," said the Cardinal to the Hungarian Bishops, who, perhaps, regretted the per-

fidy, now that the man they fancied had become imbecile was again in the field. "No, let us make an entrenched camp and wait for George Castriota."

But Hunyadi would not wait. With his usual impetuosity he routed the first line; and, charging as our King Charles wanted to do at Naseby, he managed to rout the Spahis after they had almost beaten him. Indeed, he would have won the day, but that the Wallachian contingent went off to plunder, and King Ladislus, desperately breaking in among the Janissaries at the head of his Polish lancers, was cut down, and his head placed side by side with the broken treaty.

Their King's death threw the Poles into confusion, and of five hundred who had burst through the Turkish stockade only two came out. Besides Ladislus, the Cardinal, two Bishops, and a number more Christian leaders fell; but a revolt of the Janissaries at Adrianople prevented Amurath from improving his victory. Before long Hunyadi had got together another army, and, in spite of peaceful messages from the Sultan, determined to fight on the same "blackbird plain" where the first Amurath had been, sixty years before, killed in the moment of victory. Again his furious onset beat down the Spahis, despite their vastly superior numbers; and on the second day he was so well supported by the Saxons of Transylvania, that he would have gained the victory, had not the Wallachians deserted to Amurath. This defection unnerved Hunyadi. He rode off the field, leaving his Transylvanians to bear the brunt of the Janissaries, by whom they were killed to a man.

Amurath's last act was to choose an Emperor out of the sons of John Palæologus, and to force him on the Greeks; and then, before he could abdicate for the second time, he was cut off by apoplexy, leaving behind him a reputation for mercifulness, truth, and peacefulness, as rare as it was well deserved.

Mahmoud the Second began by killing his younger brother Ahmed, and before long had picked a quarrel with the Greek Emperor, and was besieging Constantinople. So eager was he that he could not even sleep while his plans were preparing; and when he sat down before the city, he had a host of two hundred and fifty thousand men, and three hundred galleys, and two hundred war-boats.

The City of the Crescent (so called because, in the old days, the young moon had

enabled its defenders to beat off a night attack of Philip of Macedon) had already stood several sieges, but in each case the terrible Greek fire had proved too much for the assailants. For nearly sixty years, from 1204, it had been held by the Crusaders; with that exception it had been, since 330 A. D., under the descendants of its second founder, Constantine. Against Mahmoud's host the Greeks had less than five thousand of themselves, along with two thousand mercenaries and a few hundred Genoese. The Venetians refused help; so the defenders had only three Genoese, one Spanish, one French, and three Candian ships. The walls were in such bad order, that they shook when the very small cannon mounted on them were discharged. Mahmoud had fourteen batteries of heavy guns, among them the largest piece ever used in war, needing fifty oxen to draw it and two hundred men on either side to keep it steady. It burst almost at the first discharge (loading was the work of two hours), and killed the Hungarian engineer who had cast it. But it was repaired, and another Hungarian, ambassador from John Hunyadi (such was the chaos of parties that he was now anxious to make terms with Mahmoud), worked it with terrible effect. By sea the Turks could do nothing; their ships were manned by landsmen, and four Genoese ships and one Greek coming in to help the besieged, actually beat off one hundred and fifty of the enemy, and forced their way into the harbour. Mahmoud, who had ridden into the water to cheer on his sailors, was furious. He was for roasting his Admiral alive; dissuaded from this, he had him stretched on the ground while he dealt him a hundred blows with a heavy club, a soldier meanwhile crushing in his eyes with a stone.

Better had the four Genoese vessels been sunk instead of winning their way in, for Genoese treachery had a great hand in making the defenders helpless. Thus, when, by laying down a plank road (greased with beef fat) along the five miles from the Bosphorus to the inner harbour, Mahmoud had succeeded in getting more than eighty galleys right under the city walls, the Genoese Admiral at once planned to burn this fleet, which seemed to have dropped from heaven to the consternation even of the bravest of the garrison; and he would have succeeded, but that his secret was betrayed to the Sultan by his own countrymen. Mahmoud now threw a

bridge of boats across the harbour, and brought his guns nearer the walls. Almost daily there were fresh attacks, headed by wild Dervishes, who adjured the soldiers, in the name of the Prophet, to plant the standard of Islam on this last Christian stronghold; and the Turks were helped by wretched quarrels in the garrison. Giustiniani, the Genoese Admiral, was faithful, but the Genoese of Galata lost no opportunity of playing the traitor; and the Greek Admiral, Lucas Notarias, was so jealous that he would not even let Giustiniani have any extra guns. Giustiniani's stoutest helpers were Cardinal Isidore, who, (sent to reconcile the Greek and Latin Churches, had found the time more fitting for warlike aid than for theological discussions), and Trevisano, who, with four hundred Venetian nobles, held one of the gates.

Constantine, John's eldest son, who had been made Emperor instead of the Turkish nominee, was a hero; and his plans of defence were well laid, though the extent of the walls sadly taxed his little army. Every assault was beaten off, though the Sultan himself came on in the midst of his Janissaries, and though (like the Persian leaders at Thermopylæ) he had his troops flogged up to the fight, and himself smote down the runaways with his iron mace. The Greek-fire was more dreaded than his blows or the scourges of his officers. At length, on the fifty-second day of the siege, Giustiniani, sorely wounded, insisted on leaving his post at the Emperor's side, by the St. Romanus Gate, and being taken in a Genoese ship to Galata. The dismay caused by this strange conduct emboldened Mahmoud to make one more attack. This, too, was being beaten off, when fifty Turks stole in through Kerkoporta (a little gate bricked up by Isaac Comnenus, because of a prophesy that through it the city would be taken). Constantine had opened it to make a sortie, and nobody seems to have thought of defending it. The fifty were soon cut down; but the news spread that the Turks were in the city, the garrison was panic-stricken, and, though the Emperor bravely died in the breach, the besiegers poured in, and the city was taken by what Colonel Malleon rightly reckons among those Surprises of which the history of war has so many fatal examples. A dozen men at Kerkoporta would have changed the history of the world. The Turk would have been confined to Asia, and there would have been no "Eastern

Question" to worry the minds of Western statesmen. But it was not so to be. The Eastern Empire came to an end; the learned Greeks, dispersed over Europe, did a great deal for the advancement of learning; and though Hunyadi, turning back to his good old ways, beat off the Turks from Belgrade (1456), three years after Constantinople was taken, Mahmoud conquered Greece, and even held Otranto in Italy; while in 1521, Suleiman, the conqueror of Rhodes, took Belgrade, utterly routed the Hungarians at Mohacz, and very nearly succeeded in taking Vienna.

That marks the culminating point of Turkish power. In 1579 we made our first treaty with the power which, just before the Crimean War, we were so fond of calling "our old ally;" and thenceforward the Ottoman Empire lumbered along, losing Belgrade in 1717, recovering it in 1739; losing over two hundred thousand men in a three years' war against Russia and Austria (1787); fighting against us in 1807, and again in 1827, when it lost its fleet at Navarino, a loss which reduced it to the condition of the "sick man" in which it still remains, awaiting (according to many) the sentence of banishment to those wilds across the Oxus, from which its founders emerged nearly seven hundred years ago.

LOST IN THE VALLEY.

By the Author of "*Driven of the Wind,*" etc.

A STORY IN SIXTEEN CHAPTERS.

CHAPTER X.

As Madame Ravelli spoke, there flashed into Maurice's mind the remembrance of what Eveline had said to explain her tolerance of de Villars's visits—that she had been the indirect cause of bringing great grief and trouble upon some of the Marquis's relatives.

Through her, she had said, they had been reduced to poverty—"poverty which they will not allow me to relieve."

The very name, "Jeanne de Mornay," seemed familiar to him. Surely he had heard de Villars mention it in his conversation with Eveline.

He grew restless and uncomfortable, and found himself watching the hard lines in the face of the elder Madame Ravelli, who sat opposite to him, with a feeling akin to dread.

Eveline had so often alluded to her

enemies. If these two ladies should really be those she had spoken of as having injured, Madame Ravelli did not look the sort of woman to forgive an injury, however indirect. Maurice was very keen of observation, and he read pitiless rancour and violent prejudices in the handsome, thin-lipped face opposite to him. As to the little widow by his side, she was simply an amiable, exciteable nonentity, and would be bound to follow her mother-in-law's lead, in any case.

He was so absorbed in speculations of this sort that he scarcely spoke during dinner to his vivacious neighbour, who was already in love with his poetic appearance and fair hair.

His family attributed his silence to the fact that he was in love—in love with this mysterious widow whom they already mistrusted, and concerning whom they were longing to question him farther.

"He said she was a Countess. How can she be a Countess if her name is Mrs. Douglas?" Ethel had asked again and again in the family conclave before dinner.

"Countess! pooh! They're all Countesses abroad. Out of England it's a distinction not to have a title. Anyone can be a Duke who can pay for it," said her father.

"Thurstan," said his wife helplessly, "she is probably some atheistical, unprincipled woman."

"Wait and be kind to him, mamma," said Mary, the shrewdest of the family. "He is probably longing to talk about her, and if we are sympathetic, and don't ask too many questions, it will all come out by degrees."

Which counsel, although it was the wisest, they all resolved to take.

When Maurice was left alone with his father, after dinner, the old gentleman simply had not the pluck to take his son to task. He was secretly rather afraid of him, admiring, but not quite understanding, his curious reserve and calm. So he only said:

"Well, my boy, and is she very pretty?" just as any weak-minded woman might have done.

Whereupon Maurice launched into a description of Eveline's beauty and gentleness with a fervour that sent the old gentleman's thoughts back to the time when he, too, was not much over twenty, and trying to learn music from the blue eyes of the sweetest girl in the world. And when father and son entered the drawing-room

together, arm-in-arm, both looked perfectly satisfied and happy; and it was arranged that they should cross to Paris together in a fortnight's time.

"I hear you are engaged to be married," said Madame Ravelli the elder, to Maurice, very kindly. "May I congratulate you, and hope you will be very happy?"

"Thank you," he said, thinking he had been wrong in taking a dislike to her face, which could look very sweet and sympathetic at will, as it did now. He sat down in the centre of the circle by the fire, in a comfortable easy-chair his mother and his sister Mary had reserved for him, between them. Madame Ravelli was seated in an arm-chair on his left hand; her daughter-in-law and Ethel, with arms enlaced, were chattering together on the sofa; while his father selected a deep arm-chair, a little to the rear of the circle round the fire, that he might doze undisturbed.

Maurice bent over Graeme, an ugly, gentle, Newfoundland dog, whom he sincerely believed to be the most beautiful animal in England.

"We have just been telling Madame Ravelli all about it, dear," said Mrs. Wilde. "At least, all we know," she added, correcting herself.

"It is beautiful to be engaged to anyone one loves," said little Jeanne Ravelli. "I remember how nice I thought it."

She sighed as she spoke, and the ready tears filled her dark eyes. Ethel kissed her affectionately during the pause that followed.

"And I remember," chimed in the low, deep voice of the Italian lady, "how my son came to me, five years ago, and told me that he was going to marry Jeanne de Mornay, the girl of my choice, and how I blessed him, and her too. For I loved my son, madame, as you do yours," she said, turning to Mrs. Wilde, who had laid her hand affectionately on that of Maurice, "and his happiness was mine."

"Of course, of course," said Mrs. Wilde kindly. "But don't talk of it if it distresses you."

"It does not distress me now so much, Madame. It is a dull pain that never ceases; like an illness that one grows used to, but never forgets. It is, on the contrary, a relief to speak of it sometimes."

A curious feeling was rising in Maurice's mind. He could not shake off the presentiment that this woman's story was in some way connected with Eveline's. What was it she had said to him? The words were

coming more clearly back to him now—that one of de Villars's relatives, a cousin—yes, she had said a cousin—had been reduced to poverty through her husband, the Count of Montecalvo. These ladies were poor; they had seen great trouble, and one was de Villars's cousin. Would it not be better, since she had warned him that she had enemies, and that he must hear things against her, to hear the worst at once, and confute it? Her husband had been a scoundrel, he had no doubt, and, since it was through him they had been ruined, and he was dead, they turned their unreasoning dislike against his innocent widow. Should his surmise be correct, he could tell Madame Ravelli now how unfounded was her prejudice; how unhappy it made his beautiful Eveline to think that she had been associated, however indirectly, in bringing misfortune upon them; how she longed to repair it, to help them. So, suddenly raising his head from his apparently close inspection of Graeme's collar, he addressed Madame Ravelli in a gentle, sympathetic tone which invited confidence.

"Your son married young too, Madame, then?"

"And died, alas! young still, Monsieur. But I must not trouble your new happiness by details of my old grief."

"Oh, you have never told us about it, Madame. And we are so much interested in anything that concerns Jeanne," put in Ethel enthusiastically.

"It will not be troubling me," said Maurice; "and if sympathy can really do you any good, you are indeed welcome to mine."

Madame Ravelli was a woman who for three years had brooded over this tale, until it had so eaten into her mind that she could think of nothing else. The idea of revenge was always present to her; and the only revenge she could think of was to make her wrongs public, and the author of them, if possible, shunned and detested.

So she needed but little persuasion now to begin; looking an impressive figure, as she sat upright in her corner by the wide tiled fireplace, in the deep mourning she invariably wore, with her prematurely white hair rolled high from her handsome, clear-cut face, which altered in expression with every incident she had to relate.

"I must tell it you from the very beginning," she said. "When very young I married, and my husband died a year after my only child was born. His father left him a large fortune, and, as I come from

one of the oldest families in Italy, he inherited high birth too. My son was extremely clever. Had he chosen, he might have risen to the highest honours, and, without a mother's pride, I may say he was superbly handsome. You shall judge."

She unfastened a mosaic brooch she was wearing, and handed it to Maurice. It contained the portrait of a young man with dark eyes and fair hair. At the first glance he recognised it as the younger of the two men whose portraits, taken together, he had seen in Eveline's sitting-room on the night of de Villars's challenge.

A cold faintness, born of excitement, began to creep over his heart.

He heard the admiring exclamations of his mother and sisters, as they in turn examined the picture; heard the little widow sob and declare that "Tito was much handsomer than that;" then, restlessly eager to hear what she would say next, he turned to Madame Ravelli and begged her to proceed with her tale.

"My son was my idol," she went on. "It was impossible to know him without loving him. They told me I spoiled him; but he was so grateful for affection, and so passionate in his grief if repulsed, that it was not possible to refuse him anything. He hated occupation. His ideal of happiness was to meet some perfect woman, and to spend his life at her feet, devoting himself to her, body and soul.

"When he was twenty I was with him one evening at the Opera House in Milan. We were seeing a representation of 'Faust.'

"Towards the middle of the first act, a lady and gentleman entered the box immediately facing us. The man was an Italian, the woman English. I hate that woman so, that I would give ten years of my life to see her lying dead at my feet, but I own that she was then—they say she is still—most beautiful, with a charm about her that attracts women as well as men.

"It was I who first directed my son's attention to her.

"'Look, Tito,' I said, 'that is the loveliest face I have seen for years.'

"And my son looked; it would have been better had he died then in my arms than have lived to look upon that woman's face again.

"Probably you all here, with your colder, calmer English natures, will scarcely realise what I say when I tell you that my son fell madly in love with this woman at first sight, an utter stranger to him, and destined to be his ruin.

"He left me to make enquiries about her, and learnt that she was the wife of the man who accompanied her—the Count of Montecalvo."

"Why, Maurice, are you ill? What is the matter with you? Your hand has grown suddenly quite cold," Mrs. Wilde exclaimed.

"It is nothing," he answered, drawing his chair a little away from her, "I haven't got over the journey. Besides, I—I am interested. Please go on, Madame Ravelli."

"My son was terribly distressed when he learnt she was married," she continued, "and, in spite of that, would have tried to make her acquaintance. But she and her husband left Milan the same evening, and he could not track them. Then Tito fell into strange fits of melancholy, and I persuaded him to accompany me to Paris, that he might forget the extraordinarily strong impression this woman's beauty had made upon him.

"I felt certain that a speedy marriage with an amiable and attractive girl would be the best means of curing him; and so, at the end of a year, he selected, by my advice, the sweetest wife a man could wish to possess in the person of Jeanne de Mornay, now my daughter-in-law.

"My son was so naturally affectionate, that I am sure in time he would have been won by his wife's devotion from his strange fancy; but, alas! on his wedding tour he went to Venice, and there, at the first entertainment to which he conducted his newly-made bride, he met, and was introduced to, the woman he had seen at the Opera House of Milan a year before.

"She was the same age as he; her husband adored her, and squandered a fortune upon her diamonds, her toilettes, her equipages. It will be difficult for you all, good and sweet women, to understand the nature of such a woman as the Countess of Montecalvo. Under an exterior of the most exquisite beauty and gentleness, under an expression of the most pathetic sadness, she conceals a heart of ice, a duplicity that is appalling, and a rapacious greed and extravagance that know no bounds.

"My poor son fell into her power at once. Her foolish husband, trusting her, left them constantly together, and formed a strong friendship for Tito. I was away, and Jeanne, a child of seventeen—what did she know of the wickedness of the world.

the perfidy of the women in it? She admired this woman as I had done, and made overtures of friendship to her, little guessing that while she sat lonely at home, believing her husband to be at his club, he was spending his evenings at the feet of her treacherous rival.

"When the honeymoon was over, Tito declared he could not part with his friends, and the woman persuaded her husband to settle in Rome, close to the Palazzo Ravelli, my son's ancestral home. When I joined them there, I found the young wife neglected and alone; her husband was out, as usual, with the Count of Montecalvo, whom this poor child foolishly detested, never guessing that it was his wife, not he, that was her enemy.

"I soon learned the truth, and remonstrated with my son; it was in vain; after a violent quarrel with me on the subject, he declared that he would no longer remain in the same house with me if I spoke ill of the only woman he could really love. Soon after, deserting his wife and mother, he fled to Florence in the track of the Countess and her husband. I followed, but my letters, my prayers were in vain. The Count of Montecalvo was constantly changing his residence; he hurried from Florence to Baden, from thence to Monte Carlo, to Nice, to Paris, and back to Florence; and wherever he and his wife went my son followed, until at last, wearied by my vain endeavours to win him back to his duty, I withdrew with Jeanne to Rome. It was while we were living there that the news came to me of my poor boy's ruin.

"For two years the Countess of Montecalvo's dresses and jewels had been growing more superb daily, and she had been saving the money on which she is now living in luxury. At the end of that time my son's fortune was dissipated, and he was a ruined man.

"One night, pale and haggard, he burst into her apartments, and implored her to fly with him before he was proclaimed a beggar. But she, with a refinement of cruelty that almost passes belief, treated him with cold disdain, and finally summoned her husband to dismiss the man whose life she had ruined. He came at her call: angry words passed between the two men, and the same night the Count of Montecalvo was found dead in a garden

just outside the town, with my son's dagger through his heart.

"Maddened, frantic with grief, remorse, and despair, Tito sought the Countess's presence again, to find that she had left Florence with another of her lovers, an English doctor.

"The discovery of her flight was too much for my poor distraught boy. On the day following his dead body was found in the river, and on it a letter addressed to the Countess of Montecalvo, in which he passionately reproached her as the cause of all his misfortunes.

"That letter I caused to be published in every town in Italy, that the world might know the name of the destroyer of my son.

"She fled from the country, and, changing her name, travelled about, at first trying to conceal her identity; but Henri de Villars, a well-known French roué, a cousin of my poor Jeanne's, was seen driving with her in Paris a few weeks ago.

"Previous to that, about a month since, she had the audacity to cross to England, and to make me offers of pecuniary help. I refused to see her, and wrote, telling her that I treated her overtures, made to buy my silence, with the scorn that they deserved, and that all who met me should know her as I knew her, heartless, cruel, and vile."

She ceased. Maurice knew, as he listened, where he had heard the words before. Less than two months ago he had read them in a letter he had found, lost in the Vallée du Nacre by the woman to whom it had been written.

And that woman was Evaline Douglas, his affianced wife!

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SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 6, 1886.

PRICE TWOPENCE.

A DATELESS BARGAIN.

By C. L. PIRKIS,

Author of "Lady Lovelace," etc.

CHAPTER XXVI.

"KEEP the family in London, sir," Morton had said to Uncle Archie. "Keep the condition of things as far as possible unaltered, and then——" he broke off abruptly.

"Then what?" Uncle Archie had cried in a fume.

"Then wait and you'll see," the detective had calmly finished.

But patient waiting for what the month might have in store did not at all suit Uncle Archie's constitution. Gout began to threaten, his irritability grew upon him.

He caught Morton on the stairs one morning in what seemed to him a most frivolous flirtation with pretty Kathleen. He felt inclined to box their respective ears, restrained himself with difficulty, and ended with summoning Morton to immediate conference in the library.

"Is this what you call 'giving 'em rope enough'?" he demanded, before the astonished Morton had time to get his wits together for his defence. "Is this what you call keeping an eye on things? Confound it, sir, I could have twisted a dozen ropes in the time you have been bungling over one. And as for eyes, I could have made them generally at everybody all round, in less than half the time you have spent in making eyes at one pretty servant-maid."

Morton shut the door quietly. "Servant-maids are suggestive sometimes," he said. But he said it in such a tone that Uncle Archie dropped his bluster at once and prepared to listen.

"Tell me right out, if you've anything to tell," he said; "Heaven knows, we've had suspense enough to last us to the end of our mortal lives."

"Sometimes suspense is better than certainty."

Uncle Archie shook his head. "No I think not, now," he said wearily; "I might have thought so once, but I think now, for every one in this house, old or young, the cruellest certainty would be better than what we have had to go through during the past few months. Speak out."

"Speaking out is embarrassing sometimes."

"Don't fumble, man, out with it!" cried Uncle Archie, bringing his fist down upon the table with a crash that set the ink-bottles jingling.

"Well, sir, I've come to the conclusion that we are in London, not in St. Petersburg——"

"Heavens and earth, man, you've said that before!"

"And that, consequently, being in London and not in St. Petersburg"——here Uncle Archie's foot came with a crash on the carpet——"it is impossible for a man to disappear and not leave a trace behind, unless he himself is a party to the transaction. It is easy enough in London——no place in the world like it——for a man to keep himself hidden; but simply impossible for him to be hidden without his consent."

And as Morton finished speaking he gave an uncomfortable look at the door, as though he would rejoice to be the other side of it when the full meaning of his sentences dawned upon Uncle Archie's brain.

But, strange to say, the old gentleman did not take his words one whit in the

manner he expected. He grew suddenly white, he put his hand to his forehead for a moment, shading his eyes. Then he turned and faced Morton again.

"So you're the one to say it out first," he said in a husky, uncertain tone; "I knew it would come, sooner or later—I've been expecting it," he broke off and put his hand to his head again, as though his thoughts pained him.

Morton felt relieved, and drew a long breath.

"It is the opinion of my superiors at Scotland Yard, it is the conclusion at which we have arrived there," he said, in a voice that suggested apologies for the repellent truth it had to convey.

Uncle Archie began to recover himself. "Give me the reasons, the facts from which your conclusions are drawn," he said, making his voice as hard as possible.

"Facts we have none, or next to none, to go upon. Our conclusions are based entirely upon experience. Of that we have enough and to spare at Scotland Yard."

"Well!"

"Mr. Ledyard is not the first bridegroom elect who has disappeared on the eve of his wedding-day, and he won't be the last, take my word for it, sir, he won't be the last."

Uncle Archie gave a great start, though he said "Go on" calmly enough.

"Sometimes they disappear for one thing, sometimes for another. Sometimes they are being pushed into the marriage by their friends. Sometimes their affairs are on the verge of bankruptcy, and they are ashamed to confess that they are not in a position to marry. But, oftentimes of all, another passion has taken possession of them—as a rule, a misplaced, ill-judged passion."

Uncle Archie's face showed a sense of relief.

"None of these causes could by any possibility have operated in Frank Ledyard's case," he said quietly.

"Generally speaking," Morton went on, "they seek, in the first instance, to defer the marriage upon some apparently reasonable pretext. This, I am told, is what Mr. Ledyard endeavoured——"

Uncle Archie jumped to his feet. "Stop!" he cried, in a voice that made Morton think of the other side of the door again. "All this is slander, the blackest of slander and lies."

Then he stopped himself all in a hurry.

If once he let himself go, and began to bluster, the colloquy must come to an end, he knew, and good-bye then to any chance ray of light Morton might have to let in on the mystery.

So he mastered himself with an effort, seated himself in another chair—this time with his back to the light—muttering something of an apology.

"Tempers don't improve as one gets older, and mine has been tried a good deal of late," he said wearily.

"I have no wish to force my opinions on you, sir," said Morton respectfully; "but we think, at Scotland Yard, that it is time you knew what we consider to be the true solution of the mystery."

"Go on," said Uncle Archie; and then, leaning back in his chair, he prepared to hear Morton out, without farther interruption.

"Common-place solutions to apparently impenetrable mysteries are the rule, not the exception, so far as our experience goes," Morton began in dry professional manner; "any member of my profession would bear me out in that. Inexperienced outsiders wander far afield searching for motives of action which the experienced detective finds lying ready to his hand."

"Get to the point, man; get to the point."

"When I first began to make myself at home in your house, sir, I said to myself 'I don't believe in the Irish Fenian business! We shall find the secret of the gentleman's disappearance within these four walls, or nowhere.' Then I took to questioning the ladies of the family."

"Confound your impudence," muttered Uncle Archie.

"From Miss Mab I elicited—with due circumlocution, sir, be it noted—the important fact that, during the illness of Miss Joyce towards the end of last year, that pretty maid, Kathleen, saw fit on one occasion to take up hot coffee to Mr. Ledyard, who was watching through the night, without any order being given to that effect. She might have done so on more than one occasion for aught Miss Mab knew to the contrary. From Miss Joyce I elicited a no less important fact, viz. that the said pretty maid has a man in love with her whom her brother wishes her to marry, but whom she will not marry on account of another lover. From Kathleen herself I get unintentional confirmation of both these facts. She detests Irishmen, she tells me, and a life of poverty in a cabin. Now,

sir, if you'll be good enough to put two and two together——"

But here Uncle Archie's impatience refused to be longer restrained.

"Are you a lunatic quite, sir," he cried furiously, "or only a detective without an ounce of common-sense in your head? Supposing Mr. Ledyard has a dozen or more pretty servant maids in love with him, is that to say he is to be in love with them in return? In any case he has adopted a queer way of showing his love for a girl by running away and hiding from her."

"What—if—the—girl—follows—him—in—due—course?" said Morton, bringing out his words like so many raps from a carpenter's hammer. "Look here, sir, you are paying me handsomely for my professional advice. I will give you the best I have to give, and it is based on an experience of over twenty-five years, remember. Keep your eye on that girl, Kathleen. Take my word for it, before long she will disappear. Hunt her down; and wherever you find her depend upon it Mr. Ledyard won't be far off."

The door opened at this moment, and Joyce looked in. Her cheeks were very white, her hand shook as it rested on the handle of the door. Not a doubt but that she had heard the detective's concluding words.

Uncle Archie read the fact plainly enough in the wan face he had learnt of late to read like the pages of a book. It would be useless to gloss it over!

"Tell him it's a lie, Joyce, the vilest of slanders. Anathematise him, denounce him, you'll do it much better than I should," cried the old gentleman, hoarse with mingled emotion and anger.

But Joyce's smile of scorn was her only anathema.

To her way of thinking, to anathematise Morton for his innuendoes would have been something equivalent to anathematising a schoolboy for throwing paper pellets at a Greek marble. Without a word she turned to Uncle Archie.

"Will you, please, go up at once to my mother," she said, "she has something of importance to tell you."

CHAPTER XXVII.

MRS. SHENSTONE'S important piece of intelligence had been communicated to Joyce before anyone else in the house. Going into her mother's dressing-room to

ask a question as to certain details of money expenditure, Joyce found her in front of her looking-glass with her morning cap removed, in the act of arranging her hair in an intricate and very juvenile fashion which had lately come into vogue.

"Ah, put a few hair-pins in for me, Joyce, there's a good girl," petitioned Mrs. Shenstone, "I've a very strong motive for making myself look as nice as possible now."

Joyce's wits at once jumped to the inevitable conclusion.

"Tell me, mother, are you thinking of getting married again?" she asked quietly as she fingered the hair-pins and brown plaits.

But Mrs. Shenstone did not think it right that so momentous a fact should be communicated without some little graceful prelude.

"How do you like the name of Bullen, Harold Bullen, Joyce? Don't you think it has a fine old English ring in it? It seems as if it should have a 'Sir' before it instead of plain 'General,' doesn't it? Your dear father was always fond of old English names. He chose your name because his great-great-grandmother had been a Joyce."

Her father's name in this connection set Joyce shivering.

"Mother, I would let my father's likings alone if you've made up your mind to forget him," she said in cold, hard tones.

Of course Mrs. Shenstone lapsed into plaintiveness at once.

"There, I knew how it would be. I told Harold only yesterday, when I met him at Mrs. Haggard's, that I should have you and Mab grumbling at me from morning till night. It is very ungenerous of you, Joyce, because you can't have your own happiness to begrudge me mine."

Joyce kissed her mother.

"Mother, dear, it is because we want to secure your happiness for you that we speak as we do," she said apologetically.

But Mrs. Shenstone was not to be appeased.

"I wish to goodness you'd let me be happy in my own way. I never interfered in any way between you and Frank, did I? If Frank were here he'd tell you all the kind things I used to say to him about you both. I wish to goodness he was here, then he could have given me away on my wedding-day; a nice, handsome young

fellow like that would have looked like my brother. Now Uncle Archie will have to do it, and everyone will think he is my grandfather at the very least. I wish your dear father——”

But Joyce here fled from the room, fearing her mother was going to say she wished her dear father were alive, so as to have the privilege of giving her to her second husband.

She felt herself to be incapable of deciding the question whether the step her mother was about to take was likely to result in her happiness, so straight to Uncle Archie she went, feeling that he ought at once to be made aware of the condition of things.

Uncle Archie's explosions were terrific all that day, and gout came nearer by a good many paces.

Towards evening he calmed down a little, got Joyce alone, and talked the matter over with her.

“Things are gone too far, I suppose, for any amount of quiet reasoning to do any good,” he said, unconsciously satirising his own argumentative powers. “I know General Bullen slightly; he is a gentleman, and your mother might do a great deal worse, not a doubt. I shall make a point of giving him full details of your father's will, and, if after that he perseveres in his suit, I shall conclude he knows his own business best.”

And to Aunt Bell that night the old gentleman said, as he pulled on his night-cap and put out the candle:

“After all I'm not sure but what it's the best thing in life that could happen. That woman wants a keeper if ever a woman did. Bullen may be able to do what nobody else has done—keep her out of mischief. So long as she's with the girls she's bound to get them into hot water, and we shan't be always here to get them out of it, for I take it you and I, Bell, are going down hill a little faster than we like to own, even to ourselves.”

CHAPTER XXVIII.

SING a song very loudly, and very often, and someone will be sure to catch up your notes and play the echo to them. Uncle Archie's repeated assertions that “the police authorities at Scotland Yard were noodles to a man, sir,” had found general acceptance among the friends of the Shenstone family. Everyone had decided that, so far as Frank Ledyard was concerned,

their work had been done in an uncommonly sleepy fashion. Yet it is possible that a fairly plausible brief for the defence might have been made out. “Experience and known laws,” the police authorities might have said, “explain alike the mysteries of the universe and the trivialities of common life. Both point to one simple solution of the mystery before us—viz. an unwilling bridegroom seizing upon a chance opportunity for escape from an unwelcome marriage.” The case could be paralleled over and over again.

The suspicion that Fenian or secret society machinery had been at work in the matter was scarcely worthy of a second thought. The discovery that the house of John Johnson had been used as a place of meeting for possible conspirators was a thing apart, and to be treated entirely on its own merits. There was no tittle of evidence to show that Frank had so much as crossed the threshold of that house.

The private information which had sent Morton to ladle ices at Mrs. Shenstone's evening party was, in one sense, important; in another, trivial. Important, in so far as it marked out for the observation of the metaphorical detective “eye” one or two supposed peaceable and respectable citizens; trivial, in so far as no distinct plot was unearthed, and consequently no arrests were made. Captain Buckingham was still looked upon as a clever adventurer, whom chance had made the mouthpiece of the advanced Irish party; who was most useful to police authorities when at large, and forming a centre for the more headstrong democrats.

Ned Donovan, in company with another hot-brained Irishman, Bryan O'Shea, was regarded as one of the active organisers of systematic boycotting in Ireland.

“But that,” as Morton informed Uncle Archie, “was a matter to be dealt with by the Irish authorities whenever law-breaking chanced to be the result of the boycotting, a by no means inevitable consequence. Let the brother go; it's the sister you should keep the sharp look-out on.”

The latter half of the speech, let it be noted, was not spoken until Uncle Archie was out of earshot.

Although Morton had not summed up the Shenstone family so epigrammatically as Uncle Archie had summed up him and his colleagues, he had, nevertheless, in sufficiently graphic style sketched their portraits.

“Knives, scissors, grape-shot, cannon-

balls, vinegar, ginger-beer, pepper, crab-apples. You may select from that list to describe the old gentleman," he had been heard to say, "an oil-flask might represent the old lady"—Aunt Bell—"milk and water, or let us say sugar and water, out of politeness, the middle-aged one."—Mrs. Shenstone! "As for the two young ladies, they're not a bad sort as young women go. The younger one isn't made of wash-leather, and she isn't made of buckram, but of a sort of something between the two. But the elder——" Here a protracted shake of the head did duty for a sentence. "She might as well be perched on top of the Monument, in the thick of a London fog, for all she knows of what goes on about her."

Mab might certainly have had a more poetic portrait drawn, but scarcely a truer one. Little by little her life had seemed to be separating itself from the lives of those about her. How it came about no one quite knew, but certain it was that she was never consulted now on any matter, great or small, in the household arrangements. Had she been qualifying for a convent she could not more effectually have cut herself off from all mundane affairs. Yet withal of late she had seemed to put more of purpose and order into her daily routine of life. Its detail ran somewhat as follows—breakfast early, sometimes before anyone else was downstairs, then the morning service at the Abbey; afterwards an hour or so of visiting among her poor people; the rest of the day, allowing the intervals necessary for meals, was spent alone in her own room.

A silent, dreamy, but not an unlovely thing, her life seemed becoming now. Could one of the sweet maiden-saints of old time have been suddenly recalled to life, and placed amid nineteenth-century surroundings, she might have kept much such a course. Joyce, in spite of the intense pre-occupation of her own thoughts just then, could not keep the question out of them. "What is transforming Mab in this way? What does it mean? Where will it end?" She felt at times as though little by little, slowly but surely, Mab were being dragged out of her loving grasp by some hidden magnetic influence.

At one time she had urged upon her sister the advisability of resuming her ministrations to her poor people, now she felt as if those ministrations must be too spiritualising—if the word be allowed—for Mab's temperament.

"Don't you think, dear, it would be wiser not to spend so much time among your poor people? Wouldn't it be better to visit them, say once a week instead of every day?" she queried gently, tentatively.

Mab aroused to a sudden energy. "Oh, don't ask me to do that, Joyce!" she said earnestly. "They are so terribly wretched, poor souls! The misery in the world is something appalling." She paused a moment, then added with deep feeling: "Oh, Joyce, I can understand Our Saviour being glad to lay down His life for the world. I would cheerfully lay down mine for any two of the wretched people I know."

Her whole soul seemed spending itself just then in an infinite pity for everyone around her.

"Poor, poor mother!" was all she said when the news of her mother's intended second marriage was told her. "Poor, poor Uncle Archie!"—not Joyce's mocking "poor Uncle Archie," be it noted—was her only acknowledgement for half an hour's steady irritable lecturing. And once Joyce, going suddenly into the room, discovered her with her arm round Kathleen's shoulder, comforting her and drying her tears as though she were a sister instead of her maid.

"Kathleen's tears come so readily, she is always crying now," Mab said, turning apologetically to her sister.

"What can Kathleen have to cry about?" asked Joyce, eyeing the girl coldly and suspiciously.

The question and look combined sent Kathleen, with a downcast face, out of the room.

It was, however, an incident occurring on the night before Mrs. Shenstone's wedding that thoroughly awoke Joyce from her pre-occupation, and made her resolve that Mab's health, mental and physical, should have immediate professional attention.

June was drawing to its end now, the London season was working its hardest, knowing that its days were numbered. Outside in the streets sounded a perpetual whirl of coming and going carriages. The Shenstones had dined quietly, Mab had crept out of the room immediately after dinner. General Bullen had retired with his bride-elect to the back drawing-room, where, across a chess-board, an uninterrupted exchange of compliments for simpers did duty for love-making between the two.

Joyce dared not sit still and think. She and tranquil meditation had months ago said good-bye to each other. She thought she would follow Mab upstairs and sit with her till weary bedtime came round once more.

Only in the lower portion of the house were the lamps lighted. On the upper floor there lingered enough of June twilight to guide her to Mab's door. It was not locked, and turning the handle softly she went in.

There was Mab, as usual, reclining in her high-backed chair with eyes closed and folded hands. The chair stood against the window. An iron-grey sky with a smirch of red across it, where the sun had gone down, formed its background. Mab's face showed white in the twilight, but tranquil and placid enough. The nervous frown, that perpetually contracted her forehead in her waking moments, had disappeared; the full white lids veiled the troubled, weary eyes, the mouth seemed almost smiling in its perfect tranquillity.

Joyce stood looking at her for at least five minutes, scarcely daring to breathe lest she might awaken her from what appeared to be the calmest of sleeps. Then she seated herself near in a dark corner, patiently waiting for her eyelids to lift.

"Joyce, how beautiful you are—how strong and beautiful!" said Mab presently, in slow dreamy tones, but without opening her eyes.

Joyce went and knelt beside her. "I did not think you knew I was in the room, dear," she answered speaking softly, for she half thought Mab was talking in her sleep.

"I have been looking at you for the past half hour," said Mab, still with her eyes shut.

"My darling, I have only been in the room for about ten minutes."

Mab opened her eyes with a sigh. "All the same I have been looking at you." And, as it were unconsciously, she laid marked emphasis on the two pronouns.

"Oh Mab, with eyes shut; and you upstairs and I down!"

"I see better with my eyes closed, dear. Our senses shut out as much from us as they let in; they are our limits as well as our lights."

"Oh Mab, Mab!" and Joyce gave a startled, bitter cry. "Am I losing my reason, and don't know what you are saying to me, or is it you—you who are losing yours and slipping out of my grasp?"

Mab leaned forward in her chair, putting her arms round Joyce's neck.

"No, dear, I am not going mad. Once I feared I was—about three months ago——" she broke off abruptly.

"Go on, dear," implored Joyce.

"So I went all by myself to the lunatic ward at the Penitentiary—you know, Joyce, where I went to visit some of my poor people once. I asked the Matron if any of the poor creatures who had felt themselves going mad had ever described their sensations to her. She told me that one woman had said to her that she felt as though a thick black curtain were being let down slowly, slowly, an inch at a time, between her and her fellow-creatures and the bright, beautiful outer world; that she knew that by-and-by it would be altogether let down, and she would be shut in alone in the darkness."

Joyce hid her face in Mab's lap. "Oh Mab, darling," she cried, "you don't feel like that—you can't, it isn't possible."

"No, Joyce, I don't feel like that," answered Mab solemnly, her face aglow with some intense hidden feeling. "I feel day by day, with every breath I breathe, as though on every side of me curtains were being drawn up, not down; as though veils were being rent, mists rolled away; as though the souls of my fellow-creatures were being revealed to me, and the secrets of the universe were being whispered into my ear. Oh Joyce, I see, I hear, with closed eyes and sealed ears fifty thousand times more fully than you do with everyone of your senses working at their hardest."

Joyce lifted up a face white as Mab's own. "Mab, Mab!" she cried vehemently, "death will seal all our senses sooner or later. While we have them let us use them."

Mab turned away with a weary sigh. "You don't understand, Joyce," was all she said.

It was a simple statement of a simple fact. Joyce to Mab was an open book, written in words of one syllable; but Mab to Joyce was a page of problems, for whose solution a loving sisterly sympathy supplied guesses in lieu of key.

SEALSKIN, AND WHERE IT COMES FROM.

IN FOUR PARTS. PART I.

IF I were to ask in any ordinary company what animal it is that furnishes us with our sealskin jackets and clo-

should be overwhelmed with information. Why, the seal, of course; everybody knows a seal. Those who go down to the sea in ships have seen them everywhere during their voyages—in twos and threes in hot climates; in larger numbers in temperate; and in myriads in cold and northerly latitudes. Even stay-at-home folk know something of them. Everybody has seen at least a stuffed specimen in a museum. Nowadays there is plenty of opportunity of seeing one alive, for few aquaria are without one. It feeds on fish, swims divinely, does tricks, does everything but talk; and do not we of a certain age remember a seal that did talk? This is the creature which supplies us with our sealskins.

Plausible, but wrong; utterly and completely wrong.

In the first place, the skin of the seal we all know so well is good for nothing but tanning. It is the Hair Seal (*Phoca vitulina*). That which I propose to discourse upon is not one of the Phocidæ. This and the sea-otter, now very rare, form the genus *Otariidæ*. Its specific name is *Callorhinus ursinus* (Gray), and there is as much difference between it and the Hair Seal as between the proverbial chalk and cheese; or, to put it more correctly, as between the racoon and the black or the grizzly bear.

The popular error on this matter is not to be wondered at. We know—or till just recently—have practically known nothing whatever about the Fur Seal, its birth, parentage, education, life, and habits. Frequenting, as it does, the most out-of-the-way, dreary, inhospitable regions, it is not surprising that what little we know of it is so mixed with fable—derived from cursory, unintelligent observation, and the deceptive, not to say lying reports, of seamen—that it has been really impossible to get at truth from a scientific point of view. Now, however, we do feel that we have some sound information on the subject; and the object of this paper is to introduce this knowledge to a larger circle than would be reached in the ordinary course of things. My authority is a United States Government report; a work of considerable size, which the general public will never see or hear of, this class of literature being, as is well known, “caviare to the general.” It is drawn up by Mr. H. W. Elliott, an Associate of the Smithsonian Institute of Washington, who was deputed to report on the subject, and who accordingly spent three years amongst the Fur Seals, with results which I now proceed to epitomise. By so

doing, I venture to think I shall deserve the thanks of the reading public.

The facts are not only new and strange, but are authentic; and can be depended upon as the observations and deductions of a trained naturalist, who has had opportunities never before afforded, and which are not likely to be provided again, at any rate for a long time to come.

I say that there is little or nothing known about the Fur Seal, and I say it advisedly. It may, perhaps, be known to some, that the Great Fisheries Exhibition, in London, in 1884, produced a good number of official reports, meetings, and discussion, forming many volumes. In this collection there is only the most sketchy account of the capture of the Fur Seal. I turn to such of the British Museum catalogues as are within my reach, and I find, in that of Seals and Whales, by Dr. Gray, 1866, simply nothing. All the more reason, therefore, for me to introduce the subject.

Can anybody say straight off where the Pribylov Islands are? Straight off, I say, no shuffling, no guessing, no making shots. Do you know where they are? I venture to think that not one human being in ten thousand does. Few ordinary individuals, I think, are better up in geography than I. Maps have always had a strange fascination for me; and I can amuse myself any day for hours with a good atlas or an ordnance map. Yet I can honestly say, that, till these islands were introduced to my notice, I had never even heard of them. I fancy my ignorance then was but the ordinary ignorance of the general reader. Let the reader, then, turn to a map of the world on Mercator's projection, or let him, who carries it in his head, think of the Aleutian Islands, which look exactly like so many stepping-stones from America to Asia, across Behring's Sea. Some distance to the north will be found two small dots, most probably unnamed, so small are they. Let him now turn to Keith Johnstone's Royal Atlas, and in the map of Asia he will find, in the extreme right-hand top corner, the Islands of St. Paul and St. George. These are the Pribylov Islands, and these are the source of our sealskins.

St. Paul is situated 57° 67' 19" N. and 170° 17' 52" W., and has a superficial area of only thirty-three square miles. St. George lies to the south-east, some twenty-seven to thirty miles off, and contains but twenty-seven square miles. They lie one hundred and ninety-two miles north of Oonalastka, the chief place of the Aleutian

Chain, two hundred miles south of St. Matthew's Island, and about the same distance from Cape Newenham on the mainland. They form part of the territory known as Alaska, formerly as Russian America, and which, it may be remembered, was sold by Russia to the United States in 1867.

It is said that Mr. Seward was applied to by a private company to help them to buy the territory for a fish, fur, and timber trade; but that he, finding Russia willing to sell, bought it for the nation. This may be true, or it may not. We do know, however, that negotiations began in 1866. The Bill for the purchase being introduced by the Government, was, of course opposed by the Opposition, and gave rise to long and heated debates, during which, it is worthy of remark, not one word was said on either side about these islands and their capabilities. Mr. Sumner, who had charge of the Bill, evidently had not the remotest idea what a valuable property they would prove to be.

A very solitary and out-of-the-way situation they are in! No wonder we know nothing about them. They are on the way to nowhere but the North Pole, and that route is quite deserted; for, as everybody knows, all recent attempts to reach the Pole have been made on the other side of the Continent. Little, therefore, is likely to be known in the future.

The Pribylov Islands have been known for just a century. Their discovery is due to the energy and enterprise of a trader, a fur collector, one of those hardy Russians who, from the close of the seventeenth century, searched every nook and corner of the North Pacific for fields to replace those which had been exhausted by years of indiscriminate slaughter. Their search was primarily for the valuable sea-otter, which had become very rare, and the fur-seal was first noted in 1774, but little regarded in comparison with its more important relative. The natives had observed its annual migration northwards, through the Aleutian channels in the spring, and southward back again in the autumn; but this was all. There was, of course, much speculation as to where it bred and spent its time, and the Russians naturally preferred to look out for its winter quarters. With this purpose hundreds of vessels ranged all over the sea, south of the Aleutian Chain, but without success. At this time there was, however, one Gehrman Pribylov, mate or skipper of one of the

numerous sloops engaged in the fur trade. He had taken to heart a legend he had heard from an old Aleut, to the effect that there were some islands in Behring's Sea, and straightway he devoted himself to the search. For three successive years he ploughed the waters north of the Aleutian Islands, and not till the end of this time, in June, 1786, did he meet with his reward, in the shape of the music of the seal rookeries on St. George. It may appear strange that he should be all this time making the discovery, but his ill-success is easily accounted for. Nothing is even yet understood of the fogs, winds, and currents of these waters. Mr. Elliott mentions that only recently he was on board as well-manned and well-found a ship as ever sailed from any port, and yet she hovered for nine days off the north point of and around St. Paul, never more than ten miles off, without their actually knowing where the island was. Dense fog is the normal condition of summer weather.

Pribylov's secret, of course, could not be kept. Next year a dozen vessels were watching him and following in his wake. St. Paul was seen to the north-west and taken possession of, and thus began the history of the islands.

The Pribylovs are just outside the line of floating ice which passes between them and St. Matthew, and touches the mainland near the mouth of the Kuskogum River. Inside this line there are no fur-seals and no cod-fish, which latter swarms in the Aleutian Seas, and furnishes the staple food of the natives. The climate, as may be expected, is rigorous in the extreme. There are really but two seasons—summer and winter, spring being at once precipitated into the former, although the latitude is only that of Balmoral. Mere latitude, however, as most people know, conveys no accurate information. The warm currents from the Pacific moving continually northwards, produce dense, damp fogs and drizzling mists, which completely conceal the islands, and only allow the sun to be seen one day in ten during summer. The winter begins about the middle or end of October, when the cold winds come down from the north, carry off the moist fogs, and clear the air. By the end of January the ice comes in fields, dirty and broken, and lodges on the coast, completely shutting it out from the world, and even stilling the roar of the surf. This lasts till the beginning of April. During these six months the cold is intense, but not nearly

so low as we read of in many places. March is always the coldest month, and its mean temperature appears to be eighteen degrees above zero. That is cold enough, to be sure; still a much lower temperature can be borne, and comfortably too, as one knows by experience in Canada and elsewhere. But the particular discomfort in the Pribylovs arises from the wind. It is always blowing, and nearly always from all points of the compass at once, so that it is physically impossible to get out of doors. Mr. Elliott tells us that one day in March the wind was blowing at a speed of eighty-eight miles an hour, with a temperature of four below zero, and this particular wind lasted for six days without an hour's cessation, and the natives crawled to each other's houses on all-fours.

The spring sets in about the first week of April. The ice dissolves and moves, and in a month has completely disappeared from open sea or land. Fog, thick and heavy, rolls up from the sea, and the delighted Aleut sings,

Summer is y-comen in,
Dense is the fog, oh;

and the voice of the fur-seal is heard in the land.

Needless to say, there is no agriculture here. Turnips of a fair size have been grown on St. Paul's in a particularly small and sheltered spot; and it is recorded that one year potatoes were pulled the size of a walnut. This was, however, a long time ago; nobody attempts now to cultivate the soil. It is easier and cheaper to get everything once a year from San Francisco.

As with civilised plants, so with domestic animals. Neither cattle nor sheep can get through the winter, and chickens can only be reared by keeping them in your bedroom. Pigs, however, do well, but then, as they will do whenever they have the chance, they turn carnivorous, to the intense delight of the natives, who have a great liking for seal-fed pork.

Blue and white foxes are indigenous, and give great sport throughout the year, both to children and adults: in summer to the former as playthings; and in the winter to the others as creatures to be hunted or trapped without mercy, thus giving wholesome employment to both mind and body—a point of great importance in a place where there is nothing whatever to do. The lemming, too, is indigenous, but for some reason or other is confined to St. George.

There are no rats as yet, and this is the

only place in all Alaska where there are no mosquitoes. But mice swarm, and are a great nuisance; consequently cats abound, which, living entirely on the seal-meat, and mostly out of doors, half-wild, become totally different animals from the harmless, necessary creatures of advanced civilisation—thicker, shorter, and with less tail. Their music, too, becomes exaggerated, and appears to be the only thing which can rouse the sluggish Aleut to boiling and raging indignation. And now for the natives:

When first discovered, the islands were absolutely desert. In order, therefore, to proceed with the seal hunting, Aleuts had to be imported from the islands and the mainland, and it is the descendants of these, supplemented by additional arrivals, who now form the population. During the long period of the Russian dominion they were kept in the most abject state, physically, mentally, and morally. They were purely slaves, and treated worse than dogs. But since the transfer to the United States, and under the wise regulations of the Government and the commercial company to which the islands are leased, their condition has vastly improved, and they give promise of being able to keep up the present population; possibly without any great increase, but still to keep it up implies a certain amount of comfort and well-being. They are staunch members of the Greek Church, and are, of all these Northwest people, the only practical converts to Christianity. Their spiritual wants are fully attended to, and there is no lack of schools and churches. They may be said to be in a very high state of semi-civilisation.

As to their origin, nothing is settled; they seem to form a perfect link between the Japanese and the Eskimo; yet their language and traditions are totally distinct from both, and are peculiar to themselves, not one word or numeral of theirs bearing any resemblance to either. At present there is such a mixture of Aleut, Russian, Kolosh, and Kamtschadale blood, that every type is represented, from Negro to Caucasian. The men average five feet four inches or five feet five inches, and the women less, though both giants and dwarfs are known. The prevailing features are small, wide-set eyes; broad and high cheek-bones; coarse, straight, black hair; small, neatly-shaped hands and feet; together with a brownish-yellow complexion. They have abandoned the cumbrous Russian long coat and dog-skin cap, and regularly provide

themselves with the ordinary garb of the States—boots, stockings, underclothes, and ulster, but the high winds prevent their donning the stove-pipe or chimney-pot of civilisation. The women, too, have levelled themselves up to the men; this is said advisedly, for it is noticed that in savage, and some new societies, the greatest desire to be smart appears in the young men. But as the wives of the officials and the Company's agents not unfrequently come up to spend the year, provided, as is always the case, with everything that women want to wear, the native intellect has received undue expansion. They naturally copy the latest fashions, and amongst them are to be found some very clever dressmakers. This is a great improvement on the good old days. Under Russian rule the women were the hewers of wood and drawers of water; actually the latter, for on St. Paul the drinking water had to be fetched a mile and a half from the village. Nowadays, however, when that necessary has to be procured, it is the man who shoulders the tub and brings it to the house from a spring only half-a-mile off, which has been opened by the Company. The population of St. Paul in 1874 was three hundred and ninety-eight; of whom fourteen were whites, thirteen males and one female; one hundred and twenty-eight male Aleuts, and one hundred and fifty-six females. As to food, the staple is seal-meat. The average consumption is six hundred pounds per day, all the year round, and to this they add as much butter and sweet crackers as ever they can get hold of, with an indefinite quantity of sugar. No sweet tooth ever equalled that of the Aleut. Then comes two hundred pounds of bread per week, and seven hundred pounds of flour, fifty pounds of tobacco, seventy-five pounds of candles, and fifty pounds of rice. They now burn kerosine oil, although seal blubber overflows the island; but the imported article is handy and less noisome than the other, and does not give out the objectionable smell, still worse, the greasy soot, of the native product. Vinegar is little used, and for mustard and pepper the demand is very small. Beans are tabooed, but split-pea soup is making way. The people will take salt beef or pork if it is pressed on them, but will never buy it. A very little coffee is used, but for tea, like everybody who has been under Russian influence, they have a positive craving, and will drink any quantity. King Valoroso, of Paphlagonia,

would be driven crazy here, for they are always drinking tea, and must each of them get through at least a gallon apiece every day. Their samovars, and recently the orthodox kettle, are never off the fire from the moment they get up to the moment they go to bed. Coal is supplied gratis to a certain amount by the Company. But of all things in demand the greatest is tinned fruit, and no householder would hesitate to ruin himself if he could only buy as much as he would like to have. It must be remembered that, as the islands produce nothing but seals, everything has to be got from San Francisco, and is sold at cost price, plus the expense of conveyance.

Now, what do these people do with themselves? During the busy season, which lasts only a month or six weeks, there is naturally no lack of occupation. For the rest of the year they simply vegetate, for the good reason that there is nothing to do. They eat, drink, and sleep, and a few gamble. The day, however, can be got through by the help of visits of ceremony; but the greatest resource is in the daily observance of the innumerable Greek rites. They are great church-goers, and the ceremonies and observances of their faith would alone serve to keep them from utter stagnation. Saints' days are a great institution, some two hundred and ninety in a year being devoted to the celebration of some holy man or woman's birth or death. So much for the islands and their inhabitants. In our next we shall get to the chief, indeed the only, production—seals.

OLD ETON DAYS.

In 1883, there appeared a very entertaining little volume, entitled "Seven Years at Eton," and containing an interesting account of the writer's experiences during his stay there from 1857 to 1864. Between my departure from the school and his arrival twenty-two years had elapsed, and considerable changes had consequently taken place in the interval; a new generation had sprung up, old landmarks had been removed, and customs which had been in vogue since time immemorial, had either been greatly modified, or had altogether passed away. Half a century is a long stretch to look back upon, and I may be pardoned if the following recollections, not improved by a protracted residence out of England, are somewhat hazy; such as they

are, however, they may perhaps remind some few surviving "condiscipuli" of the days when Keate ruled over us with despotic sway, when Montem and the "Christopher" still flourished, and when any additions to the usual scholastic routine in the shape of mathematics or modern languages, together with the R.V.C. and compulsory football, were things unknown.

I arrived at Eton after Easter in 1831, and left it at election 1835. Having been tolerably well grounded at a private school, I was placed in the Upper Fourth, then considered rather a feather in one's cap, anything higher being rarely attainable. Nowadays, boys are so carefully prepared for Eton, that it is a common thing for those endowed with merely average intelligence to be at once installed in the "remove"; but this system of coaching did not exist in my time, and the Middle, or even Lower, Fourth, was the habitual lot of the majority of new-comers. During my first half I boarded at a dame's, Miss Slingsby's, who occupied the last of the row of houses facing Barnes Pool; but on a vacancy occurring at my tutor's—the Reverend James Chapman, subsequently Bishop of Colombo—I migrated thither, and retained the same room during the rest of my stay at Eton.

The ruling authorities at that period may be briefly enumerated: they were Dr. Goodall (Provost), Dr. Keate (Head Master), the Reverend Mr. Knapp (Lower Master), assisted in the following order by the Reverends Edward Craven Hawtrey, Richard Okes, James Chapman, Edward Coleridge, John Wilder, J. G. Dupuis, Cookealey, and Pickering, Masters in the Upper School; and the Reverend Messrs. Green, Luxmoore, and Mr. Charles Wilder (who had not then taken orders) in the Lower. With most of these, beyond the occasional obligation of "shirking" them when out of bounds, I had little or nothing to do, not having been "up" to them in school; and I never, to the best of my recollection, exchanged half-a-dozen words with any of them. The only two, indeed, my own tutor of course excepted, of whom I am able to speak from personal experience, are Messrs. Okes and Coleridge; before doing so, however, a passing reference to the strangely-contrasted couple who successively filled the post of Head Master, appears to me indispensable.

Dr. Keate always reminded me of a turkey-cock in a paroxysm of exasperation, which seemed to be his normal state. for I

never saw him otherwise. He was short in stature, stoutly-built, and red-faced, and so constitutionally irritable that his ordinary mode of speech, which has appropriately been likened to the quacking of an angry duck, was abrupt, jerky, and irresistibly ludicrous. He had a reputation for kindness in private life, which may, or may not, have been merited; but it is certain that, in his magisterial capacity, this amiable weakness, if it really existed, was so carefully concealed as to be altogether imperceptible. His one panacea for every fault of commission and omission was the birch, and plenty of it. He flogged indiscriminately, and for the merest trifle, accompanying each cut with an incessant muttering, intended to impress on the victim the heinousness of the particular offence for which he had been "put in the bill." As a natural consequence, he was more feared than respected; and his retirement in 1834, after five-and-twenty years' tenure of office, followed by the appointment of Dr. Hawtrey as his successor, was generally regarded as a subject of congratulation, rather than of regret.

The new-comer, although as strict a disciplinarian as his predecessor, was a man of infinite tact and courtesy, a thorough gentleman in the best sense of the word; combining great energy and determination with a dignified urbanity, which more than atoned for the disadvantages of a face which in his youth had earned him the nickname of "Monkey Hawtrey," and of a somewhat ungainly figure. During the twenty years of his reign he projected many useful reforms which, however, were not carried out until I had left the school; but from his first accession to power his firm, yet conciliating, manner made a favourable impression on the little community under his charge, which gradually ripened into popularity.

The Reverend Richard (more familiarly known as "Dicky") Okes, the present Provost of King's, was, as I remember him, a portly little man, of sedate aspect and stately bearing, with a kindly expression of countenance and a pleasant smile. During the latter part of my stay at Eton he presided over the Upper Division of the Fifth, and strove earnestly to encourage a spirit of emulation among us; he had a marvellous knack of gauging the capabilities of his pupils, and when he had once satisfied himself as to the superior intelligence of any one of them, took good care to keep him up to the mark. Every-

body liked him, even those who, either from idleness or incapacity, were frequently the objects of his quiet and good-humoured satire; that he was equally respected for his honourable character and strictly conscientious performance of the duties assigned him, it is almost superfluous to say. His colleague, the Reverend Edward Coleridge, a tall, handsome man, who married Keate's daughter, was very popular with his own pupils, and, I may add, with the school generally; he had a keen sense of humour, and often enlivened the division allotted to him with some droll, semi-classical allusion, which set the Form in a roar. Personally, I had every reason to be grateful to him, having twice attained the enviable distinction of being "sent up for good" by him, and consequently of hearing my theme or verses read aloud in a sing-song twang by the irascible little Doctor himself before the entire Sixth Form, an ordeal by no means agreeable to undergo. By way of compensation, however, and in accordance with an ancient custom not then fallen into disuse, I became entitled on each occasion to a bonus in the shape of a sovereign, which, as a matter of course, was duly charged to my debit in the next account sent home.

My own tutor, as already mentioned, was the Reverend James Chapman, an excellent classical scholar, and, unless provoked beyond measure by some unusually flagrant example of ignorance or stupidity, an even-tempered and amiable man. In the pupil-room he kept the Lower boys steadily at work, and enforced attention by blandly intimating that a lack of application would entail on the offender the necessity of committing to memory a page of "Paradise Lost," to which unfortunate selection I attribute my unconquerable aversion to the productions of the great epic poet. In 1834 two of his pupils, Lonsdale and the late Lord Lyttelton, distinguished themselves by gaining respectively the Newcastle Scholarship and the Medal; a double triumph which established Mr. Chapman's reputation as a first-rate "coach," and was celebrated by a supper given by him in honour of the successful candidates. Being unmarried, he entrusted the details of household management to a Mrs. Holmes, a middle-aged lady, whom we never saw but at meals, when she sat at the head of the table, invariably attired in a brown silk gown with black mittens, and a "front" ingeniously disguised by a complicated

arrangement of muslin and lace. Except on Sunday evenings, when my tutor regularly made the round of the house, on which occasions we took care to be engaged in the perusal of the "History of England," or some other equally unobjectionable book, fellows in the Fifth Form were left pretty much to their own devices; and although it was industriously reported for the benefit of the juniors that the interval between lock-up and bedtime was devoted by the dons of the Upper and Middle Divisions to a course of unremitting study, I fancy that the proprietress of the Windsor Circulating Library, who let out novels at twopenne per volume, could have told a very different tale. Indeed, setting aside the few who read for scholarships, it was a fixed principle with most Etonians of my time not to do an iota more work than, according to their notions, could legitimately be required of them. Of professed "saps" I can only call to mind the brothers Goulburn, both so extremely short-sighted that they were obliged to hold up their books within an inch of their faces, and a very clever little fellow of the name of Cotton.

To anyone gifted with a moderate share of ability the ordinary school business offered no insurmountable difficulty, all that was necessary being a superficial acquaintance with certain portions of Homer, Virgil, and Horace, and a mechanical facility sufficient for the composition of indifferent verses and themes. Nothing else was obligatory, or included in the regular scholastic routine. Mr. Tarver, the worthy Professor of French, may perhaps have had half a dozen pupils, and Mr. Evans, a Drawing Master of high local repute, possibly twice that number; but these accomplishments, generally regarded in the light of unimportant extras, were tolerated rather than encouraged by the authorities. There were also two mysterious gentlemen whose names figured in the school lists, one of whom was supposed to teach Italian and Spanish, and the other dancing; but as I never set eyes on either, nor met anyone who had, I only allude to them in passing.

Notwithstanding, however, the considerable amount of work required, the item of verse-making was a stumbling-block to many, and more than one member of the "Eight" and the "Eleven" were reduced to the necessity of enlisting the pen of some readier writer. A good-humoured giant, popularly known as

"Swab," had his regular "Muse" every half; and another bright specimen of humanity, fresh from the Cambrian mountains, was so ill-advised as to apply for aid to a noted wag, who kindly volunteered to supply him with a copy of verses descriptive of a battle, in which occurred the following astounding line:

Et viridis nigro sanguine terra rubet;

or, literally translated, "And the green earth is red with black blood."

Fagging in my time was a very mild institution, the duties of a house-fag being chiefly limited to laying the cloth for his master's breakfast and tea, and occasionally fetching a pot of chocolate, or a "college-loaf" from Spiers's, or a dozen sausages—the best and crispest I ever tasted—from Hatton's. Lower boys were of course liable to be impounded for cricket fagging, but, as most of them had a protector in the Fifth Form, who allowed them to "use his name," they were supposed by a kind of pleasant fiction to be charged by him with some important errand, and consequently escaped compulsory attendance in the playing fields. Of bullying I remember no flagrant instances, and have seen far worse at a private school.

There were few fights during my stay, and I can only call to mind one between two fellows in the same Form—Wigram (afterwards Fitzwygram) and Sparrow, which turned out a lamentably one-sided affair. About the cause of quarrel I am not quite clear, but rather think it originated in the refusal of one of the contending parties to "take a licking" from the other; the result being a challenge no sooner proposed than accepted. We anticipated an easy victory for Wigram, and, to judge from his confident air and the scientific attitude assumed by him, he evidently expected it himself; he soon discovered, however, that he had caught a Tartar, and at the conclusion of the first round collapsed, and declined to come up to time, so that

Le combat finit faute de combattants;

and his adversary was dubbed "Cock Sparrow" on the spot.

I recollect but one instance of a boy running away from Eton; he was a new recruit, named Sawyer, and had taken an invincible dislike to the school. Three times he tried to escape, but was captured and summarily "swished." His fourth attempt was more successful, and he probably reached home and persuaded his parents to transfer him elsewhere, for we never heard any more of him.

I have nothing to say about the "boats," having been a "dry bob" heart and soul, and seldom frequenting the Brocas, except as a spectator of the matches, or on the fourth of June and Election Saturday. Fond, however, as I was of cricket, I never attained any proficiency in the art, and have a distinct recollection, on the occasion of a match between the Lower Shooting Fields and the Aquatics, of placing my first ball in the hands of "point," a jovial, red-faced fellow called Beauchamp, who chuckled immensely at my discomfiture. In my last half our Eleven included among other excellent players, "Whacky" Kirwan, a swift underhand bowler; Wilkinson, a capital wicket-keeper; "Bull" Pickering, long-stop; and Dealtry, a renowned "slogger," who could throw a cricket ball over a hundred and twenty yards. Our champion, however, was Charles Taylor, who subsequently became the pride of the Sussex Eleven; and, in a match with Kent some years later, on Brown's ground at Brighton, carried out his bat for a hundred runs, a great score in those days.

Hockey was then more in vogue than football, but neither was regarded as obligatory, everyone disposing of his "after twelve" and "after four" exactly as he chose. Paper-chases and an occasional run with the beagles were extremely popular, and, during the rainy season, when the water jumps became formidable, proved a source of considerable profit to the fashionable tailor, Tom Brown.

Those who had a liking for the drama—and they were legion—used frequently to profit by the interval between "absence" and lock-up, and while away an hour at the Windsor theatre, paying, I am ashamed to acknowledge, admission to the gallery, and sliding down between the acts into the generally empty boxes. A very favourite piece with us was Tom Parry's Adelphi farce, "P. P., or the Man and the Tiger," in which Dodd, a clever low comedian, afterwards a member of the Brighton company, took John Reeve's part of Bob Bucksakin.

It was not then—as it has of late years become—customary to bring much money from home at the commencement of a half, five or ten pounds being the average amount of ballast with which most of us were supplied. The major part of this being necessarily absorbed by the payment of the "ticks" of the preceding half, we were seldom overburdened with cash, and anxiously looked forward to the chance

visit of some liberally disposed relative for the replenishment of our coffers by a timely tip, or, as it was usually styled, "pouch." I am afraid that "sock" formed the principal item of our expenditure, every facility for impairing our digestions being continually afforded us; it required, indeed, more fortitude than we possessed to resist the temptations held out by the inevitable "Spankie," with his tin receptacle for hot pastry, and by his minor colleagues, Dell, Brion, and old Mother Pond. Some fellows patronised Knox, the fruiterer adjoining Windsor Bridge, and other—Sybarites of the Upper Division—luxuriously indulged in ices at Layton's; but the favourite resort was Fowler's, which had the advantage of being within bounds, and where we daily regaled ourselves on fruit tarts and cream immediately after dinner!

In 1832 the "Eton College Magazine" commenced its short-lived career, and closed it with the eighth number; it was succeeded by "The Kaleidoscope," which—doubtless for financial reasons—was also discontinued at the termination of the first volume. But these were well conducted, and some of the articles displayed considerable ability; they were chiefly anonymous or signed by pseudonyms, but it was generally supposed that the cleverest papers published in "The Kaleidoscope" were contributed by one or other of the brothers Goulburn.

I am not aware that—with the single exception of Lord John Manners, from whom I won a bet of five shillings in 1835, having backed Abercrombie against Manners Sutton in the famous contest for the Speakership—any of my fellow Etonians have attained political distinction in after life; George Smythe, son of Lord Strangford, promised to become a shining light of the Tory party, but died young. The patrician element, however, was largely represented, including, among our hereditary legislators, past and present, the late Marquis of Londonderry, the present Marquis of Sligo, Earls Powis and Dartrey, the late Lords Desart and Manners, and many more, whose names have slipped my memory. Other contemporaries of mine were Balston, the future Head Master and Archdeacon; Henry Mildred Birch, the most popular of collegers, than whom no more accomplished tutor for the Prince of Wales could possibly have been chosen; Shadwell, son of the then Vice-Chancellor, and Hobhouse, the winners of the double sculling sweepstakes; and my old school-

fellow at East Sheen, Sir John Anson, one of the victims of the terrible railway accident at Wigan some years ago.

DREAMS AND DREAMING.

DREAMS are very common, very familiar, yet in many respects still very mysterious phenomena. There is scarcely a fundamental question with reference to dreaming which is not in some degree open to doubt or dispute.

Is dreaming the rule or the exception?

Is it inconsistent with sound sleep?

Whence is derived the material of our dreams?

Are dreams often influenced by things which act upon the senses of the sleeper?

How do we account for the usually incoherent but occasionally orderly method of dreams?

Have dreams any value as indicating the course of future events, or are they mere recollections of the past?

These and a host of similar questions have received the most various and conflicting answers, and some of them still remain unsettled problems. The mystery surrounding dreams is not difficult to comprehend. It is evident that we cannot submit them to any definite tests of observation, and that peculiar difficulties embarrass any attempt at instituting exact and satisfactory experiments. Our recollections of dreams are at best partial and fragmentary, singularly vivid often in details, but usually confused and incoherent as a whole.

The characters of dreams vary much, but they have some constant features. First, they possess apparent reality and objectivity. We never doubt the genuineness of a dream, until we are nearly or altogether awake. Dreams are "true while they last," i.e., they are a reality for the time being to our consciousness. Secondly, they are characterised by great intensity, and impress us even more forcibly than similar real events would be capable of doing in our waking moments. The visions seen in dreams are more real than reality. Beauty seems to possess a halo not of earth, and images of terror impress us with unnatural intensity. Our impressions of space and magnitude are greatly exalted. Every mountain towers to the sky. Every tree is a lofty pine. Every river is a rushing Niagara or a broad flowing Amazon. We awake bedewed with per-

piration, the roar of artillery sounding in our ears, and we find a watch ticking at our side. We dream that some gigantic monster is pressing upon our chest, and on awakening we discover that our pillow has got displaced. This exalted sensibility admits of an easy explanation. In dreaming, will, judgement, and memory, are more or less dormant; but imagination and emotion remain fully awake. We see wonderful visions, and having lost the power of correcting their absurdities by comparison with surrounding objects, or with past scenes and experiences, fancy runs riot. At other times our sentiments and emotions are not so much exalted as perverted. The most extravagant things appear to us in dreams, but our wonder is not excited. Wicked deeds and piteous events no longer excite their appropriate emotions, but are frequently viewed with the most callous indifference. Friends long dead re-appear, but memory fails to remind us of their decease. Scenes in different hemispheres get strangely mixed up together, but we are unconscious of any incongruity.

A third characteristic of dreams is the fact that the dreamer seems the centre and source of all the action of the dream. The world centres round him; in his hands are its destinies; or he is the chief agent in some great drama, or the chief sufferer by some terrible catastrophe.

The absence of will has been regarded by many authorities as the essential feature in dreams. In "nightmare" we make (as we think) frantic efforts to resist some monster, or to avert some disaster. We struggle (or seem to struggle), we pant, we fight, but some palsy seems to be upon us; our lips refuse to cry out, our arms lie nerveless by our sides, our feet forget to run, we have a vivid impression that we are making great efforts of will, but that our limbs refuse to obey the mandate of the brain. The real explanation is that the will is not exercised at all; sensation and imagination are active, but the will sleeps. When we try "to will" we awake.

Do we always dream? Kant, Sir William Hamilton, Sir Benjamin Brodie, and others answer in the affirmative. They regard dreaming as a normal accompaniment of sleep, and explain the fact that so frequently we have no recollection of having dreamed by reference to such experiences as those of the somnambulist, who performs during sleep strange feats, of which on awaking he is entirely unconscious. They point out, further, that on being sud-

denly awakened we so often find ourselves dreaming—a fact which the writer's night-bell has given him many opportunities of confirming. Yet this view is open to much question. General experience confirms the theory involved in the common expression, deep, dreamless sleep. We are not thoroughly refreshed by sleep which has been full of dreams, and on the other hand, when after unusual fatigue we sleep very profoundly there is usually, on awaking, no recollection of having dreamed. Another argument in favour of the Kantian view is, that after even the soundest sleep we have a vague consciousness that time has elapsed, and it is alleged that this feeling proves the persistence of brain activity in dreams. This argument does not seem convincing, as the sensation of lapse of time is sufficiently explained by the fact, that we awake in a different physical condition from that of the previous night. We are refreshed; fatigue is gone; perhaps some degree of hunger has supervened. These facts are amply sufficient to account for the feeling of lapse of time, without arbitrarily assuming that we must necessarily have dreamed.

Probably people differ immensely as regards the frequency of their dreams. Persons of active brains and delicate sensibilities dream more than the dull and lethargic. The condition of health has also a notable influence. Nervous derangement and dyspepsia are probably accountable for a heavy proportion of most of our dreams.

Another questionable theory about dreams is, that they are essentially phenomena of the transition stage between sleeping and waking. That many dreams belong to this category, and that we remember best the dreams of this period, is undoubtedly true. Many dreams are excited by the same cause which awakes us, although we feel as if a long interval had intervened. A door is slammed or a shot fired near us. These sounds excite a train of dreaming which runs a long and intricate course, and finally we awake. The noise caused both the dream and the awaking, and probably only a few seconds intervened, although our dream may have seemed to include the events of a lifetime. It is related of Lord Holland that on one occasion, when some person was reading to him, he fell asleep, and dreamed an apparently long dream. On awaking, however, he heard the end of the sentence which the reader had begun before he fell asleep, so that his dream

must have been of the briefest duration. Yet this theory—that dreams belong only to the transition or waking stage—seems conclusively disproved by decisive evidence—that persons can be known, by the expression on their faces, and by their muttered words, to be dreaming in ordinary sleep, as well as by the correlated facts of somnambulism.

Whence is derived the material of our dreams? This question often admits of a ready answer, but sometimes it presents insoluble problems. Frequently, as Sir Benjamin Brodie says: "That which constitutes the imagination during the day is the foundation of our dreams at night." Dreams are thus, to a limited extent, a gauge and reflex of character; but nothing is more familiar than the mysterious manner in which the most improbable and most bizarre elements become mixed up in our dreams. The almost forgotten scenes and events of childhood flash before our eyes with bewildering intensity. Persons to whom we have not devoted a thought for years arise before us in dreams. We travel in unknown lands; we see demons and monsters; perhaps we are transported to the stars, or approach the sun and see the belching flames of his huge furnaces. These facts seem inexplicable, but we cannot doubt that for each there is a natural and reasonable explanation. Some event of recent experience, some fact in a book, some sight or sound has touched a long silent chord, and made it give forth strange music. Events of which we are entirely unconscious may influence our dreams.

Dr. Carpenter relates a story of a gentleman who went to bed in a strange room, and all night long he was tormented by dreams of lizards crawling over him. In the morning he noticed a clock upon the mantel-piece, on the base of which lizards were engraved, but he had no consciousness of having observed them on the previous night. His eye must unconsciously have lighted upon the lizards, and this unnoticed circumstance must have given the direction to his imagination during the hours of sleep. A single fact like this is sufficient to suggest possible explanations of many of the most puzzling phenomena of dreams.

The state of the bodily organs is often the explanation of our dreams. An undigested supper becomes a torturing demon. A painful toe gives rise to dreams of inquisitorial torments. A mountain of guilt

seems to be crushing us down, but it is only

That confounded cucumber
We ate and can't digest.

Dr. Reid relates that, having had his head blistered after a fall, and a plaster having been put on which pained him excessively during the night, on falling asleep towards morning he dreamed very distinctly that he had fallen into the hands of a party of Indians and was scalped. The sequence of ideas is here clear enough.

Experiments have been conducted which prove that dreams may be excited, or their course modified, by artificial means. Stroking the lips, tickling the skin, pinching the muscles, will, in many cases, excite a train of ideas in the dreamer. If the irritation be slight, it will probably pass unnoticed; if it be somewhat stronger, dreaming will be excited or modified; if stronger still, the dreamer is aroused.

Many dreamers are also sleep-talkers, and of these there are various classes. Sometimes the talk is unintelligible gibberish, or it may consist only of occasional disconnected exclamations, or may seem to be detached portions of an intelligent speech. More rarely it possesses perfect logical coherence and sequence. Sleep-talkers sometimes respond to remarks made to them, and if an idea be suggested by a bystander, they occasionally fly off upon some new train of thought. It is curious and interesting that most sleep-talkers awake at once on their names being distinctly pronounced.

Many extraordinary instances are recorded of the performance of intellectual feats during dreaming. A mathematician, after worrying for hours over some puzzling problem, has gone to bed, arisen in a dream, and, repairing to his desk, has solved it with ease. Coleridge asserted that his poem, *Kubla Khan*, was actually composed in a dream. Musicians have been known to compose elaborate pieces of music whilst dreaming. These facts would be almost incredible, if they did not rest upon the strongest evidence; but they become easier of credence when we recollect the extraordinary feats which somnambulists perform in sleep, proving clearly that while some functions of the mind are in abeyance during dreams, other functions are stimulated into abnormal activity.

Such feats as the above are exceptions to the usually incoherent character of dreams. It would seem that, if the mind be powerfully directed to some question

during the day, and if the dreamer chance to resume the thread of thought at the point where it had been interrupted, his dreams may be rational and orderly, although probably of unusual vividness and intensity.

The consideration of the value of dreams as supposed indications of the course of future events is a question of absorbing interest, and a great mass of information on this subject might easily be compiled. Few subjects are more fascinating to the curious, than a comparison of the various dream theories of different races and different ages. In early times, and among savage nations, great significance has always been attached to dreams; while in modern days and among civilised peoples, the rationalising spirit has entirely prevailed, dreams being regarded as purely natural phenomena, and usually admitting of a physiological or a psychological explanation. Three distinct dream theories may be differentiated as having prevailed at various epochs of human history.

First comes the theory of the savage, such as the American Red Indian. He considers dreams to be essentially real, as real as his daily waking life. He believes that it is he himself who goes forth in dreams to battle or the chase, scalping his foe, or slaughtering the bison. But he knows that his bodily form continues reclining in slumber in his hut, so he is compelled to assume the existence of a second self, another identity, a 'shadowy "alter ego," the mysterious complement of his physical frame; and he believes that it is this second self which goes abroad in dreams and engages in nightly adventures.

The second view, which has widely prevailed at various epochs, regards dreams as invariably sent by a supernatural power, to warn, instruct, or encourage. The divine message may be variously delivered. Sometimes a visible messenger appears; sometimes a voice only is heard; sometimes a moving panoramic tableau, symbolic in character, passes before the sleeper's eye, and demands attention and interpretation. Of such a character were the dreams of patriarchal and prophetic times, when the Creator chose this means of revealing Himself to man; but the superstitions of all ages and all nations have ascribed this supernatural interpretation not merely to special revelations, but to all dreams alike.

The third, or modern view, is that dreams are purely natural phenomena, de-

pendent on the state of the bodily organs, on the condition of the brain and the exercise of the imagination, and in a less degree upon the casual influence of surrounding objects and sounds upon the mind of the sleeper.

If we interrogate the English poets on this subject, we find them, for the most part, in harmony with the modern view. Shakespeare says :

Dreams are but children of an idle brain,
Begot of nothing but vain fantasy;
Which is as thin of substance as the air,
And more inconstant than the wind.

Dryden calls dreams the

Interludes which fancy makes;
When Monarch Reason sleeps, this mimic wakes.

On the other side, Joanna Baillie says :

Dreams full oft are found of real events
The forms and shadows.

Many people still believe that they receive warnings in dreams, and it is impossible to rebut the arguments for such a belief; but we may confidently assert that any general reliance on the confused and contradictory indications of dreams would involve the most inconsistent vagaries of conduct, wholly unworthy of a rational being. Our reason and our dreams are often so hopelessly at variance that, to desert the former for the latter, would be equivalent to relinquishing the bright shining of the sun in order to pursue a treacherous will-o'-the-wisp. The writer once had occasion to engage a passage for a long sea voyage, and the only vessel available at the desired time was a steamer which been a great favourite in her day, but was then so old that doubts were entertained regarding her seaworthiness. In spite of warnings on this point, he engaged his berth, and, on that very night, he had an intensely vivid dream of shipwreck and drowning at sea. Undeterred, however, he set sail without serious misgiving, and had a most agreeable and prosperous voyage. In this case the dream was evidently no supernatural warning, but rather the natural result of the effect produced upon the imagination by the hints thrown out regarding the vessel's supposed unseaworthy character. Presentiments of all kinds are almost invariably groundless, and when, on rare occasions, a presentiment is verified by the result, the explanation is the very simple and obvious one that in this instance our fears correctly forecasted the future. We fear and we hope many things, more or less probable. Of these

fears and hopes some, in the ordinary course, will prove well founded.

Have dreams ever any objective or genuine value? Yes. They are more or less sure indications of the sort of exercise which we give our imaginations during our waking hours, and of the prevailing bent of our thoughts. Secondly, modern investigation has shown that there is some foundation for the very ancient idea, that a dream about a certain organ of the body has occasionally been followed by disease of that part. In this instance, however, a purely natural explanation is the most probable. The subtle premonitions of disease, while yet too feeble to be recognised during our waking hours, carry their message to the brain during sleep, and thus the dream is directed to the organ which is already the seat of some hidden morbid process. In this case it is the disease—while still latent—which causes the dream, not the dream which in any marvellous or inexplicable manner forecasts the disease.

Many worthy people have a regular code of interpretations for dreams. The loss of a tooth means the death of a friend; or, on the popular principle that "dreams go by contraries," a birth means a death, a marriage a funeral, and so on. It may save us much needless anxiety and the just reproach of superstition, if we are thoroughly convinced that such ideas are on a par with belief in astrology or witchcraft, and are destitute of the slightest foundation in reason or experience.

LOST IN THE VALLEY.

By the Author of "Driven of the Wind," etc.

A STORY IN SIXTEEN CHAPTERS.

CHAPTER XI.

FOR the next few minutes Maurice heard and saw nothing of what was going on around him.

He had only a dim consciousness that his mother and sisters were condoling with Madame Ravelli, and uniting in reviling the woman who had brought such trouble upon her; and that his father, roused to wakefulness, was adding his voice to theirs.

Maurice went on mechanically stroking his dog's long hair, and listening to the loud, excited beating of his own heart.

For Madame Ravelli's tones had carried conviction with them, and, in these first moments, Maurice believed her story unquestioningly.

At length Ethel's voice, raised high in sympathetic interest, reached his dazed senses.

"And what was the name this dreadful woman took, Madame Ravelli?"

Maurice suddenly rose from his chair. His mind was filled with the wish to say something to create a diversion; to stop that deep, cruel voice that was about to pronounce his doom and disgrace. But, before he could collect himself sufficiently to frame a speech, Madame Ravelli's answer came clear and distinct.

"Her husband's title was the Count of Montecalvo, but the name she has adopted is Eveline Douglas."

"Eveline Douglas!"

The name was repeated simultaneously by them all—father, mother, and sisters. Maurice felt that they were all looking at him, as he stood, white and silent, holding the back of his chair to support himself. Then, after a moment's pause, that seemed interminable to him, without a word he turned and left the room.

Upstairs, he locked the door, and sat down to think. But each fact he could remember at that moment seemed only to confirm the hideous tale he had just heard. Eveline's silence as to her past life; Janet Douglas's denunciation; de Villars's insolence; her own confession that no one in Paris would receive her; her brother-in-law's refusal to recognise her in the Bois; her own acceptance of such avoidance, such insults; her reluctance to mention her real name; the O'Haras' surprise, and Dr. Grantley's indignation at his engagement with her; her disinclination to come to England; and, finally, her wealth and mysterious isolation.

He pressed his hands to his burning forehead, feeling that he was going mad.

Suddenly, his promise to her, during almost their last interview, came to his mind:

"If anyone should come to me, and say anything against my future wife, I should listen to nothing, believe nothing, until I heard it confirmed by her."

He started to his feet, and began hurriedly repacking his travelling-bag. He would go back to her now, without a moment's delay; tell her what he had heard, and ask for her explanation; before he accepted any facts against her. He had never known how dearly he loved her until now, when the very thought of being with her again, even under such circumstances as these, filled his heart with a momentary gladness.

That wretched letter too: he remembered he had left it at Paris, in the pocket of a coat that was still there; he would confront her with it, and ask her to prove to him that the charges made against her in it were false.

It was too late for him to cross to-night, but it was not too late to catch the last train to town. Stealing from the room, he hurried down the stairs, and out by the garden-door into the stables, his bag in his hand. Calling softly to the coachman, he ordered the dog-cart to be got ready at once, and stood watching its preparation. When it was ready he got in, and, telling the man to drive straight to the station, and avoid passing the front of the house, he left his home within three hours of entering it, in silence and stealth, more like a suspected thief than the son and heir.

During the three miles' drive through country lanes, bordered at first by his father's fields, he had time to collect his thoughts and to soften considerably the harsh verdict he had been at first inclined to pass upon the woman he loved. Had he not himself stopped her, when she would have told him the history of her married life? And was not this Madame Ravelli a woman of violent prejudices, jealous, and domineering, and possessed by an unreasoning hatred against the woman who, perhaps unconsciously, had stolen her son from her? Would she not be likely to distort facts? And was not Eveline herself so lovely, so fascinating, that a man might well become infatuated about her without much encouragement from her?

So he reasoned, and the keen October night air, whirring past him as they drove rapidly along in the darkness, seemed to impart clearness and coherence to his mental arguments in Eveline's favour.

When they arrived at the station he scribbled a few lines in his pocket-book, and tearing the leaf out gave it to the servant for his father.

The words he wrote were these:

"DEAR FATHER,—I am off to Paris to find out the truth. Do not follow me. I shall return without delay.

"Your affectionate Son,
"MAURICE."

The train was waiting at the station, he jumped in, and was on his way to town before his people at home had learned of his departure.

When, next day, he stepped on board the boat to cross to France, Maurice could scarcely realise that it was only a few weeks ago since he had made that journey before. He felt ten years older, and had passed through more exciting experiences and emotions than he had ever met with in his whole life before. Then he was heart-whole, free from anxiety; now he was racked by doubts and suspicions concerning a woman whom he loved with all his strength. For her beauty and sweetness, her gentle caresses, and the charm of her voice and manner, still held him bound to her in her absence. And now that his fate lay trembling in the balance—that marrying her, at any rate, seemed impossible—he longed for her with an aching wistfulness that was absolute pain.

Maurice was extremely delicate; the worry, excitement, sleeplessness, and fatigue he had endured since he left Paris had severely strained him, physically as well as mentally; and it was a very white and weary version of the happy, buoyant Maurice of six weeks before that now slowly ascended the stairs to the old rooms in the Boulevard Haussmann.

His heart beat fast when he passed the floor where Eveline's rooms were. Should he go to her now the first thing? No, there was that letter; he would take that with him.

Just as he had got about half way up the staircase leading to his own rooms, the sound of a door opening on the floor below attracted his attention. He stopped, and leaning over the banisters looked down to see if it was Eveline. Watching thus he saw Pierre, her man-servant, come out, and, closing the door after him, proceed to descend the staircase to the floor beneath. Before he had gone more than a few steps, however, he was met by the Marquis de Villars, who stopped and engaged him in conversation for a few minutes. What he said Maurice could not hear, but he could see M. de Villars slip money into the man's hand before they parted, and Pierre returned to his mistress's rooms.

Maurice was in that state of mind in which every fresh circumstance seemed suspicious to him. Was it all a trick to quiet him, he wondered, the journey to Fontainebleau, that had either not been undertaken at all or had been brought to a very speedy termination?

Tortured by new misgivings, he entered his rooms with the key he had taken from the office downstairs. Passing through the

cheerless, unlighted sitting-room, he found his way to the kitchen, where Benoit was dozing with her feet on the fender, and with the remains of a repast, of which garlic formed an unmistakable item, on the table beside her.

She woke in a great state of surprise and chatter when Maurice appeared.

"What should she prepare? But it was so unexpected! What would Monsieur like?" Monsieur ordered his invariable coffee; also hot water and a light; dinner she could give him later on—anything she liked; he was far too much worried and excited to trouble about eating just at present.

Unlocking his portmanteau, in the pocket where he had left it he found Madame Ravelli's letter, and read it through again carefully. It was written, he decided, in the same highly-strung, dramatic style that characterised her conversation. She was just the sort of woman whose prejudices would be rooted and unchangeable. He felt for a moment that he hated her and her letter too, and was strongly tempted to destroy it, and, going down to his beautiful lady-love, to tax her with no questions, but to renew their old happy, peaceful times together. But he knew that this was only an idle dream: his parents had heard her story; de Villars knew it too. With his detestation of anything unpleasant and likely to hurt either his own feelings or the feeling of those he loved, it was torture to him to have now to place this letter in his pocket and descend to the well-known rooms on the floor below. He would have fought fifty duels rather than look forward to such a meeting as this must be.

Pierre opened the door in answer to his ring, and expressed surprise at the sight of him. Pierre was an admirable servant, well-mannered and quiet in his movements, but with a certain slyness of expression which Maurice disliked.

"Madame was in," he said; and he conducted Maurice through the first salon to the door of the inner room. Here Maurice dismissed him, and, drawing aside the silk curtains, he himself knocked at the door. "Come in," he heard her say, and opening the door he saw her seated at a little table, the red light from the lamp suspended above falling on her hair, as she bent her graceful head over the letter she was writing. She was wearing the pale blue velvet gown in which he thought she looked best of all, and he could see the ring he had given her shining on her left hand as it rested on the table before her.

His heart leaped up at the sight of her; the tears rushed to his eyes. He had come to tell her that he suspected her of being a wicked woman, almost a murderess; but, following his first irresistible impulse, he sank down on his knees beside her, resting his cheek against her arm.

She was full of joy and wonder at the sight of him.

"Maurice, my dear, dear Maurice, back so soon! Has anything happened? You have had no accident, I hope? Or did you not go after all? You are quite well, are you not?" she went on anxiously, raising his head between both her hands and gazing into his face. "My poor boy," she exclaimed, "you look horribly ill! What has happened? Tell me, dear."

He looked steadfastly into her eyes a moment before he answered her. Could it be possible that the sweetness and purity, which he seemed to read there were really absent from her heart? That this woman whom he had known and worshipped as his ideal of all that was good and womanly, could really be the evil creature whose history he had heard yesterday?

He sat down beside her on the sofa.

"The two journeys have tired me," he said; "but I have so much to tell you that I could not keep away any longer."

"Why, you silly boy," she said, "you might have written. But I can't blame you, even for risking your health, when you bring me back yourself. I have missed you so. No one has been here since you left except Dr. Grantley, and he only came to scold me." Her face clouded a little. "He told me among other things," she added lightly, "that I wasn't half as good-looking as his mother, and she is nearly seventy. But you must be half-dead, poor boy. Let me ring and have some dinner prepared for you at once."

She was about to rise, but he laid his hand on her arm.

"No, don't ring, Eveline, I want to talk to you quietly first. I—I spoke to my mother and father about our engagement."

"And they objected? Ah, I feared they would. I was just writing to you, to warn you to break it to them gently."

"Were you writing to me then when I came?" he asked, touched at this fresh proof of her affection for him.

"Why," she answered, laughing and blushing, "I began a letter to you the moment I returned from seeing you off."

"You do love me—you must love me

then, Eveline," he said, taking her cool white hand between his two hot ones. "Why do you love me?"

"Because you are kind and gentle, and pure-hearted and true; because you are not only my lover, but my dear, dear friend as well. Because I am happier, more at peace with you, than I have ever been all my life before; because I love you, in fact," she added tenderly. "I am telling you all about it in this letter."

"Ah! that letter—do you take care of your letters?" he asked in a different tone; "I mean, letters addressed to you?"

She looked at him in surprise.

"What I want to ask you," he went on hurriedly, "is this: did you ever lose a letter?"

"Yes," she answered slowly, "I lost a letter once—about six weeks ago; a very cruel letter, that I had taken with me to read over quietly, to think how much I deserved of the harsh things said to me in it, by the most bitter enemy I have in the world."

"Where did you lose it?" he asked in a low voice.

She hesitated, and looked at him with a startled expression in her brown eyes.

"Why do you ask me all these questions, Maurice?"

"Because I have found that letter, Eveline, and I have it here."

He drew the torn leaf from his pocket, and laid it on the table before her.

"Is that the one you lost?" he asked. And, drawing a quick breath, she answered:

"Yes."

CHAPTER XII.

THERE was a long pause between them.

When he looked at her again all the colour had left her face. She was staring at him with the same hopeless expression in her eyes he had seen there before, when her husband's brother refused to recognise her in the Bois. Against his reason, all his heart went out to her in pity as he watched her.

"Eveline," he exclaimed impulsively, "I don't want to believe anything against you. I told you I should believe nothing, until I heard it confirmed by you. But when I got to England I found Madame Ravelli staying at my father's house, with her daughter-in-law. And yesterday evening, as we were all sitting round the fire, just after I had persuaded my father to

come over with me to see you and fetch you back with us, Madame Ravelli told us all her version of her son's life and of his death. And when I remembered all that had happened here, every little event seemed to confirm her story, so that, instead of being able to stand up and confront her with her falsehood, I had to creep from the room and leave them, as if I were the guilty person. I was half mad at first; but when I thought of you, and how much I loved you, and what I had promised you, I stole out of the house, took the train to London, and to-day crossed the sea again, and have come straight to you."

"You believed them then?" she asked, in a tone that betrayed neither surprise nor reproach, but only a dull hopelessness.

"I did not know what to think, what to believe."

"Remember," she went on, still in the same voice, "that I tried to tell you myself, that I said it would be better for you to hear it first from me."

He looked at her in doubtful fear. Her manner seemed scarcely that of an innocent woman indignant at a wrongful accusation. It was rather that of a criminal, aware that no defence can be made for a crime constant reference to which is wearying. As she sat silent again, with her head bent down, a cold expression came into his blue eyes, and, looking up suddenly, she saw it.

"What is the use of talking when you have made up your mind not to believe me," she said. "Here is your ring." She drew it from her finger as she spoke. "Dr. Grantley was right. I ought to have told you. But I was afraid of losing your love. Now that I have lost it, take back your ring. You are free to go."

He rose to his feet, hesitated, and then sat down again.

"No," he said, "I am not going until I have heard your version too. I know it is painful for you; but you owe it to me to tell me the whole truth. I see now that it was my own fault I did not hear it before. Only tell me that woman was lying, and I will believe you."

"Of what use is it that I say it is untrue?" she asked, for the first time showing impatience, and starting to her feet. "Did I not tell everyone the truth at first, and who believed me? No one but the O'Haras, who took my word, because they loved me, and Dr. Grantley and his mother, who were fond of me too. I have

no proof of what I say. My husband, Tito—the only two men who knew everything that happened—they are both dead, killed, so people will tell you, through me.”

She covered her face with her hands and stood motionless for a few moments.

“It is quite useless,” she went on again, in a calmer tone, and resuming her seat. “I have left off talking about myself, and I accept avoidance and insult as if I deserved them.”

Maurice grew impatient in his turn.

“Remember,” he said, “you are talking to a man who loves you, and who wishes with his whole heart to know that you are, as he always thought, worthy to be loved.”

“What can I say to you?” she exclaimed helplessly. “Only in heaven, where all things are known, shall I be judged rightly, as a weak and foolish, but never a wicked woman. All this unhappiness I brought upon myself by over-obedience to a husband I was afraid of, but to whom I was always perfectly faithful in word, and thought, and deed. For, Maurice, I was married to a gambler, a man who only lived for the excitement of high play, and who, less than a year after our marriage, reproached me for having attracted him by mere valueless beauty, when he might have become the husband of a woman whose money would have helped to perfect his system. His system!” she repeated to herself, “I heard of nothing else from morning till night. He had squandered his own fortune before he met me; but his family, who were very proud, shut their eyes to his life, and wished him to retrieve his fortunes by a wealthy marriage.

“I am not accusing my husband. He was never absolutely cruel to me, and I believe he loved me in his way; but he hurried from our child’s death-bed to the card-table, and, when he returned, he forgot that I was a mother grieving for the death of her only child, and approached me with being unsympathetic because I did not rejoice with him over his winnings. I had loved him before; I do not think I loved him again. But I am not a woman of violent feelings, and he found no change in me. I believe he cared more for me than for any living creature—for anything, indeed, but the gambling-table. He spent his money, when he had it, in buying me dresses and jewellery, and he knew he could trust me absolutely.

“We had been married between four and

five years, when, at a ball in Venice, my husband introduced me to Tito Ravelli and his wife. She was a French girl, very young, gentle, and loveable. He was an Italian, with a curious nature, which, unfortunately, I never understood. I am not naturally clever, and my own griefs and troubles absorbed me then to the exclusion of all outer things. My dear mother was only a few months dead; my child had died a year before; we were terribly in debt, and I could not check my husband’s extravagance, nor had I the slightest influence over him in his frequent sullen fits of moroseness. I think a clever, strong-willed woman might have done him some good, but I was simply afraid of him, and my only anxiety was to keep him pleased and amused, and, if possible, to distract him from his absorbing passion.

“I liked Tito Ravelli, and I would have made a friend of his wife. I did so, indeed, until her mother-in-law came and warned her away from me—I did not at first know why, for Tito, when with me, was the gentlest and most inoffensive creature. He would beg to be allowed to come and read to me, or play to me, and, as I was very lonely, I should have been glad of his companionship, but that I feared he should thus neglect his newly-made wife. So I invited her too, and she came, until Madame Ravelli the elder prevented her. Then I went to my husband, and told him that I thought he had better suggest to Tito, who was his constant companion, to discontinue his visits, as his wife might very naturally object to them. But my husband broke into a fit of anger that terrified me, declaring that if he, the Count of Montecalvo, could trust his wife, Madame Tito Ravelli could trust her husband; that he did not like me to be dull; and that he desired, even commanded, that I should receive his friend whenever he presented himself.

“The Count had engaged an English widow lady, named Mrs. Symonds, who has since left Europe, as a companion for me; sometimes, too, I had old Mrs. Grantley, sometimes one of the Miss O’Haras, staying with me, so that I scarcely ever saw Tito alone. But when I did he was always the same—gentle, soft-mannered, sympathetic. I used to encourage him to talk of his wife, to beg him to bring her to see me. Even had I been a free woman and he a free man, and had I known that he loved me, I do not think that I should have ever returned Tito

Ravelli's affection. To me there is something about an Italian nature so unsafe, so violent, and therefore so at variance with my own, that, except in my very early girlhood, I do not think I could ever have grown to love an Italian.

"All this time my husband was growing much more amiable, and much kinder to me. He would buy me handsome presents, and would even stay and have tea with me in my sitting-room in the afternoons, if Tito was there too. In fact, I found the only thing to render my husband's home attractive to him was his friend's presence. He himself would bring him to see me nearly every day, and take him out driving with us. When Dr. Grantley remonstrated with my husband they had a violent quarrel, of which I did not hear till long afterwards; it ended in Dr. Grantley's being forbidden the house.

"When we travelled hurriedly from one gambling resort to another, Tito either accompanied or followed us, my husband once declaring that if I banished his friend I banished him too. When I ventured to remonstrate with Tito for neglecting his wife, he told me that they had long since separated by mutual consent; that she disliked him, and preferred to live with his mother. He never attempted to treat me other than as a friend, and only once in life tried to offer me a present—a diamond bracelet—which he entreated me to accept as a proof of his esteem for me, and of his affection for my husband. But I persuaded him to send it to his wife instead, and I myself saw it posted to her. I can see now how blind, how weak I was. But I knew nothing of my husband's affairs, and was too happy to see him peaceable and contented to dare to question him on the subject. Once, indeed, when I had overheard that he was losing large sums at play, although I knew we were living in greater luxury than ever, I ventured to speak to him about it; but he referred me to an obdurate old wealthy uncle who had relented at last, and left him all his money, and I believed him.

"Madame Ravelli has told you what the end of it all was."

She stopped; the colour left even her lips.

"Three years ago I was sitting alone one evening by the fire in my salon, trying to read, but really thinking of the terrible fits of gloom to which my husband had again been subject during the last few days.

"Suddenly the door opened, and Tito appeared. I looked up gladly, as I thought

he had perhaps persuaded my husband to leave the gambling-table earlier than usual, a thing I had often asked him to do for me.

"But, in my first glance at his face, I saw that it was not the Tito I had known, or, at least, not the Tito I thought I knew. I thought at first he must be mad, or excited with wine.

"Flinging himself at my feet, he seized my hands and covered them with burning kisses.

"'Tito! Signor Ravelli, rise; you are not in your right senses; you terrify me,' I exclaimed.

"But he stopped my words with a torrent of passionate reproaches for my coldness; swearing that he had loved me for three years, a year even before he had met me at Venice; and that he had sacrificed all—his wife, his mother, his fortune, his honour—for me.

"'I know you have not known it,' he cried. 'Had you had the least suspicion of it, I should have told you all my love long ago. But you have sat there every day like some pictured saint, and I dared not tell you.'

"I did not know what to say or do. I begged him to be calm; commanded him to leave me. I was utterly astounded, bewildered, distressed. I reminded him of his family, of my husband—his friend. He laughed wildly.

"Your husband!" he exclaimed. "Your husband, who has sold me every five minutes I have spent with you until to-night, when, as he has gambled away every shilling I possessed, and I am a beggar, he has quarrelled with me, discarded me."

I sank back into the chair from which I had risen. It was too ghastly to believe at first.

"I told you my wife did not love me; had returned to her home," he said. "That was not true. She is in Rome, and has been there for a year, tormenting me with letters which I have ceased to open. I have quarrelled with a mother who adores me, because she spoke ill of you. Your husband is a scoundrel, a heartless gambler, who cares nothing for you. I worship you, and have sacrificed everything for you. Now I have come to beg, to implore you to have pity on me, and to leave this place with me to-night at once."

"Maurice, what could I do? I tried appealing to his generosity, to his pride, his honour, his religion; but in vain. At last, when he took a dagger from inside his

coat, and threatened to kill himself at my feet if I did not consent to fly with him, I shrieked in terror for assistance. I did not even know that my husband was in the house; but when, in answer to my cries, he entered the room and I saw him struggling with Tito for the weapon I had seen in his hand, terror deprived me of consciousness, and, for the first time in my life, I fainted.

"Of what took place afterwards I knew nothing until several hours later, when I found myself lying in my own rooms attended by my maid, Mrs. Symonds, and Dr. Grantley.

"As soon as I could speak, Dr. Grantley made me enter his carriage, which was waiting, and accompany him to his mother's house. Here they told me that my husband was dead, but they would tell me no more, and the next day Mrs. Grantley took me away with her to another part of Italy. A week later, in a paper which a servant secretly gave me to read, I saw the account of my husband's death and of the subsequent suicide of Tito Ravelli. I read, too, a copy of the mad letter which the unhappy man had written to me, and, through all my grief and horror, there flashed across my mind the awful suggestion of what the world would think and say of me. So, with only a letter of grateful thanks for her goodness, I secretly left the house of Mrs. Grantley, and returned to Rome, where I knew Tito's widow and mother were.

"I tried in vain to see them, to prove my innocence, to entreat their pardon for any share I might have had in bringing this trouble upon them by my blind obedience to my husband.

"But my letters were returned, and their doors, as well as those of everyone I had ever known in Rome, were closed against me. I was pointed at in the streets; treated with frigid contempt by women, with coarse familiarity by men.

"My husband had died penniless. I sold everything I had left, and fled to England, intending to try and support myself by teaching. There, and when my money was almost gone, and for days I had lived in hopeless, weary loneliness, on the verge of starvation, I suddenly found, by an advertisement for me in an English paper, that I was a wealthy woman. My stepfather, knowing nothing of my story, had left me all his fortune when he died far away in the north of Scotland.

"It was partly, I suppose, to spite his relations, and partly, I hope, through a wish to atone for his harshness to my dead mother and to myself, that he disposed thus of his property. The truth of this part of my story you can, I believe, prove for yourself by a visit to Somerset House when you are in London. My stepfather's name was James Gordon Douglas, and he died two years and a half ago, as you will find by reading a copy of his will.

"Mrs. Symonds is now in America, and I do not know her address. Beyond her evidence, which would be valuable, I have only the personal affection and trust of the O'Haras and the Grantleys to vouch for the truth of all that I have told you. Dr. Grantley's mother lives at Boulogne; she and her son have always been among my warmest friends.

"I have tried vainly to atone for the evil I inadvertently helped to bring about by seeking out Madame Ravelli and her daughter-in-law as soon as I heard that they were living in poverty in England. But when I crossed the Channel six weeks ago for that purpose they again refused to see me, and the elder lady wrote me a letter, which I lost in the Vallée du Nacre, where I had taken it to read again on my way back to Paris. This is the letter. How did it come into your possession?"

"I found it before I ever saw you," he answered; "and it has been upstairs among my things until to-day. I have often thought of showing it to you, as it seemed so interesting and so strange. I wish to Heaven I had done so, for then I should have heard all this story long ago, and from your lips first."

"Before you had learned to love me?" she said mournfully.

"Before I had told you that I loved you, yes."

NOTICE.

On NOV. 12th will be published,
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A Weekly Journal
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No. 937. NEW SERIES.

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 13, 1886.

PRICE TWOPENCE.

A DATELESS BARGAIN.

By C. L. PIRKIS,

Author of "Lady Lovelace," etc.

CHAPTER XXIX.

So the house in Eaton Square once more put on a smart and festive appearance, as became a house whose mistress was about to forget her widow's weeds and don bridal attire.

"Mind," Uncle Archie had said to his sister-in-law, in a voice that recalled a rusty gate creaking on its hinges, "there's to be no wretched parade of wedding finery. The first sign of cake or favours will send me back in a trice to Gloucestershire, and you'll have to find somebody else to give you to the happy man."

So Mrs. Shenstone, after much bemoaning, was forced to content herself with a marriage in a travelling dress, a quiet family luncheon, and a departure immediately after for the nearest railway station en route for Paris.

"No satin slippers, no flowers, no rice; no anything delightful!" she lamented to Joyce, as she kissed her at the hall door; "creeping out of the house for all the world as though we were ashamed of what we were doing!"

"As you very well might be, both of you, at your time of life," grumbled Uncle Archie to himself, as he shut the door on the departing carriage. "Of course it's your own business, and you are each of you old enough to know what you are about; but for the life of me I couldn't say what you can see in each other to take a liking to."

Perhaps the newly-wedded pair might have been driven into a corner with the question.

Possibly Mrs. Shenstone, if she had been

compelled to a truthful answer, would have said: "He is fifteen years older than I, and he calls me 'my child.' The combined facts take at least ten years off my age. Also he will take me the round of all the delightful watering-places and cities in Europe, and I shall return with a semi-foreign air of distinction which will enable me to throw open my doors in London to my friends with increased éclat."

And the old General, had the magic flute compelled his candour, might have answered somewhat as follows:

"I certainly thought her fortune was in her own hands; but still, after all, five hundred a year, added to my own six hundred, won't make a bad income. The daughters are easy-going, generous girls, and will be sure to let the mother have the old home to live in whenever she wants it, and as much of her old income as she requires for life. Also, she won't make a bad sort of companion for a man at my age. One can't get all one wants in this world; I've a horror of strong-minded women and 'ladies intellectual,' and, whatever her faults may be, they won't carry her that way, at any rate."

The old General was right in his estimate of the course of conduct Mab and Joyce meant to pursue towards their mother. They steadily refused to draw any benefit from her second marriage, as from the conditions of their father's will they very well might have done. Joyce was spokeswoman, as usual, and told Uncle Archie of their resolution not to touch one penny of their mother's income.

"If the dear old home in Gloucestershire is to be kept up again, mother will spend her money on it as she did before, no doubt," she said; "and living quietly, as Mab and I do, we have more money than we know what to do with."

Anyone would have endorsed her statement. Living a life of conventional seclusion, with every girlish outlet of enjoyment cut off, she and Mab might have lost one-half their incomes without having to alter their daily routine in any one particular.

After her first little outburst of indignant remonstrance, born of reverence for her father's memory, Joyce did her best to make things sunshiny and smooth for her mother. She threw as much heart as she had to throw into the trousseau and wedding arrangements. All her mother's whims and wishes—and their name was legion—she endeavoured to meet half-way.

"I should like, dear," Mrs. Shenstone had said, "for you to lend me Kathleen for a travelling-maid. She arranges hair so much better than Price—has a better eye for a profile. Also in appearance she accords so much better with a wedding-trip; she is, in fact, exactly the kind of maid a bride should have."

Joyce, though a little surprised at her mother's request, had assented readily enough.

Kathleen of late had fallen out of her favour. To her mind there was a suspicion of underhandedness about the girl, of some strong feeling at work in her mind which for certain reasons she was keeping hidden. She did not believe in her repeated asseverations that she knew nothing whatever of her brother's whereabouts; nor did she think the fact of her disinclination to become Mrs. O'Shea fully accounted for her dejected appearance and frequent red eyes. Mab, it is true, steadily refused to countenance any suspicion concerning the girl, but then Mab's conduct could scarcely be taken as a guide for anyone else's, her Christian charity had of late so far outstripped in growth her common-sense.

"You may have her, mother, and welcome," Joyce had said, in reply to her mother's request; "only, don't let her go out alone, or she'll be sure to get into mischief."

The evening of the wedding-day found Joyce and Uncle Archie sitting in council once more in the library.

"This is the exact state of the case, Joyce," the old gentleman was saying: "gout is coming, coming, as fast as it can; and, unless I can get to Cheltenham, and my old doctor, before it sets in, well—the consequences may be something awful for everybody."

"Oh, Uncle Archie, go to-morrow; why not?" cried Joyce. "I can look after Mab. I am never going to lose sight of

her now, and mean to get in the best doctors in London to see her, one after the other."

"Cheltenham is a famous place for doctors; you have the pick and choice of doctors there," said Uncle Archie, as snappishly as he could make up his mind to speak to Joyce.

After this there followed a briak argument between uncle and niece, as to the rival merits of London and Cheltenham as health resorts.

Joyce showed a doggedness of purpose to remain where she was, for which Uncle Archie was unprepared.

"I am not young, Uncle Archie," she said, and as she said it, in very truth she felt as though she had seen old Time's wheels go round for half a century at least. "We shall live so quietly; we shall go nowhere; we shall see no one. Some day we'll run down to Cheltenham and spend a month with you, but just now pray leave us alone here to do the best we can for ourselves."

But the real, though unavowed, reason that chained her tight to her London home was the thought, the instinct, the hope—so vague, so half-formed it was not possible to clothe it with words—that here, in the thick of the stirring life, where she had looked her last at her young lover, she would get news of him, living or dead, if ever such news was to be had.

People forget sometimes how useless it is to stand watching the curl of the water where the brave swimmer sank; and how the rocks far out at sea may get tidings of him sooner than the shallow river bed.

CHAPTER XXX.

JOYCE was as good as her word. On the very day after her mother's wedding, that is to say on the day of Uncle Archie's departure for Cheltenham, she set to work to turn herself as nearly as possible into Mab's shadow. It was a difficult part to play, this of a hybrid between a mother and a maid. Joyce set about it with diffidence. The buoyant self-confidence which at one time had carried her so smoothly over contrary currents, was altogether lacking to her now. It had been born of a joyous heart and sunshiny experiences. It died with them. In its place there had come an apprehensive diffidence—that timid touching of stinging nettles which tells the tale of the sharply-stung hand.

It must be admitted that Mab's demeanour was not calculated to inspire confidence. On the morning of Uncle Archie's departure, she came down early as usual, ate her breakfast hurriedly, and prepared to set off as usual for her morning's service.

Joyce demurred to this. "Uncle Archie and Aunt Bell will be starting in an hour or so; can't you give up your service for one day to see the last of them?" she pleaded.

Mab hesitated only a moment. Then she shook her head. "I must, must go to the Abbey to-day—you will understand why later on, Joyce. I will go now and say good-bye to Uncle Archie—it can't make much difference."

Joyce met with a second repulse later on in the day. Uncle Archie had departed. Luncheon laid for two in the big dining-room did not look a cheering or inviting meal. Mab as usual ate next to nothing, and Joyce seized this as an opportunity to introduce the wish of her heart, viz., that Mab should go with her that very afternoon to consult an eminent physician, whom she and Uncle Archie over-night had decided to be the man in London most likely to understand the peculiarities of Mab's condition.

Mab did not give the suggestion a welcome. "I will go to see any physician in London you like, Joyce, if it will make you happy, but I tell you most positively, as I shall tell him, I will take no drugs of any sort. Nor will I follow any directions he may choose to give. My lines are laid down for me."

Joyce, in her amazement, craved an explanation. "What lines, dear, and who has laid them down? You talk in enigmas," she said.

Mab flushed a deep red. "It is of no use my explaining, you couldn't understand, Joyce. By-and-by, when you know more, you will forgive me, I am sure, any pain I may have caused you. Only let me alone now, I beg, I implore."

"Couldn't understand—let you alone," repeated Joyce vaguely, in a voice full of pain, and with a rush of hot tears to her eyes.

Mab grew vehement. "No, you couldn't understand if you tried your hardest from morning till night. Could I understand, do you think, if an angel came down from heaven and talked to me in heaven's language?"

And here she hurriedly pushed away

her plate, quitted the table, and quitted the room.

Joyce left alone, felt as one in an earless, drifting boat feels sometimes, when he suddenly looks up and measures the space between himself and the receding shore. There were leagues between her and Mab now, not a doubt.

A servant coming in with a telegram made her for the moment bury her heart-ache out of sight.

Her thoughts naturally flew to the travelling bride and bridegroom. Could any ill-adventure have befallen them?

The telegram was dated from Calais, and ran as follows:

"Despatch Price at once to Hôtel Bristol, Paris. Kathleen has disappeared."

Later on in the day, the telegram was supplemented by a letter from the General. Kathleen, it must be stated, had been despatched to Victoria Station with Mrs. Shenstone's huge dress boxes and baskets, there to await her mistress's arrival after the wedding ceremony. The General in his letter stated that they found her there right enough in the midst of the baggage, but that on arriving at Dover, though the baggage had been deposited in the luggage van, Kathleen was nowhere to be seen. They had naturally concluded that she had, through some mischance, lost her train, and expected her arrival by the next. However, up to the departure of the mail packet, there had been no sign of her. In the circumstances, he strongly advised that the authorities at Scotland Yard should be communicated with.

Joyce immediately carried out this suggestion.

"Only, however, for the sake of her father and mother. It cannot possibly concern anyone else," she wrote back to the old General by return post, indignantly resenting what seemed to her an innuendo levelled at Frank behind the words "in the circumstances."

CHAPTER XXXI.

"CAPTAIN BUCKINGHAM wishes to see Miss Shenstone."

This was the announcement that fell upon Joyce's ear, as she and Mab sat together on the day after the news of Kathleen's disappearance had been received. Anger and indignation sent the hot blood in a rush to Joyce's cheeks.

"How dare he?" she cried, jumping up

from her chair and the letter she was writing. "Tell him——"

But Mab interrupted, with a self-assertiveness that sat strangely upon her. "I am Miss Shenstone; Captain Buckingham wishes to see me," she said, with a rush of hot blood to her face, which most assuredly was not caused by indignation.

Then to the servant she added: "Tell Captain Buckingham I will come down at once and see him."

Joyce sprang at her, as the servant closed the door, and folded her hands over her arm.

"Mab, Mab, what is this? what does it all mean?" she cried vehemently. "Tell me; I insist, I must know. How dare this man come to the house in this way, asking to see you? Have you given him any encouragement to do so? Have you seen or spoken to him since Uncle Archie forbade him the house?"

Mab answered calmly enough: "Yes, Joyce, I have seen him many times since, and always by appointment. Sometimes in Mrs. O'Halloran's drawing-room, sometimes in my morning walks."

"Mab!"

"Don't judge me harshly, Joyce. I had, ah! such a strong reason for wishing to see him—a reason which you yourself could not help approving. Our talk has been always of you—your lost happiness, and how to get it back for you. But yesterday——"

"Yesterday!"

"Yesterday he startled me a little by suddenly breaking off from our talk and telling me he loved me, and wanted to marry me. I could not find words to answer him then, so I told him to come here to-day for his answer."

Joyce's reply to this was a cry of pain so bitter, it told of a breaking heart. But she still clutched at Mab's arm.

"Mab, Mab, my darling Mab! it cannot be, it shall not be. You marry a man of that sort! I could hold you against him—against the world! This man shall not drag you away from me!"

In very truth, a doughtier than Captain Buckingham might have essayed in vain to unlock those convulsively clasping fingers!

Mab suddenly took to trembling under their touch.

"Joyce, I will speak out plainly to you. I feel I have only a 'No' to give him—I felt it from the first. I have put away all thoughts of that sort from my mind——"

"All thoughts of what sort?" questioned Joyce, holding Mab tighter as she felt the girl trembling more and more.

"All thoughts of love or marriage. In the life I have set myself to live, one sees the end as soon as the beginning. One has to put away the things of sense to grasp the things of soul——"

But with the last word her voice faltered. She grew heavy in Joyce's arms; her head sank back, her face grew white.

Joyce laid her on the sofa, and rang the bell for the servants. One she despatched for a doctor, two she left with restoratives, bidding them sit by Mab's couch till she came back.

Even a disabled war-horse will fall into step at the sound of the bugle. Joyce went, with head erect, straight to the drawing-room, to meet and dismiss Captain Buckingham.

"It would not take many minutes to do this," she said to herself. A few cold, decisive words, a touch to the bell, a look he should carry away and remember, and the thing would be done.

There was no sign of surprise on Captain Buckingham's bold, handsome face as she entered the room. From the first, when he had made his reckoning of the difficulties which lay between him and Mab Shenstone and her fortune, he had given foremost place among them to Joyce, with her vigorous animosity.

Well and good, he had said to himself; he had his weapons ready to combat alike vigour and animosity. And they were stouter and crueller than those with which, later on, he intended to do battle to Mab's convictions and fancies, so fine in their substance, so intense in their fervour, they might fitly be called religious.

He rose from his chair, but made no attempt at hand-shaking.

"I wish to see Miss Shenstone," he said, with a formal bow.

Joyce returned the bow with equivalent formality.

"I have to decline for her the honour of receiving you now, or at any future time," she said coldly, laying her hand upon the bell to expedite his departure.

This was a rushing into battle without preliminary proclamation with a vengeance.

"I must hear that sentence from her own lips before I accept it," he said loudly, defiantly.

"That you will never do. Captain Buckingham, I must ask you to under-

stand that your visits to my sister, and every attention, small or great, you are wishing to show her, are at once and finally declined by her and by her family."

"That also I must hear from her own lips, or I must decline to accept as final."

"Captain Buckingham, I wish you good morning," and again Joyce's fingers rested on the bell-handle.

He laid his hand on hers. "Don't do that; don't make yourself ridiculous. No one in your house could turn me out if I chose to stay here. I have come this morning expressly to say something to you—to your sister. Say it I will—listen to it you shall."

An electric battery could not have sent the blood coursing at a more rapid rate through her veins.

She drew back a step, though not in fear.

"Shall—will!" she repeated. "Those are not words to be spoken to me—by you."

She was speaking to him; but she was thinking of Frank, and how summary would have been his method of dealing with such impertinence.

Buckingham went on in his loudest and most emphatic manner: "I shall use none others. I repeat, you shall listen to what I have to say, and they are words that will send you down there on the carpet at my feet, praying me to tell you less or to tell you more."

Joyce's hot indignation was swamped now in a dread that chilled her cheeks and lips. His words could point only one way. Her fears had always suggested dark suspicions of this man. His words confirmed her fears.

She strove to command herself, and answered calmly with a question: "Are you referring to Mr. Ledyard? Let me understand what ground we are on."

"Supposing I decline to answer your question, what then?"

Her hot indignation came back to her.

"There are ways of making the unwilling speak. There is law in the land," she cried vehemently.

He laughed contemptuously. "Ah! English law has done so much for you already, no wonder you put your trust in it."

He paused for a reply. Joyce for the moment felt herself suffocating. Words would not come.

He went on:

"Send at once to your favourite detectives at Scotland Yard. Say to them:

'Here is a man who knows the secret you are hunting for.' Shall I tell you what their answer will be?"

Joyce clenched her fingers into the palms of her hand, and held back her words tight between her teeth.

"They will say to you: 'My dear young lady, we know that man, not you. He is not to be believed on his oath. Don't you know that the business of the loud-mouthed democrat is to set the police on false scents from year's end to year's end? That is the chief way in which he serves his cause. Take it for granted he knows no more than you or I do.'"

Joyce, as she listened, could almost have believed the man must have heard Morton's own words to her, when once she had spoken to him as to Buckingham's possible complicity in Frank's disappearance; so faithfully were they reproduced.

"You know I am speaking the truth to you," Buckingham went on, reading easily enough conviction in the girl's face. "Now come to me instead and say to me: 'Give me your secret, it is life or death to me.' Shall I tell you what my reply will be?"

He paused a moment, then dropped into a lower and less defiant key:

"I will say to you: 'My dear Miss Shenstone, on the very day that your sister becomes my wife, I will repay your congratulations with the information you are desirous of.'"

A rush of passionate words came to her lips:

"You—you can lift in a moment this awful load of agony from our hearts, and you are standing here making a bargain out of our necessity?"

"Ay, and a good hard bargain I mean to make of it, too. No shiftiness or double-dealing about it, I assure you."

She drew back a step, wonder, incredulity, bewilderment, all showing in her face. In her most sombre conceptions of villainy she had never pictured such blackness as this.

Buckingham went on: "Don't let us waste time in question and answer. Let us get to the point at once. I want something done that you can do; you want something told that I can tell. In other words, I want you to use your influence with your sister so as to induce her to become my wife, and you want me to give you a piece of information in which you are greatly interested. Very good; let us simply agree to an exchange of favours, and all contention comes to an end."

White and tottering, she crossed the room and laid her hand upon his arm.

"Are you a man, or what are you?" she said in low, unnatural tones, her eyes repeating the question to his, which, bold as they were, for one moment quailed and drooped.

Only for one moment; the next, confidence, and something akin to derision, came back to them.

He laughed lightly.

"Are you insinuating a compliment? Am I to infer that you consider I am exhibiting superhuman devotion and heroism in the very simple and lover-like request I made just now, that you would do your best to bring about a marriage between me and a woman I am devotedly attached to?"

Then he contrived to free himself from the pressure of her hand, which yet rested on his arm, and made one step towards the door, adding:

"But you are disturbed, agitated, this morning, and unable to see things from a common-sense point of view. In a day or two I will call again, and talk this matter out with you. You will then have had time to think it well over."

Joyce sprang forward, putting herself between him and the door.

"No," she said, in the same low, dissonant voice as before; "there shall be no talk of to-morrow. Having said so much, you shall say more. You are bound to!"

"Shall! Bound to! Those are words with a nice sound in them. Suggest the rack, 'peine forte et dure,' and all that sort of thing."

"I repeat, bound," and here her voice grew firmer, louder, though white, whiter her face was getting. "Bound by honour, by conscience, by humanity."

He folded his arms across his chest, and looked down on her.

"Ah!" he said mockingly, "what if I confess that these things—honour, conscience, humanity—are names to me, nothing more?"

Yet as he stood there mocking her agony, an overmastering admiration for this young girl, so bold in her weakness, so defiant with her lack of resources, took possession of him.

Joyce struck her hands together passionately.

"And you, who own this to me, ask me to get Mab to be your wife. I wish I had a thousand tongues, so that every one of them might answer 'no' to you."

He kept his head cool in spite of her passion.

"Then there is no more to be said," he answered calmly. "I will, if you like, consider the thousand tongues have spoken their 'no' to me. I will take it as final so far as you are concerned, but whether I shall take it as final so far as your sister is concerned, is another thing. Now I will bid you the 'good morning' you so politely bade me at the beginning of our interview."

He looked at her as though expecting her to move from her leaning posture against the door.

She did not stir.

"No," she said, her voice dropping into her former low, unnatural tone, "you do not leave this room with your secret untold. There must be a power in heaven or earth that will make you speak out."

He interrupted her with a scornful laugh.

"I should amazingly like to make acquaintance with it. Those who think to drive me into a thing I'm not inclined for, are terribly out in their reckoning."

"Then, Captain Buckingham, I entreat," and here Joyce suddenly left her position at the door, clasped her hands, and stood in front of him. "If you will not be driven, be entreated; I will go down into the very dust at your feet; I will retract every bitter, bad word I have ever said of you; I will beg your pardon for them a thousand times over; I will speak of you to the very end of my life as the one to whom I owe everything, if you will tell me just this, nothing more: is he living or dead?"

There was no need to say who "he" was. Only one man's name was in their thoughts at that moment.

She was trembling from head to foot now; her face ashen white, her eyes glowing. A colder heart than Buckingham's might well have caught her fire and grown yielding.

He made no sign, however.

"Go on. What else would you do?" was all he said.

"What else?" she cried, in a wild whirl of hope that her words had touched his heart. "What one human being could do for another that would I do; my gratitude all my life long would be yours. Ask what you would, I would strive to get it for you."

"Go on."

"How can I go on? What more can I

say?" and now her wild whirl of hope changed to a wild whirl of dread. She made one step nearer to him, caught his hands in hers, clutching them tight in her agony. "Oh, Captain Buckingham!" she cried piteously, "you must have a heart, hide it though you may from all the world. You must have had a mother once who loved you; there must be someone in the whole world who would lay down her life for you. Think—you would you have had either tortured inch by inch as you torture me! Have mercy on me! It is only one word I ask of you—a 'yes' or a 'no' to my question: is he dead?"

A marble mask could not have been more impassive than Buckingham's face as he answered:

"And it is only one word I ask of you—a 'yes' to the request I made a moment ago. Speak that word, and you get the answer to your question. Refuse to speak it, and I exercise a similar discretion. There is no more to say."

Then he freed his hands from hers, strode past her, and left the room.

CHRONICLES OF SCOTTISH COUNTIES.

WEST LOTHIAN, OR LINLITHGOW.

Of all the palaces so fair
Built for the royal dwelling,
In Scotland far beyond compare,
Linlithgow is excelling.

THERE is, indeed, no more interesting ruin in the three kingdoms than that of the palace of the old Scottish Kings at Linlithgow. The site is so sweet and retired; the old burgh that adjoins the ruin is so quaint and old-fashioned; there is such a charming, quiet, and soft melancholy about the place, with its surroundings of green hills and placid lake, and little burns that murmur past the cottage doors; the whole scene is so satisfying and refreshing, and is encompassed by such an atmosphere of old-time memories and wonders, that the stranger tears himself away from the place with regret, while he feels that he carries away with him a better understanding of Scotland's ancient days, and of her old Royal line, than could be attained by long and laborious study.

It seems likely enough that the earliest human settlement at Linlithgow was in the centre of the lake itself—a settlement by that early race not unskilled in the arts of primitive civilisation. who loved to raise

their dwellings in the midst of waters, working like beavers, with piles and wattled embankments. The surface of the lake was, probably, higher in those distant ages, and the mound on which the palace is built was then, probably, an island. A rude stone causeway would connect the island with the main land; and this, in the eyes of the Celtic settlers, who, sooner or later, appeared upon the scene, would form its most remarkable feature. The lake to them would be Llynlechog, or the Pool of the Causeway; and thus, with trifling adaptations to the heavier articulation of Saxon tongues, the name has come down to our own times.

The encompassing waters had shrunk, no doubt, to the dimensions of a shallow moat, when the troubles of the Scottish succession brought the first English Edward to the spot. The English King, too, seems to have found the place pleasant and taking, for he spent a whole winter here, and built a castle on the site, making it "a Pele mekill and stark." The Royal park about the margin of the lake is still called The Peel, and from the pleasant terrace by the margin of the waters you may see the massive foundations of the great castle-builder's fortress, upon which is reared the graceful entrance portal of later times.

The old Edwardian Castle had its adventures in the days of The Bruce. Once it was taken by the Scotch, by means of that well-worn stratagem of war, in the form of a hay-cart stuffed with armed men, which was manoeuvred so as to stick fast in the portal arch, and prevent the portcullis from descending, while men in ambush joined in the unexpected rush of warriors from beneath the hay, and carried the fortress by a coup de main. But the Castle was in English hands again in Edward the Third's reign, and some time after was gutted by a great fire, which destroyed also the nave of the ancient church. The Stuarts, pleased with the gentle beauties of the site, set to work to build a palace out of the blackened ruins. Bit by bit the work went on, the new structure following the lines of the inner bail of the old Castle, till the present quadrangular building was completed, with lofty turrets at each angle, and massive walls that defied any sudden attack. But, while offering a stern and blank exterior to dangers from without, the inner façade of the quadrangle was, and still is, even in its ruin, of noble and graceful aspect, enriched with millioned windows, and graceful oriels look-

ing down upon the velvet turf, while carvings in rich relief, heraldic devices, niches, statues, attest the taste and skill of the sculptors and masons, Italian and French, who reared this stately pleasure-house.

The western side of the quadrangle—the most ancient part of the present building—contains the apartments: a handsome reception-room, with a finely-wrought open fire-place, and a smaller inner chamber, where Mary Stuart made her first appearance in the world, in a moment of trouble and sorrow—her father dying lonely and despairing in Falkland; her mother's bed surrounded by vindictive and angry Nobles. From her birth, the poor babe was bought and sold, doubly bought and sold, and the agents of the rival purchasers hovered about her cradle.

The babe, who had become Queen of Scotland by her father's death a few days after her birth, narrowly escaped being carried off to England, to be brought up as an English Princess. Henry the Eighth meant to have her as a wife for his own infant son. The great Nobles of Scotland were bribed to acquiescence in the scheme; but first there was a doubt in the mind of the English Ambassador as to whether the babe were worth all the trouble. Report had it that the child was weakly, and little likely to live. But the Queen-mother herself set him right upon this point, introducing him into the Royal nursery and showing him the little innocent. "As goodly a child as I have seen of her age," reports the staid Sir Ralph Sadler, as the result of his diplomatic perquisition.

But the wonderful finesse and adroitness of the mother—a true daughter of the House of Guise—frustrated the plan. She convinced the Envoy that, far from being opposed to the English influence, there was nothing she would prefer, both for herself and her babe, than to be sheltered under the wing of the powerful and generous Monarch. And, while thus temporising with the English Court, her friends and the friends of France took means to arouse the national feeling on the matter; which proved so strong and fierce against the English alliance, that everything gave way before it. Ere long a national force encompassed the walls of Linlithgow, and the Queen-mother and the Royal babe were escorted, in its midst, to the impregnable Castle of Stirling. And then, in due time, the little Queen of Scots was delivered to the rival purchaser, and the

child was sent to France, to be brought up in a Court which was one of the worst possible schools for any of the virtues, or even the decencies, of the feminine character.

With Mary of Guise as Regent, the palace of Linlithgow was always a favourite residence. It had been her husband's gift to her. When the Royal marriage had been celebrated in Fife and Stirling, James the Fifth brought his bride to Linlithgow, when she exclaimed that she had never seen a more princely palace. The fine east wing had then all the gloss of newness upon it, and its stately corridors and noble halls were all brilliantly illuminated, and thronged with the beauty and chivalry of the realm in all the bravery of that brilliant and sumptuous age. What a contrast now, as the night dew settles upon the blackened walls, and the stars shine through the gaping vaults of the roofless dwelling! Then all was feasting and enjoyment, the cavernous kitchens lit up with huge fires, and, as at Camacho's wedding, the very skimming of the pots was a handsome meal for squire or man-at-arms. Now the hundred hearths are all cold, and the corbies build and croak about the shattered chimney shafts.

But there was something beside feasting and merry-making when the royal pair kept their Christmas at Linlithgow. At the Epiphany of 1540, David Lindsay's dramatic apologue of the Three Estates was represented before the King and Queen and the ladies of the Court, and, no doubt, a jolly laughing audience from the neighbouring Royal burgh. There was plenty of buffoonery of the coarsest to set the groundlings in a roar, with satire, and a good deal of plain speaking to make tingle the ears of Prelates and Cardinals, of Lawyers and Nobles, and even of Royalty itself.

The King's bed-chamber is still pointed out in the north-west corner of the Palace of Linlithgow; the pleasantest and most cheerful of all, with an outlook upon the silvery lake and the green hills, and softly undulated landscape by the only windows that are allowed to pierce the massive outer wall. But not the lofty walls and iron-bound gates, not the guards who kept watch in the antechamber, nor the warders who patrolled the battlements over his head, could protect the Monarch's couch from nightly fears. The pale forms of the victims of his ruthless and yet timid policy appeared before his distempered vision. Had the King possessed a more robust character, he might have regretted that he

had done so little with axe and gallows; that he had only cut down the humble weeds, and had left the towering growth of rank herbage. The latest of his victims, the fierce Sir James Hamilton, appeared before him in a vision, all bleeding from the scaffold, and holding in his hand the executioner's dripping sword. "Cruel tyrant," cried the shade, "thou hast unjustly murdered me, who was indeed barbarous to other men, but always faithful and true to thee; wherefore now shalt thou have thy deserved punishment." Upon this the apparition seemed to cut off first one arm of the King and then another, and promised to return ere long and finish the business. The death of the King's two sons shortly after, and on the same day, seemed to be a fulfilment of the ghostly warning, and the King ere long himself died, broken-hearted, in the shame and grief of his last unhappy days.

It will be remembered also that Linlithgow was the scene of another supernatural warning, which the King's father, James the Fourth, had received on the eve of his departure for Flodden Field. The scene of the warning was the Church of Linlithgow, a fine old building, which is separated from the Palace by only a strip of emerald turf.

The church is still in excellent preservation; the nave, which was burnt with the old castle in the fifteenth century, but soon after rebuilt on the old foundations, is now walled off from the chancel, where the service of the national kirk is conducted, the nave itself being utilised as a Sunday-school. The actual scene of James's warning is the south transept, where at that time was an altar consecrated to St. Katharine. The transept still remains very little altered, except that the shrine is broken and the painted glass no longer adorns the florid tracery of the east window. We may now follow the lines of Sir Walter Scott, who has given the incident in the fourth canto of *Marmion*, as he found it in the old chronicles of Pitscottie and Buchanan; an incident perfectly authenticated, and as well established by the evidence of eye-witnesses as any fact in Scottish history:

In Katharine's aisle the monarch knelt,
With sackcloth shirt and iron belt,
And eyes with sorrow streaming.

The Monarch's penitence was for his father's death at Sauchieburn, with his own share in that event; and the iron belt which he wore night and day was part of

his scheme of expiation, as were the masses which were continually being sung or said for the repose of his father's soul. At one of these masses the King was now assisting,

While for his Royal father's soul
The chanters sung, the bells did toll,
The Bishop mass was saying.

In the midst of the service, while the King was kneeling at his desk, engrossed with his devotions, a strange interruption occurred:

Stepped from the crowd a ghostly wight,
In azure gown with cincture white,
His forehead bald, his head was bare,
Down hung at length his yellow hair.

The mysterious figure, in fact, corresponds with received notions as to the aspect of the loved Apostle John. And there was a precedent for the appearance of such an angust messenger from the other world. It was St. John who had sent warning to Edward the Confessor of his approaching end—the tradition is recounted in the *Chronicles of Shropshire*—and what more natural than his appearance to him who might claim to be the lineal representative of the old line of Saxon Kings? In the character of St. John, at all events, and as the adopted son of the Virgin Mary, the visitant addressed the King as equal to equal:

My mother sent me from afar,
Sir King, to warn thee not to war,
Woe waits on thine array;
If war thou wilt, of woman fair,
Her witching wiles and wanton snare,
James Stuart, doubly warned, beware.

The apparition, having delivered his message, disappeared among the assembled and wondering throng.

Now, if we may hazard a guess, this mysterious visitant was no other than the Queen Margaret herself. The long yellow hair seems to lead that way, as well as the feminine postscript to the heavenly message. And depend upon it, that James, startled at the first onset, recognised the identity of his celestial visitant, and hid a cynic smile behind his illumined missal. Queen Margaret was just of the bold and gusty temperament to have carried out such a freak, and the assumption of the character of St. John was probably due to her knowledge of the tradition above alluded to, which is especially connected with Ludlow, where her brother Arthur had once held a kind of viceregal Court.

If this be the correct interpretation of the vision, the easy evasion of the messenger in the midst of the Royal suite, and

the King's neglect of the warning, are both accounted for. The Palace of Linlithgow was Margaret's own especial home.

The Queen sits lone in Lithgow pile,
And weeps the weary day.

Tradition points out a lofty look-out tower that rises above the battlements of the Palace as Queen Margaret's Bower, and represents the Queen as watching there, in lonely and anxious care, the return of her lord the King from the war; watching and wearying in vain, till mud-stained and dejected horsemen brought the dread news of Flodden, of the death of the King, and the slaughter of the flower of the land.

There was plenty of coming and going at Linlithgow as long as Mary of Lorraine was Regent for her infant daughter. Here she might well feel at home, for Lothian, in name as well as in natural features, is just another Lorraine. Here she met a Parliament that assembled in the great hall that still bears the name of Parliament Hall; and in the same place was held a Convocation of the clergy, Archbishops, Bishops, prelates of various degree, in all the pomp and circumstance of the old ritual so soon to be swept away.

Seven years after came three of the hardest-faced men in Scotland—Argyle, James Stewart (afterwards known as the Regent Murray), and John Knox himself—on a mission to reform the religious houses—the Carmelites, who had occupied a friary in the town since the end of the thirteenth century; the Knights of St. John, whose town house at Linlithgow is said to be still existing in the form of an old square tower near the railway station.

Henceforth there were few bright days at the old Palace. Mary Stuart herself does not seem to have loved the place; it was too sad, perhaps, with its memories of a parent she had hardly known. James the Sixth took the Palace in hand, and rebuilt the north side of the quadrangle; but his visits were few and far between, and from that time Linlithgow was abandoned to quietude and gloom—a kind of enchanted palace that was waiting for its Prince to set everything going again.

A hundred years had passed away, and the stillness was yet unbroken. The Commonwealth had come and gone. The swans on the lake, it is said—real Royal swans—had flown away when Cromwell's soldiers made their appearance, and had only returned—joyously splashing and bathing—at the Restoration. William the

Silent had passed into eternal silence. Queen Anne was dead, as everybody knew. The Hanoverian Georges had come and had remained; none of that family was likely to make an abode of Linlithgow, of which perhaps the Royal family had never heard. And then in the fulness of time the Prince arrived—the real Prince Charming—the beautiful young Prince at whose touch everything in the Palace came to life again.

A noble young Prince he was, this Charles Edward, when, with all the halo of victory about him, he came to spend a night at the old Palace of his ancestors. The keeper of the Palace was then a Mrs. Glen Gordon, a Jacobite dame, who did her best to give an air of festivity and Royal splendour to the scene. The old fountain was set running—so the story goes—with wine: the old broken fountain, now all choked with ferns and weeds. Had she discovered—this worthy scion of the good old stock—had she found treasure in the mouldy old cellars—old Bordeaux, with the yellow seal stamped with the Royal signet, or haply a pipe of Canary that had mellowed since the days of Queen Mary? Or perhaps, after all, she filled the marble basin with her own home-made gooseberry and red-currant wine. In the evening there was a grand reception, to which all came who dared; a baillie of the town was there, it is said, but most of the burghers read aright the signs of the times, and stopped away.

But, from the old mansions and manors round about, ancient carriages came lumbering along, old finery was furnished up, and wrinkled dames, and soft blushing maidens, and veterans in tarnished gold lace thronged the courtyard of the Palace, and mingled with Highland chiefs and kilted clansmen. Then the old windows shone forth once more in soft radiance after a hundred years of darkness. All was to begin again, and go on as things had gone in the old time.

But Linlithgow had to pay for this moment of illusion. A few months after the visit of the Prince, King George's men came marching through the town. A thousand of them were quartered in the Palace. It was in the bitter winter weather—the floors were covered with straw, great fires were built in the great cavernous hearths, and the soldiers made merry among the old tattered hangings and the scattered lumber of old furniture. Hawley's Dragoons, who had fled so shamefully before the enemy

not long before, were now in possession of the banqueting hall in the north wing, that James the Sixth had built. Dame Gordon had stuck to her post, and made the best she could of her rough guests. But when morning came, and trumpets sounded boot and saddle, Madam was horrified to see that the bold dragoons were amusing themselves by shovelling up the fire from the huge hearth and throwing it upon the thickly-piled straw.

The Gordon ran to General Hawley, to beg his interference to save the Palace. The General hemmed and hawed. Well, after all, it was not his business to protect a place which had sheltered such a traitorous rogue as the Pretender.

"Then, General," said the stout dame, losing no time in vain recrimination, "I'll just follow your example and rin awa'."

And presently the flames burst through the roof and windows, and ere long the whole stately pile was a smoking ruin.

And yet so solid and excellent was the building that, except for its roofless, forlorn condition, it stands as of old, perfect and complete, with staircases, turrets, and battlements practicable for the explorer, and with walls holding out valiantly against the stress of wind and weather. And to the eyes of most, the whole appears much more picturesque and noble as a ruin than it could have done as an inhabited building, and is besides much more accessible than palaces generally are. And with this we may find our way through the gateway leading to the town, once only subsidiary—the back door to the Palace as it were—the principal entrance being through a handsome gateway, at a point where the Red Lion Inn now stands, and so by a noble sweep through the park, and then by a bridge adorned with sculptures and statues, to the grand portal—the entrance this for Princes, Ambassadors, and the great Lords of the Realm. But even the smaller gateway has a fine appearance, with its cable mouldings, its oval meurtrières, its guard-chambers, and deep groovings for the massive portcullis. And so

Adeu Lithgow, whose palace of pleasure,
Micht be ane pattern in Portugall or France.

The town of Linlithgow is ancient and interesting, if, like the olden parts of Edinburgh, also rather dingy. And yet there is a quaint attractiveness in the long and narrow High Street, with tall, dark houses which may once have been

inhabited by the nobility, but which have sadly fallen from their high estate. The place has quite a foreign air with its fountains.

Glasgow for bells,
Lithgow for wells,

says an old adage, and Linlithgow still keeps up its reputation. There is a fine fountain by the Town Hall, a reproduction of one described by Sibbald, in the seventeenth century, as "A curious fountain raising the water a full spear's height, which falleth down in several pipes with a pleasant murmuring." There is no pleasant murmuring now, for the fountain is as dry and dusty as you please; but there are others that are actually going concerns, and one bears the legend "St. Michael is kind to strangers." For the rest the place has the reputation of having seen better days, and it seems to have flourished exceedingly during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, having, although an inland town, a considerable shipping trade through its port of Borrowstounness, a name in practice mercifully shortened to Bo'ness. At Blackness, too, in the memory of Sir Robert Sibbald, "There were some thirty-six ships belonging to the country which traded with Holland, Bremen, Hamburg, Queensburgh, and Dantzik, and furnished the west country with goods they imported, and were loaded outwards with the product of our own country." Nor was this all, for, "besides the commerce by sea, they have manufactures of leather, of dyers, of thread makers."

Of all the industries that brought prosperity to the town, only the tanning of leather now survives, a craft which Linlithgow is said to owe to Cromwell's soldiers, but which may have been introduced by refugees from France.

The great event at Linlithgow was the assassination of the Regent Murray from a house in the High Street, which unfortunately no longer exists. And when we read of the crowds that assembled in the High Street, and that impeded the Regent's progress so that he could only ride at a foot pace past a house that he knew was an enemy's—when we try to realise that crowd, the changes that time has made are brought home to us. Perhaps the nearest approach to such a bustle in Linlithgow in modern times, was in the present year of grace, when the Provost and baillies presented the freedom of the old burgh to Lord Rose-

bery, and with the burges ticket a copy of Waldie's "History of Linlithgow," in which work, by the way, much will be found of interest relating to the Palace of the Stuarts.

We have already heard, in connection with the town, of the Knights of St. John, who owned many of the principal houses, and whose Preceptory was some five miles to the south, at Torphichen. There are existing fragments of the Church of the Hospitallers, incorporated in the parish kirk of Torphichen, and a fragment of the ancient Preceptory adjoins the more modern house of the lords of the fee. Malcolm the Fourth settled the Knights of St. John in the kingdom; the Preceptor was appointed by the Grand Master at Rhodes or Malta; but the King for the time being was consulted as to the choice of such a powerful chief. Among the more notable of the Grand Masters was Sir William Knolles, from Rhodes, Councillor and Treasurer to James the Fourth, one of the chief abettors of the son against the father, and who shared the fate of the King on Flodden Field. To him succeeded Sir Walter Lindesay, whose name crops up at times in the chronicles of the period. Sir James Sandilands was the last of the Preceptors, who by paying "ten thousand crowns of the sun" to Queen Mary, obtained a grant of the Preceptory in feu ferm, and thus secured the lordship for himself and his descendants. There are Temple lands up and down in Angus and Fife, ancient possessions of the Knights Templars, which the Johnians came in for, and these lands still pay quit-rent to the Preceptory of Torphichen.

Torphichen lies among the hills, which have strange names thereabouts—Cochleureuf and Arnath, names that had a meaning once that is now, perhaps, illegible. From their summits all the country round about is visible in panoramic fashion: the Forth from its rise among the hills to its issue, with the Isle of May and the Bass Rock as salient points; and between the two extremes Stirling Castle rises proudly from its rock, and the Links of Forth twine in innumerable folds, and the Carse are spread out in all their verdure.

Along the Firth is here and there a small port or anchorage, such as Blackness, with some remains of an old castle, once held by the Douglas, and that otherwise has a little history attached to it, relating to the time when Queen Mary was a prisoner in England, and not a rood of

Scottish ground acknowledged her sway, save the rock of Edinburgh, held by Kirkcaldy of Grange and a devoted garrison. This was in the year 1573, when Kirkcaldy was expecting a goodly sum of money from France, a windfall in the way of arrears of the Queen's dower, which was to be devoted to her cause; and to secure the safe landing of the specie a detachment of the Castle garrison was marched to Blackness and occupied the Castle. Presently Sir James—the brother of the laird of Grange—sailed into the Forth with the treasure, fifty thousand double ducats, from the French Mint.

But, in the meantime, the little garrison at Blackness had been got at by James Balfour, described by a contemporary as the most corrupt man of the age, and once a companion with John Knox at the French galleys. Thus, when the adventurer landed he found himself a prisoner, but dexterously making use of his ducats, he brought the garrison to a sense of their duty and held the fort for Queen Mary, hoping for speedy assistance from his brother of Grange. But the younger Kirkcaldy had a wife, who, in her husband's absence, had become a favourite of the Regent Morton. The wife was despatched to entice her husband from his stronghold; he walked with her along the shore, and was seized by a party of men in ambush. With its chief, the fort, and the ducats it contained, fell into the power of the enemy. Sir James was made a prisoner, of course, and was likely to receive but little mercy; he contrived to escape, however, and on the following morning, the night after her treachery, his wife was found strangled in her chamber. Not long after, the garrison of the Castle of Edinburgh compelled Kirkcaldy to surrender, and then Sir James was again made prisoner, and with his brother suffered in the Grass Market, at the command of the vindictive Regent.

And now we may take our leave of Lothian, which still retains traces of its former individuality as a distinct principality; first pausing, however, to "speak" into the cause of its division. Here Sibba comes to the rescue. "Because of the jurisdiction," he explains, "it came to be divided into three districts: the Constabulary of Haddington, the Sheriffdom of Edinburgh, and the Sheriffdom of Linlithgow, which formerly did comprehend Stirlingshire likewise, but now containeth only West Lothian."

THE ROSARY.

I HAVE strung them on a golden string.
 Those dated days of ours;
 Like diamond stars in their glittering,
 Their perfume like summer flowers;
 And when I sit in the dusk alone,
 When the long "day's darg" is over and done,
 I take my Rosary from its nest,
 Hidden warmly away in my breast,
 And tell my beads with a lingering touch,
 My beads that recall and mean so much,
 And live again through each little thing
 Of the past and its precious dowers;
 Through the tears and the smiles that ever cling
 Around our sweet past hours.

I gathered them softly, one by one,
 From Memory's border-land.
 Some lay full in the noonday sun,
 And some nestled deep in sand.
 Some were o'ergrown by the verdant turf;
 And some lay tumbled amid the surf,
 That chafes for ever upon the shore,
 Where Time is breathing, "No more, no more."
 And some were set so hard in frost,
 That Hope shrank from them as something lost;
 But Love smiled down from his stand,
 And watched till my task was done,
 As I strung them with soft and tender hand,
 The treasures my search had won.

Oh, cruel time and tide may do
 Full many a bitter deed,
 Since all that we may plead and rue.
 Cannot check or change their speed;
 Much we may dream of, much we may trust,
 Will fade, like the rose of a day, to dust;
 The hope we cherished may sigh and part;
 The reed we leant on may pierce the heart:
 But nothing can dim the tender shine
 Clinging about these jewels of mine;
 And never in vain, for me or for you,
 Can Memory's magic plead,
 For pure and rounded, and rich and true,
 Is every threaded bead!

SEALSKIN, AND WHERE IT COMES FROM.

IN FOUR PARTS. PART II.

BEFORE describing the fur seal it will be well to notice its much better known relative, the hair seal, with which it has often been confounded.

The hair seal about the Pribylovs is comparatively scarce, and differs notably from its congeners in shape and habit. It seldom comes out of the water for more than a few rods at most, but prefers the edge of the surf, and especially small isolated rocks just jutting out of the water, where it can lie and be continually washed. It is not polygamous, like the fur seal, and is never seen in larger numbers than twenty or twenty-five together. Its cylindrical, supine, grey-and-white body forms a great contrast to the erect, long, black or ochre-coloured Callorhinus. The pups when born are quite white, and weigh three to seven pounds: they grow rapidly, and at the end

of four or five months turn the scale at fifty pounds, assuming by this time a soft steel-grey coat, with back mottled and barred lengthwise by dark brown and blackish streaks, melting imperceptibly into the grey of the body. Next spring this bright grey has turned to a dingy ochre and the mottling spread well over the head and down the back, fading, however, as it gets towards the tail. There is no appreciable fur or down, and the skin is, as we have said, valueless except for leather. The animal is sought, however, for its oil, which is inferior—if inferior at all—only to sperm. As we know, though sparsely distributed in the North Pacific, it forms the great bulk of the animal life of the North Atlantic; and its capture gives employment to a host of vessels and men off the mouth of the St. Lawrence in March and April, when the creatures are netted. When disturbed, their mode of progress on land is very distinct from that of the fur seal. They make off by a simultaneous reach of both front flippers, pulling the hinder parts after them. Their progress is thus six inches or a foot each time. When swimming, all the work is done by the hind flippers of the Phoca, while the Otariidæ use the fore flippers.

Now for the Callorhinus. Let us take him as he comes out of the sea, in the prime of life and strength, seven years old. He measures six-and-a-half to seven feet in length, from the tip of the nose to the end of what we must call the tail, but which is in reality the merest apology for that appendage, being only about four inches long. He will average five hundred pounds in weight, and is in the prime, fattest condition that an animal can possibly be in, creased and wrinkled on the breast and neck with loads of blubber, for what purpose we shall soon see. He swims three feet or so out of the water, and holds his head high and erect, small in proportion to his huge neck and shoulders, and furnished with a pair of big, soft, bright, hazel blue eyes. He has muzzle and jaws similar in size and form to those of a good Newfoundland dog, with this difference—that the lips are not flabby and overhanging; they are as firmly lined and pressed together as our own. The upper lip bears a yellowish white and grey moustache, composed of long, stiff bristles, and when it has not been broken, or torn out in combat, it sweeps down and over the shoulders as a luxuriant plume.

As he lands, we can see that he raises himself by alternate reaches of the fore flipper, then, arching his back, he lifts up the hind extremities and brings them under the body, thus getting leverage for another forward movement. This is the regular mode when going leisurely; but when disturbed or frightened, he quickens his motion, and gallops so as to take a man all he can do to head him back. Thirty or forty yards, however, of this is quite enough; he then sinks exhausted and breathless.

The bulls begin to arrive, one by one, as soon as the snow has gone—say from the 1st to the 5th May—but the great body comes up from the sea later in the month, and by the 10th to the 12th of June every station is mapped out and occupied. The rule is naturally, first come, first served; the one who actually lands first has the right of pre-emption, chooses his ground of course nearest the water, and he is allowed to keep it—on this condition, however, that he can hold it. Here, as in all earliest known states, the law of the strongest is in full force—might makes right. To covet his neighbour's goods seems to be the first duty of the male seal, and to get at them he spares no trouble. His hand is against every seal, and every seal's hand against him. Consequently, every bull in possession has to be prepared against all comers. Fighting, therefore, is continuous and never-ending; it goes on morning, noon, and night somewhere in the colony, without a moment's cessation, and the row is indescribable. It may be heard above the roar of the surf, and several miles out at sea, where it really serves as a signal to the mariner that he is approaching St. Paul or St. George. Of course the territories are continually changing owners. A bull who arrived early, and has kept his ground say for a month, may at any moment be dispossessed by a stronger, or at any rate a fresher arrival from the sea; and this change is never-ending, up to the 8th or the 10th of July, when all the cows have arrived, and things have really got shaken down into working order. During this period, of nearly three months, incredible as it may appear, the bulls never desert their grounds for an instant, even to eat or drink, and forty winks are the very utmost that can be allowed them for sleep. It will be at once asked, how in the world they live. They live by the absorption of their own fat, a curious provision of nature not unknown to physiologists. Nothing can

well be more different from the fat, bulky creature we have seen arrive than the same creature at the end of the season, when he slinks into the sea, haggard, ragged, and torn, to come up again next spring as fresh as paint.

The bulls are all at least seven years old, for that is the earliest age at which they take upon themselves the responsibility of paternity. Their coat is a dark dull brown, with a sprinkling of lighter brown black; the very old bulls being noticeable by their grizzly grey coats. This, then, is the colour of the over hair, underneath which lies the fur, the distinctive mark of this species. The hair and fur exactly correspond to the feathers and down on a duck's breast.

The males have four distinct notes, differing in this from the hair seal, which is voiceless, or nearly so; from the sealion, which has a deep roar; or from the walrus, which grunts. The fur seal has a loud, long, resonant roar, a low gurgling growl, a whistle impossible to communicate, as it must be heard to be appreciated, and a sort of spitting cough, exactly like the puff-puff of a locomotive starting a heavy load. The cows have only one note—a long, hollow baa, strangely like that of an old sheep; and the pups baa just like lambs. So like, in fact, that during the summer of 1873, a lot of sheep brought up from San Francisco were thoroughly disturbed in their intellects, and kept running in and out of the seals to the neglect of their own pasture, and a small boy had to be engaged to herd them to their proper feeding-ground.

But everything comes to an end if you give it time enough. Between the 12th and the 14th of June, the first of the cows appear at the edge of the water, and they continue to come up till the 10th to the 14th of July, when the arrivals cease. As they come to land they are coaxed and urged by the nearest bulls, who never have the slightest hesitation in adding force to persuasion, taking the cow by the scruff of the neck, just as a cat will a kitten, and depositing her in his territory.

Let us look at the colony just as it appears at this period. A shingly beach slopes down to the sea, varying from four hundred to six thousand feet of sea margin, and forty to one hundred and fifty feet back. All over are placed the bulls, as regularly as a chess-board. Imagine the scene. A bull in the front rank has just landed a cow, but, seeing another in the

water, he abandons his first love, and devotes himself to number two. As soon, then, as his back is turned, the bull immediately behind him stretches out and seizes upon cow number one, whereupon he is immediately set upon by the three bulls next to him, and there is a grand fight for a minute or two, during which the lady either crawls or is carried further back still, possibly to the very last row, where she is, perhaps, allowed to stop.

The female is, in every respect, a contrast to her lord and master. She is four to four-and-a-half feet long, and much more shapely; there is none of that unsightly folding of the blubber on the neck and breast. The shape never seems to alter, for, unlike the bulls, they come and go frequently, and leave their maternal duties—which indeed press very lightly on them—to sport in the water and to feed for considerable periods. When dried, after emerging from the sea, the cow glistens in steel grey; but after exposure to the weather, this changes to a dull ochre below and brown and grey above, and this colour is retained till they change their coats in August. In manners she is the very opposite to the male; she is amiability itself, never quarrels or gets angry, and hardly even utters a sound when she has two bulls hold of her, each hauling a different way. They vary much in size amongst each other, whilst the difference in the weight of the sexes is striking. Two were weighed, and found to be, one fifty-six, the other one hundred pounds, both being in normal good condition: so that we may say that the female is one sixth of the male.

The female comes up, excited by the maternal instinct, and the pup is born sometimes a few hours, but usually a day or so after landing. The pup gets fed at long and irregular intervals, sometimes even a couple of days; but the treatment evidently agrees with it, for, while at birth it weighs three to four pounds and is twelve to fourteen inches long, in four months it has become twice as long and ten times the weight. As soon as the pup is born it opens its eyes, begins to paddle aimlessly and to baa; thereupon mamma looks down anxiously, sees a fresh object, begins to give it attention, and then, a happy thought striking her, begins to suckle it; after which, if the spirit moves her, she pops into the water and amuses herself to the best of her ability, it may be close in shore, or it may be miles and miles away. On landing

again she has no difficulty in recognising her own property, for, although the pups appear not to know their own mothers, the mothers recognise their offspring by the voice. This is the only explanation of the fact that each pup gets nursed by its own parent, out of perhaps ten thousand other pups. Suppose mamma has been away a couple of days, and comes back to where she left her pup. Young Hopeful is no longer there; he is the soul of sociability, and has got mixed up with a cluster of other youngsters. She, therefore, sings out exactly like a sheep, and the pup answers just like a lamb, hearing which, mamma straightway makes for the spot, knocking everything right and left. Perhaps the pup is asleep; if so, he does not reply, and mamma, after a few more calls, adapts herself to the situation, and goes to sleep too. Remember that this is one instance only out of hundreds of thousands exactly alike, and the noise may be imagined. There seems to be little or no exhibition of that maternal affection which we see in our cats and dogs. There is no play between mother and child; but the little ones amongst themselves carry on just like kittens and puppies, and have grand romps, nor does the habit leave them till they are seven years old.

When the young seal is about a month old, its education begins. One may wonder wherein this consists, and this feeling will be intensified when we learn that it consists in teaching the young to swim. It seems paradoxical—one can hardly believe it—that the finest swimmer of all amphibious creatures, which spends half its existence at sea, has no more idea of swimming at first than one of our own babies. But it is the fact. Take a pup and put it out of its depth, and straightway its bullet head sinks, its hind parts flop about impotently, and its death by suffocation is the question of a few minutes only, the little creature not having the least idea of lifting up its head and getting the air.

Such being the case, its education is a question of some little time, and is thus effected. At about six weeks old his instinct takes him down to the water's edge, where he paddles about all day long, now washed by the surf and now left high and dry, in another moment perhaps to be rolled over and over by the water. After a few minutes of this he gets tired, curls himself round like a cat or dog on the hearth-rug and goes to sleep, but only for a short

time, for the seal at all ages is the most restless of living creatures. Then again to the surf, paddling about just like our own little boys and girls, every day expanding his ideas, and proving to himself that water is not such a dreadful thing after all. By repeated efforts, then, he learns to keep himself afloat, to recognise his own powers, and become thoroughly master of the element in which he has to spend the greater portion of his life.

Once at home in it, he has a fine time—he and his brethren swarm all over the coast; and when we know that St. Paul's alone has sixteen and a half miles of seal ground, which at this time is covered by seals of all ages, one may get a faint idea of their number.

By the 15th of September all born in that year have become familiar with the water, have learned to swim and congregate by the water's edge. Now they begin to take their second coat, shedding the black pup hair completely. Their new dress does not vary in colour at this age between the sexes; the change is effected very slowly, and cannot be said to be completed until about the 20th of October. This sea-going jacket is a uniform dense light grey over-hair, with an under-fur sometimes greyish, but generally of soft light brown. The over-hair is fine, close, and elastic, nearly an inch long, while the fur is half this length. Thus the coarser hair completely overshadows and conceals the soft under-wool, and gives the colour by which, after the second year, the sexes are recognised.

So far we have proceeded with the life history of the fur seal. We can now leave him to do for himself. It is now the 20th of September; he has learnt to swim and make himself thoroughly at home in the water. The rookeries are now broken up, all order and regularity is at an end; confused, straggling bands of females are seen amongst pups, and squads of old males crossing and recrossing the ground in a listless, aimless way. The season is now over. Many of the seals do not leave St. Paul and St. George before the end of December; some wait even till the 12th of January, but by the end of October or beginning of November all the fur seals of mature age—five and six years—have departed. The younger males go with them; many of the pups still loaf about the land, but seem to prefer, as a rule, the rocky sea margin. But by the end of November these have all gone; the islands settle down for six months' quiet, and winter sets in with its usual severity.

Where do they go to? Certainly not northwards, for it is well known that not a single seal is to be found north of the Pribilofs, and the floating ice of winter prevents any congregation of amphibious life. There is then the southwards, the enormous expanse of sea south of the Aleutian Chain, five thousand miles of water between Japan and Oregon, swarming with the natural food of the seal—fish. They can have no resting-place, or it would be known; they must therefore spend all their time afloat, seeing that they sleep at sea just as comfortably as, or perhaps more so than on land. They lie on their backs, fold the fore flippers across the breast, turn the hind ones up and over, so that the tips rest on their necks and chins, thus exposing only the nose and the heels of the hind flippers above water, nothing else being seen. Here is no poetical fancy, but a prosaic fact, "rocked in the cradle of the deep."

One cannot but think of the enormous quantity of fish they must get through. The common seal, such as we see in our aquaria, has evidently a most voracious appetite, and never seems able to get as much as he can do with. Consider then the weight that must be consumed in the year by the fur seal, several times its size, roaming about under thoroughly natural conditions in its natural element, instead of being cooped up within the four walls of a tank.

As a matter of fact, the hosts of the fur seal produce a notable scarcity of fish around the Pribilofs. It is perfectly hopeless to throw a line over the gunwale of a boat. You must go out at least seven or eight miles, and then you can get nothing but very large halibut. Practically, the sea for a hundred miles round is cleared of fish. It is computed that forty pounds per day is rather a starvation allowance for an adult male, twelve pounds to a female, and not much, if any, less for the fast-growing pups. Allow an average of ten pounds per individual per day, and calculate what four or five millions would consume every year—only seven million tons or so. Why, all the fishing of the world is but a drop in the bucket compared with this. We must remember, too, that the seal is only one of the creatures which prey on fish. I can well believe what is asserted by many well-informed people, that the supply of sea-fish is inexhaustible by any means known to man.

FANCY PIGEONS.

If you enter London by any branch of the Great Eastern Railway you are not likely to form a high opinion of the Imperial city. The prospect is distinctly ugly; narrow streets, with little houses all painfully alike, the oldest dating from that time—the beginning of the century—when England's architectural energy (like her purse) was almost used up by the long war. Of course there are stately houses in Stepney, and even round Ratcliff Cross novelists tell you of them; explorers come upon them after much search along broad, garish, unsentimental "Roads." They are red brick, which weathers well; whereas the pale, yellow London brick—used also, alas! in some suburbs of Dublin—is of all building stuff the vilest. When new it makes a street look as if it had the jaundice; and in a few years it gets smirched and grimy, while the smoke-acids act as a rapid solvent on its ill-tempered constitution.

The New York tenement system has its evils, very grievous ones; so has the Continental system of flats; also the plan—seen in Soho and in the central parts of Dublin—of turning once stately mansions into human rabbit-warrens. But the "every-man-his-own-house" plan has its drawbacks too. It condemns a whole district to ugly monotony, unbroken save by the flaunting "public," for the shops are of the meanest; showing, indeed, a variety which would tax the quick glance of a Houdin, but a variety unredeemed by a trace of beauty or artistic arrangement. What "culture" can come of seeing in street after street the pitiful mixture of tapes, red herrings, boys' tops, onions, Dutch dolls, blacking, lollipop bottles, envelopes, and lucifer matches? The wide roads have their stuccoed buildings, and they have the charm of many "small industries." They are so wide that a policeman thinks it needful to order the seller of automaton mice, beetles that dance at the end of a bit of elastic, penny scales, ditto gridirons and toasting-forks—not to speak of fruit and fried fish—to "move on." Here I saw the Italian and her fortune-telling birds. You dropped your penny or halfpenny into a box, and straightway one of the little creatures picked out for you your fate from a whole trayful of neatly rolled up mottoes. Poor woman! not long after she changed

her ground to the wastes of ill-made brick and untempered mortar north of King's Cross; and there, not having the wide road between her and harm, she was crushed by a falling house.

As you look from the Great Eastern Railway through the maze of telegraph wires into the dingy back-yards, you cannot help noticing how many people keep pigeons. There are the birds flitting about, some of them common-place enough, but some which, if you have a fancier's eye, will tempt you to wish you could fly out of the carriage window and have a chat, perhaps a deal, with the owner. And they do not come from a distance, attracted by the morsels to be picked up, for there—sometimes in half-a-dozen houses together—are the quaint substitutes for dovecots. Pigeons are tolerably independent of the laws of health. Mr. Ure tells of a most successful fancier, a Dundee cobbler, who kept his birds under his bed. You smelt them the moment you put your nose into his stall; and I, who believe in the close connection between pure air and temperance and the reverse, am not astonished that the "souter body" came to grief through drink, and had to sell all his birds but one, a splendid cock fantail, with which, as solace for his wanderings, he tramped all the way to Glasgow in search of work.

Some of our East-enders keep their pigeons in even queerer places; others rig up an old box on the garden side of their house (such gardens they are!), and in these little streets may be seen tumblers of all kinds, magpies, bluebeards, bald-heads; fantails, the handsomest of all on a housetop—even the lace-fantails, with their singularly expressive faces; barbs, trumpeters, pouters, nuns; while boys, seemingly not much raised above the street Arab, may be heard learnedly discussing the relative merits of short and long faces, and what swallows, and rollers, and dragoons, and turbits, are like, and whether the new Jacobin with his hog mane is really an improvement on the maneless bird now nearly extinct. You are at once puzzled to know how the breeds are kept distinct. Nokes goes in for pouters; his neighbour, Styles, for fantails; three doors off is a breed of "ground" or "house" tumblers—a kind which never go aloft. They turn their somersaults so low down that sometimes one of them strikes its head and kills itself, as the rollers occasionally do. Further on are

some big trumpeters, with thickly-feathered legs, and the rose well over their eyes, nobly mottled black and tan—altogether, one could think, as irresistible to little Miss Fantail as a tall Guardsman is to a diminutive nursemaid. I suppose, despite the doves' well-known fidelity, there must be a good deal of cross breeding. There must be a good deal of give and take, too, in the way of food. Pigeons in the country have a proverbial fondness for the peas in fields not belonging to their owners. Those who are always finding fault with the dark ages, tell us that is why the dovecot, in England and France, still so often shows where the manor-house stood. The seigneur, lord of the manor, would not let anyone else in the parish have a pigeon-house; and he always took care to have one himself, because it cost him nothing. His pigeons sallied out and fed on the farmers' crops, just as his men-at-arms went out to forage for fowls and sheep when their lord's larder was low. In the Nile valley, the ne-plus-ultra of oppression is to deprive a "fellah" of the right of pigeon-keeping; the consequence is, that everybody's birds prey on him, and he sometimes finds his crops miserably reduced, without having any means of retaliating. How they manage in Stepney and Spitalfields, I don't know; but they do manage to breed birds of which neither Baily of London, nor Siddons of Birmingham, nor the new lights at Plymouth, nor such other worthies as Ridpath of Manchester, would despise. How do they do it? What subtle connection is there between bird-fancying and general grubbiness? Why should a dingy street in Seven Dials be a veritable birdcage walk? And why should the most thickly-peopled slums in Norwich furnish our choicest canaries? They say it all comes from the Huguenots. That revoking the Edict of Nantes did as much, according to some people, for Western Europe as the dispersion at Babel did for the world at large. Anyhow, the Spitalfields weavers have for generations been renowned for pigeon-fancying, and the weavers were originally a French Protestant colony. In Norwich, again, there were several immigrations—of Dutch, during Alva's persecutions; of French, when Louis the Fourteenth's serious concern about his soul led him to drive out his best and most industrious subjects.

To get on well with birds needs a special aptitude; almost all country-bred children try to rear linnets or thrushes, yet how few succeed. They do not fail in tenderness;

even some are not wanting in patience; but still the little things will not eat. I never knew but one, a Somersetshire girl, who was thoroughly successful as a dry nurse to young birds. She would take them, as my boys brought them, almost from the egg, and scarcely ever failed. But then she would get up at all hours to feed them, and she never forgot that they have enormous appetites and very quick digestions. She was repaid for her pains by their affection when they grew up. The birds used to walk up her arm, sit on her shoulder, and never think of going off further than the corner of the table-cloth.

That was much harder work than pigeon-breeding, and the result from a fancier's point of view was nil. Why pigeons are so attractive is that, of all stock, they are the most variable. That is why Mr. Darwin chose them to illustrate his theory of selection. Sports, reversions to ancestral type, etc., occur among them more often than they do among horses, sheep, or cattle. Their rapid breeding-time, too, enables you to watch, and weed out, and establish a variety much more quickly than the cattle-breeder can.

Then, pigeons cost less than pedigree cattle, even at the extravagant prices that are now given for fancy birds. So that, instead of one, you can have fifty selections of what best suits your purpose, each doing what Mr. Darwin contends that Nature does in the long run. The Darwinian principle needs no proof as far as varieties are concerned—certain surroundings, certain food, careful selection give you the varieties you want. Pouters—which in their full development are so hopelessly unlike the original blue-rock dove, with its long thin neck, that you think they must be another species—are bred by taking the shortest-necked, fullest-cropped pigeons of your flock, breeding from that pair; and then from those of the children in whom the parental peculiarity is most developed; and so on. Never mind how prettily marked the others may be, what soft eyes they have, what expressive faces, and feathered legs. Your object is pouters, and so you must sell or kill off all that do not pout so decidedly as to show that what was at first only a "sport" is getting into the blood.

That is how man manages it—for pigeons or dogs, or sheep—and the process is easy enough, and quick enough for a scientist to watch it while his book is awaiting its second edition. Every now and then comes

out, in the most carefully bred stock, something that is not a pouter, or a carrier, or whatever the breed may be, but a blue-rock dove, or something very like it. The breed may have begun in the far East—the fantail is undoubtedly an Indian variety—and have been “improved,” getting close-feathered to stand the climate, amid the fogs of Holland.

The “owls” shown some thirty years ago at the Crystal Palace were labelled “Booz pigeons from Tunia.” “African owls,” they are still commonly called, though the best, with their grand frill, come to us by way of Germany. It may—like the trumpeter, that splendid fellow, who looks so proud if you give him fair play, i.e. provide him with a “walk” of sand, so that he may not soil his feathers—have passed through years of adaptation to a northern climate in Russia. But in every case there will be now and then “reversion to original type”—a more or less decided case of common blue-rock pigeon, which of course you will weed out at once, but which proves that all these strange distortions as some call them—“these splendid varieties,” in the language of the fancier—from that fine old breed the “Archangel,” to the newest American peak-headed fantail, are descended from one original stock.

Now, the question of questions is—Can what is so patently true of varieties be extended to species? At present, species very seldom interbreed, at least, fruitfully, but even among some pigeons—fantails and pouters, for instance—it is very hard to get a cross.

Is it possible that, in the course of ages, what originally were only varieties can have lost the reproductive power? A pouter is more unlike a high-bred carrier, a Shetland pony is more unlike a barb, a turnspit is more unlike a greyhound, than a leopard is unlike a panther, or an African is unlike an Indian elephant. Yet these are different species, the others only varieties. Can it be that these have only lost, through long subjection to different environment, a reproductive power which they originally possessed? That is how Nature does it, by subjecting the creatures to a certain environment; those whom that does not suit die off, the others survive, and accommodate themselves to it more and more.

In some small, windy islands the beetles are wingless, or slightly equipped in that respect. Why? Because those that are born stronger in the wing are ambitious, and in their flights are pretty sure to be

blown out to sea, leaving the race to be continued by those necessarily condemned to sedentariness. We may extend the principle to human beings; Nature is continually weeding out the weak, in spite of medical science, which, many think, keeps alive, in countries like ours, a vast number who never ought to have grown up. But human beings are swayed by a host of considerations quite apart from what Nature means by fitness. The Spartans, indeed, used to select those whom they deemed the fittest by the summary process of flinging the newborn “unfit” into the caverns of Mount Taygetus; and they tried to ensure a good breed, mentally and physically, in ways which are a still greater outrage on our feelings than the cavern business. But among other nations the wish to found or to perpetuate a family outweighs all other considerations. Very rarely would a millionaire bid his only son refrain from marriage, though he knew that son to have in him the seeds of constitutional disease. He would trust, and we cannot condemn him for so doing, seeing that care and diet work such wonders, to good bringing up (i.e. environment) to get rid of the bad germs. Here adoption, the method of the modern Hindoo, as it was of the old Roman, might advantageously come in. How have Rajput families been kept up since before Moses’s day? By adopting a kinsman, if there was no son, or only a weakly one. The elder Scipio’s son and heir, Scipio Nasica, was a weakling. “He had very poor health, or rather, no health at all,” says Cicero. What did he do? Look out for an exceptionally buxom bride and take his chance? No; the family prestige was too precious to be committed to chance. His father had won a splendid name in the long struggle with Carthage; his son must finish that father’s work. So he looked round, and, finding that the best all round among rising young men was an Æmilium, he adopted him. Certain religious rites made the adopted son bone of his new father’s bone, and blood of his blood; he took to his family gods, and gave up his own. And thus the future conqueror of Carthage became Scipio Æmilianus, reckoned among the former, but preserving in his second name the memory of his origin. The slow progress of man during the Middle Ages; the apparent falling back every now and then, the general coarseness, are explained from the fact that the gentle, the pure-minded, the noble-hearted, the men and women of broad and intelligent

views and wide sympathies, very generally took to the cloister, leaving the race to be perpetuated by those who were their opposites.

But, *revenons à nos*—pigeons. May we assume that because, confessedly, all pigeons are from one primal stock, as is proved by an unmistakeable mark of the unimproved original cropping up every now and then, therefore (the time being indefinitely increased) the whole race of cats, from the royal Bengal and the African lion downwards, have developed from an ancestor no longer existing, even as the horse is said to have done, link by link, from the "hipparion"? And, if so, how is it there is no instance of reversion? Why don't we sometimes find, among many litters of kittens, one more or less like what we may suppose the common ancestor of all the cat kind to have been? Well, to this last objection, at any rate, the answer is clear.

Reversion in cats, and tigers, and lions is nowadays very slight indeed, because the selection, and consequent development, has been natural; among pigeons and sheep it is artificial, and is kept up artificially. "In the beginning," when, we are told, species were as much in a state of flux as varieties of pigeons are now, it was because they had not found their fittest surroundings, but were, as Mr. Grant Allen poetically puts it, striving after them and getting modified in the process. In plain prose, those which could not suit themselves to the surroundings died out, and the breed was perpetuated by those who could. When any breed had found what suited it, the modifying process ceased. Egyptian cats are almost exactly like our own, though we find pictures and mummies of them nearly four thousand years old.

Pussy had grown to be what she has since remained, because the cats that were born with slightly different constitutions and habits, either died out, or gradually developed into something else. Cats, for instance, are "arboreal"; but a mane would interfere with climbing trees as much as Absalom's hair did with his safe passage under them. Therefore, any kittens born with manes would be likely to die out—to be caught, and their eyes pecked out by crows—or would have to migrate to treeless countries, and develop habits which in æons on æons might turn them into lions. How it might have been with the Egyptian cat had it continued to be used—as it was

in very early times—as a retriever and water-dog,—who knows? It might have become web-footed. Unhappily, the experiment was cut short; for, when the Egyptians began to mix with other nations, they took to retrieving with dogs instead of cats, and pussy's fine taste for fish is nowadays seldom joined with a love of getting her feet wet.

Australian rabbits, again, have not yet changed their shape—they climb trees, have "forms" like hares, swim rivers, and otherwise comport themselves in very unrabbit-like style. Well, the geologists and others must settle, if they can, the matter as to species. As to pigeons, the case is clear; it is only by perpetual care that these highly-developed modifications can be kept up. And what care must have been taken with the carrier, for instance! Most pigeons have the "homing" tendency pretty strong; but in them it is irresistible, and seems to need no gradual training from short to long flights. Keep a good homing Antwerp shut up for twelve or eighteen months, and when you let it out it will be off in a "bee-line" to its old home. Hence their value in war; one remembers them in the siege of Paris, how they took and brought news—if they escaped the Prussian rifles—written on thin strong paper (*pelure d'oignon*), and rolled up in a quill. They used to be kept at Arbroath, to give the Bell Rock lighthouse men a chance of sending messages in rough weather. Unfortunately, just when the sea is impassable the air is full of storm, and the birds used to get so often lost that the plan was given up.

Clearly it is not in stormy weather that your pigeon will go from London to Brussels in less than five hours, making the distance between London and Dover in some twenty minutes. That is a triumph of breeding and training too, and full of practical use; and yet fanciers are wrong-headed enough to talk of "the homer-pest." In many pigeons—horsemen, dragoons, etc.—the homing is unusually strong, and from these, by patience continued through many generations, carriers have been brought to what they are; just as the cropper has been developed into the pouter. It is to be remembered that the so-called "carrier" is not the homing pigeon, but is bred for quite other qualities.

I began with the East End; but let no one think that, therefore, pigeons are unfashionable. Look at the prices that good

exhibition birds bring. Great numbers of people in all grades of society keep pigeons for show or pleasure. I prefer the latter. I advise fanciers not to bow their knee to the Baal of shows, and to beware of fanciers' tricks in making up birds. They have not yet got to the length of the street artisan, whose goldfinch the disappointed buyer found to be a painted sparrow; but they have come pretty near him.

LOST IN THE VALLEY.

By the Author of "Driven of the Wind," etc.

A STORY IN SIXTEEN CHAPTERS.

CHAPTER XIII.

"It was through Madame Ravelli I first learned to whom that letter was written," Maurice went on presently. "She quoted a part of it yesterday, but she did not know, and does not know, that it is in my possession."

"I can quite understand the spirit in which she wrote," said Eveline, without a trace of bitterness in her voice, "and it is hopeless to expect her ever to believe me. One thing, however, I was able to do. While in London I called on her lawyer, and directed that a few hundreds should be paid to Madame Ravelli annually, and that he should state that the money came from relatives in Italy, who wished to have their names suppressed. More I cannot do, for they will not let me. I have told all I have to tell now, Maurice; do you believe me?"

"Yes," he answered quietly, "I do believe you, Eveline. But I think you have been very, very much to blame. First, by allowing yourself to be associated with, and duped by, such a man as your husband must have been; next, by permitting Tito to be always with you, by which you tacitly encouraged his love; and lastly, by not taking up the matter at once after your husband's death, and proving with the evidence of Dr. Grantley, Mrs. Symonds, and your stepfather's will, that the stories circulated against you were false."

"How could I?" she asked. "Proofs will not stop slander, even if they be forthcoming. Mrs. Symonds had left Italy before I even knew of Tito's death. My husband's family had never approved of his marriage.

and they naturally upheld his memory at the expense of my good name. I know I have been altogether weak and foolish, but surely I have been punished enough all these years in being haunted with such memories, and pursued by such hatred. When I found that the world shunned me, I shunned the world. You know how quiet my life has been. I never thought of marrying again; I wished for no future; I only wanted to forget the past, to live down slander by a blameless life. When I met you—it was your voice that first attracted me, the sweetness of it seemed to soothe me. I thought you were a boy, and the chivalrous deference of your manner was something so new to me, that I grew to look forward to your visits as the one cheering event of my day. Then, when I found you were risking your life for me, I was in despair; and when you told me that you loved me, it was such a great and unexpected happiness that I could not repulse you. The very absence of passion about your affection for me has made me love you better than I have ever loved anyone before, for violent emotions awaken no response in me but terror. I was always afraid of my husband; I have never been afraid of you—afraid only lest by hearing of my miserable life, you might judge me as most of the rest of the world have done, and no longer love me. Of course I know that this is an end of everything, and that your parents will never think of allowing you to marry a woman against whom such terrible charges have been brought, even if you yourself still wished to. But at least let me hear you say that you do not altogether hate me too."

She slipped down on her knees by his side, and laid her hand on his shoulder while the tears rolled slowly down her fair face.

He turned and looked at her; her voice, her eyes, her touch, did more even than her words towards softening his judgement of her.

Without a word he gently clasped his arms round her, and laid her head against his heart.

Even at this moment he knew quite well that, had he known all this story before, although he believed in Eveline's version of it, he would never have told her he loved her, never have asked her to be his wife. But he had gone too far now to draw back, and his mind at that moment was filled with a strength of affection, half passionate, half pitiful, of which neither

he nor anyone else would have thought him capable.

For a few seconds they remained thus, she weeping silently against his shoulder, until a knock at the door brought them both back to a sense of things prosaic, and Eveline rose to her feet as H el ene entered the room with a letter.

"For me, H el ene?" she asked.

"No, Madame, it has just been left for M. Wilde."

It was from de Villars.

Maurice recognised the writing before he opened it, and at sight of it he remembered that Eveline had not yet explained to him her intimacy with this man.

The Marquis had not wasted words in this note to his rival; but what he said was none the less to the point.

"M. WILDE.—Ask the lady whom you are going to make your wife, with whom she was having supper the night before she knew you were to fight a duel in defence of her good name. Should she decline to inform you, I can refer you to M. de Montmorillon, or to half-a-dozen of my other club friends, who can swear that it was at my house, in company with them, a few charming ladies like herself, and your humble servant,

"HENRI DE VILLARS."

Maurice read the letter through, in hot indignation at first; but, looking up, he saw that Eveline also had recognised the handwriting, and was watching him as he read it with her head bent forward and a look of fear in her eyes.

He handed her the letter without speaking.

"Is this true?" he asked as she finished reading it.

"Yes," she faltered, "it is true, Maurice, but I can explain——"

"Stop!" he said sternly, "I have no doubt you can explain this as you explained the rest, but I require no further explanations. I am perfectly satisfied."

And, without another look at her, he left the room.

His first thought, when he reached his own apartments, was that Eveline would follow him and entreat him to listen to some plausible excuse which, uttered in that melodious voice, would force him again, against his better judgment, to believe her. To ensure himself against such a contingency he called B enoit, and directed her to refuse admittance to every-

one. "To everyone, B enoit, you understand. No one is to come in to-night," he repeated.

But no one tried to do so; and in two hours' time—during which he pretended to eat some dinner and to read a newspaper, he found that, from being indignant at the idea of her intrusion, and anxious to protect himself against it, he began to listen keenly for the sound of someone ringing at the entrance door, and to feel a pang of absolute disappointment as the hours went by and no one came.

He excused this weakness to himself, by saying that he was curious to know what palliation a woman would dare to suggest for such conduct as hers. Knowing that he was to meet de Villars the next morning, she had absolutely gone to a supper-party at his house, among the fastest men and women in Paris. She had owned to it. What could she possibly say to justify such a proceeding? It was the more inexplicable when he remembered her contemptuous treatment of de Villars when he had concealed himself in her sitting-room the evening before.

But Maurice suddenly recollected that Eveline knew he was in the adjoining room and could hear what passed.

"She wanted to keep us both, the rich and the poor one, I suppose," he said to himself bitterly.

She had never alluded to de Villars in her explanations; never properly accounted for her tolerance of his society. And the moment she thought Maurice was safe in England, the Marquis had evidently been recalled.

Yet the O'Haras, Dr. Grantley, Miss McIntyre, they believed in her, called her an angel of goodness and charity. But then he remembered that the O'Haras were enthusiastic, prejudiced Irishwomen, who did not, after all, see very much of their fascinating friend, and that Miss McIntyre's devotion was no doubt partly due to Eveline's charity. For she was charitable; yes, but lavishness in spending ill-acquired wealth, was a quality not by any means associated with the worthiest women.

And Dr. Grantley, no doubt, was the English doctor whom Madame Ravelli had spoken of as the Countess's lover. Miss O'Hara had said he was in love with her, and the highest praise the Doctor himself could find to bestow on Mrs. Douglas, was that "she was more sinned against than sinning."

Maurice rose and paced up and down his room in miserable agitation.

He would not see her, would not let her deceive him again. Yet he looked now eagerly at his watch to see if it was yet impossibly late for a few words with her to-night.

He found it was past midnight. In his excited state he had not noticed the flight of time. He went to bed; but could not sleep. He would cross back to England the following night, he decided, and would see Eveline once more first—just for curiosity's sake, to hear what she could say.

So, between ten and eleven the next morning, he rang the bell on the floor below and, when Pierre opened the door, asked for Madame Douglas.

"Madame left last night, Monsieur. If Monsieur will but wait, she left a little note for him."

Maurice mechanically followed the man into the salon. As Pierre opened the door of the inner room to fetch Eveline's letter, her little white kitten crept out, and rubbed itself against the young Englishman's feet. He took it up and caressed it while he waited.

When Pierre returned he brought with him a tiny packet, which he laid in Maurice's hands. Without opening it he could feel that it contained a ring, and guessed that it was the one he had given her. The room seemed to be swimming round him and a dimness to obscure his sight. But he felt that the man-servant was watching him, so he would not open the packet now; and only asked, "where is Hélène?"

"She has gone with Madame, Monsieur."

"Do you know where they have gone and when they will return?"

"Ah, Monsieur! no," the man replied with a markedly mysterious manner. "I only know that Madame informed me that she might be absent a month, six months, even a year. I was to remain until I heard from her again, and the other servants also. But Madame will doubtless have said more in the note Monsieur is holding."

"Thank you," said Maurice, moving towards the door. On the threshold he paused, as an idea suddenly flashed into his mind.

"Did Madame Douglas go alone? I mean, alone with Hélène?" he asked slowly.

Pierre hesitated before answering. At last he said:

"No, Monsieur, not alone. She had a

fetch her on receipt of a note which Madame despatched to him."

"Who was it?" asked Maurice, almost in a whisper.

"Ah, Monsieur! it is not for a servant to recognise visitors."

Maurice could see that the man required bribing. It was a contemptible thing to have to do; but at any cost he felt he must know the name of Eveline's companion.

"Try and remember now," he said, placing a sovereign in the man's hand.

"Merci, Monsieur! But one's memory comes and goes indeed."

"Who was it?" Maurice repeated.

"Monsieur, it was assuredly M. the Marquis de Villars."

A greyish pallor overspread the face of his questioner; but he mastered himself even now sufficiently to thank Pierre for his information in a tone which, but for his sudden change of colour, would have suggested entire indifference on the subject of the Countess's travelling companion.

Then he quietly returned to his own rooms. It was not until he reached them that he discovered he had Eveline's white kitten still clinging to his sleeve. He burst into a dreary little laugh at the sight of it.

"So she has deserted you as she has deserted me?" he said. "Well, it serves us both right for pinning our faith on a woman."

The packet Pierre had delivered to him contained no word of farewell, of affection, or of explanation; only the ring he had given her.

The shock of her departure was an unexpected one, for all his doubts so far had been but half doubts; and he had come down this morning ready and willing to listen, to believe, and to forgive.

In these first moments all his love for her seemed dead, and he himself incapable of feeling anything further than an intense longing to get away from this noisy, unfeeling town to his own people and his home among the quiet Malvern Hills, there to forget this month of love, of excitement, and of sorrow.

So, quickly and carefully repacking his things and choosing his train as if nothing but the most every-day occurrence had taken place, he left Paris; and it was not until several hours later, as he stood on deck and watched the shores of France receding from his view, that the full reality of his position came upon him for the first time, and he knew that such a

might love his home and his family, he was leaving his heart, his trust, and his youth behind him with Eveline Douglas.

At luncheon-time next day he arrived at The Grange, and found his father, mother, and sisters at table with their two guests. Greeting them all as if nothing had happened, he quietly took his place there, knowing that every eye was watching him, every ear on the alert for some explanation. But when Ethel commented on the fact that he looked "dreadfully old and ill," he only said that the three journeys had tired him, and he wanted rest and quiet.

"We are going to lose our friends, Maurice," said Mary, to change the subject. "Madame Ravelli has had such a piece of good news from her lawyer in London."

"Yes, indeed!" said the Italian lady; "a relation of mine, who wishes to remain unknown, has provided me with a sufficient sum to enable me to return to my native land, and live there in at least moderate comfort, for the future. So I hope to travel to Italy with Jeanne in a very few days' time."

The blood rushed to Maurice's face. He knew well whose generosity had so provided for the maintenance of an enemy.

"I congratulate you," was all he said.

Jeanne did not seem pleased at all. She had, indeed, been carrying on a brisk flirtation in broken English with a cousin of Miss Dudley's, and the prospect of retiring to widowed dreariness in Italy with her mother-in-law was far from inviting to her.

They were to leave in three days.

Mrs. Ravelli heaped dignified benedictions on the heads of the Wildes for their hospitality and kindness, rather after the manner of an exiled monarch bestowing gracious blessings upon loyal subjects.

The sound of her voice was hateful to Maurice, so, as soon as he could after luncheon, he retired to his little study upstairs, and opening the window, leaned out in the frosty air to cool his aching head.

As he stood thus, Mrs. Wilde came softly in behind him, and laid her hands upon his shoulders.

"My poor boy," she said, "how wickedly you have been treated! Tell me all about it. Did you see that dreadful woman?"

Maurice shivered.

"Listen, mother," he said, closing the

window and standing with his back to it, the worn, tired look on his face shown up pitilessly in the clear, wintry sunshine. "I have come home, and I want to stop here. But if you or the others ever mention Eveline's name before me, either to praise or blame her, or to ask me questions about her, I shall have to go away and live among strangers, who cannot torment me about her. I loved her, and I—I thought she loved me. I can't help thinking so even now," he added, more to himself than to her, with a sudden break in his voice. "But to hear her discussed by anyone is more than I can bear. I know I am troublesome, and morbid, and selfish, but as you are fond of me, and want me to stay with you, you will humour me in this, will you not, and you will tell the others what I have said, too?"

She kissed him and promised. Then she went downstairs to make up for her self-restraint by talking the whole thing out very fully with her husband and daughters. They had all, of course, done nothing else since they heard Madame Ravelli's story, and found that its heroine was Maurice's fiancée. Madame Ravelli's dislike to Eveline was, however, so virulent that she sometimes went a little too far in her diatribes on the subject, describing her as a creature of such superhuman depravity that the more intelligent of her auditors began to doubt her statements altogether.

At last, to Maurice's intense relief, Madame Ravelli left them, to make the final arrangements for her journey in London.

Jeanne went to pass the intervening days with her friend Miss Dudley, and made such good use of her time that when, a few days later, she left for Rome with her mother-in-law, she was engaged to be married to young Dudley, and it was arranged that, as soon as the elder lady was settled comfortably in the town where she meant to end her days, little Jeanne's English admirer was to go out to them, marry her there, and bring her back with him to England.

"If only Eveline could know!" was Maurice's first reflection when he heard the news. "If only anyone could tell her!"

For, try as he would to persuade himself that she was cold and heartless, he knew it would give unmixed joy to her gentle nature to hear of her enemies' welfare.

"THE STORY OF OUR LIVES FROM YEAR TO YEAR"

ALL THE YEAR ROUND

A Weekly Journal
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PRICE TWOPENCE.

A DATELESS BARGAIN.

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CHAPTER XXXII.

JOYCE had not Mab's aptitude for slipping into unconsciousness whenever affairs neared a climax, and a tumult threatened. Only a white, haggard face told the tale of the storm she had just passed through, as, quaking and tottering, she made her way back to Mab's side.

Mab had been restored to consciousness, but still lay, with closed eyes, on her couch.

Joyce dismissed the maids, and took their place beside the sofa. Mab's eyes opened instantly.

"Is he gone, Joyce?" she whispered nervously.

When Joyce, making a gigantic effort, gave in reply a calm "Yes, darling," there came a long, weary sigh of relief and another question, this put a little eagerly:

"He won't come back again, will he?"

Joyce was all unprepared for this question. "No, darling, he won't come back again," she answered boldly enough; but her heart gave the lie to her words as she spoke them. It said with no uncertain conviction, "He will come back again, and again, and again; he will test his strength against your weakness day after day, day after day, till how it will all end, Heaven only knows."

"I don't want to see him, Joyce," Mab went on presently. "I don't think I could say 'No' to him, if he really begged for a 'Yes.' But I feel 'No' is the only word I ought to say." She ended with another deep sigh, and a pathetic emphasis on the "I."

Joyce felt she must get to the bottom of this hideous mystery, no matter at what cost. "Tell me, dear," she asked gently, "how is it you have learnt to—to—like this man in the way you do?"

Mab for one instant lifted her eyes to Joyce's face. They showed deep and shining as Joyce had never before seen them. "Oh, Joyce," she said, in a low, impassioned voice, "if one walked into the room this very minute, bringing you glad news of Frank, how would you feel towards him?"

"I—oh, I should fall down and worship him! I would lay down my life for him, inch by inch, as he wanted it—I can't say more."

"Ah, you will understand, then. Well, listen! Captain Buckingham came to me bringing me glad news, the gladdest news in the world. He made me see how that I, who had been all my life long fighting against one half of myself, thinking it was the base, bad half, had in reality been fighting against the best, noblest part of my nature. He taught me it was my duty to loose it—let it go free, so that I might live here a life beside which an angel's might show clouded and dim."

Joyce's bewildered brain made vain efforts to solve what seemed to her a string of enigmas. "Go on, dear; how did you set about it?" she asked, hoping the question might bring a ray of light in its answer.

"I studied deeply books of all sorts on clairvoyance and trance vision. I acquired the habit of self-mesmerism. I learnt the art of throwing one's self into a trance—at will."

Joyce started. Here stood the mystery of Mab's life explained.

"Go on, dear," she contrived to say calmly enough, but all the time fearing

that the revelations of this terrible morning were never coming to an end.

"I learnt to know who, what, the 'I' of existence is. How that it is not the soul, not the body, but by dint of habit, by practice, by strong exercise of will, can reside in either."

"Go on, dear. And then——"

"Oh! the sweet things, the beautiful things, I have learnt to see, Joyce. I know now what 'I was in the spirit' means. If I lived long enough, like Swedenborg, like the prophets of old time, I know I should taste beforehand the glories of the world to come."

"And then, dear——"

"Oh! and then—why, then, darling Joyce, of course I should finally, eternally enter into them—after death, I mean."

"Shan't we all do that, Mab, if we lead true, patient lives here, without any straining after gifts and powers wisely put beyond our reach?"

But the instant she had said the words, she would fain have caught them back. Mab turned her face wearily to the wall with a deep sigh, saying: "I thought you would have understood, Joyce; I wanted so to tell you everything."

"Darling, tell me everything," pleaded Joyce, getting up from her chair and kneeling beside the sofa. "I will listen quietly, oh, so quietly; I won't interrupt you again."

But it was some minutes before Mab spoke again. Then there was something of pain in her tone as she said:

"Joyce, I don't want you to think I have been utterly selfish from beginning to end in the—the gift I have been cultivating."

"You selfish! Oh, my darling!"

"I have thought of all my friends throughout. It seemed to me, if I trained myself to use this gift of seeing—it is nothing else—I might do great things for all my friends."

"Yes, dear, I understand."

"You know how I failed with poor Ned Donovan. Captain Buckingham explained to me how it was I did so fail. The thing haunted me—nearly drove me mad. I felt—I feel all your unhappiness was of my bringing——"

"No, no, no, Mab."

"Yes it was, Joyce. I think the thought would have killed me outright, if Captain Buckingham had not shown me how my gift might be the means of repairing the terrible evil I had wrought."

A flash of lightning, all in a second, will reveal miles of night-hidden landscape. All in a flash Joyce seemed to see the double game Buckingham had played: how he had adapted his bait to his victim, and how desperately fatal it was likely to prove.

She wisely kept her indignation from her tongue, however, knowing how meaningless it would be to Mab's clouded brain.

Mab went on: "So, night and day I shut myself up in my room, with but one thought in my mind, 'Frank, Frank, where is he; where shall I see him!' Oh, Joyce, how your hand trembles! Do I distress you? Shall I leave off?"

"Go on, Mab, quickly; for the love of Heaven tell me what you have seen!" cried Joyce, all vibrating with another feeling now.

"Alas, darling, so far I have seen nothing. And this is strangest of all, for I could fill volumes with the wonders and glories I have seen in the world that seems so commonplace to commonplace eyes, and yet leave the greater part untold."

There came a long, deep-drawn sigh from Joyce, nothing more.

"Yet whenever I close my eyes and say to myself, 'I will go feel after Frank in the wide, wide world,' strange to say an odd noise fills my ears, a sound like the rushing and surging of an ocean. I see nothing but a great grey stretch of sky, a great grey stretch of sea beneath, not a sign of life anywhere. Nothing but desolation all around."

Joyce's face was hidden in her hands now. This vision of desolation seemed in very truth an apt picture of her own empty, aching heart.

Mab tried to speak words of comfort.

"Darling, do not grieve so; I do not believe he is dead. If he were I should have seen him, I know. It would take too long to tell you how I know it—and you wouldn't understand. Oh, and there's one thing, Joyce—one thing has been forced upon me in these long, silent hours! I am sure, I have felt it, I know it; wherever he is, he is true to you. By-and-by people will be trying to make out that Kathleen has had something to do with his disappearance. I have heard them whisper it already. But you'll never believe this, Joyce, will you?" Here she sat up on her couch, and put her arms all round her sister. "And in my long hours of—of vision this thought has come to me always first and last, strong and clear,

'Wherever he is, he is true, he is true, he couldn't be otherwise.'

Joyce drew her hands from her white, stricken face, with never a tear on it.

"He couldn't be otherwise," she repeated slowly, and the mournful scorn of her smile as she said it was a thing to remember. "Oh, Mab, has it taken you hours of trance to find out what is simple matter of fact to me, to everyone who ever touched Frank's hand, or looked in his face? My dear, you have made to yourself wings to carry you over a plain, straight road that your feet could have trodden more easily by far. Oh, Mab, take to your feet again, let the wings go. The angels want them, not we!"

Mab sank back again on her couch, answering nothing. Her eyes closed wearily once more. Was it sleep or trance? Joyce asked herself.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

THERE is an old legend of a knight whose brave heart was exchanged for that of a hare, and who ever afterwards trembled at, and fled from, the dangers he before had courted. Joyce felt herself in much such a plight now.

Her terrible interview with Captain Buckingham had left her with but one thought paramount—a longing for instant flight. In it alone she felt lay Mab's safety, her own only chance of a successful resistance to an appalling temptation.

She dared not risk another interview with the man. In her last she had expended all her resources, had drawn upon her utmost reserves. Were they to meet again, she knew she must lie weaponless at his mercy.

She at once consulted the doctor, who had been hurriedly called in to attend Mab in her fainting-fit, as to the expediency of immediate change of air and scene for his patient. The doctor pronounced a decidedly favourable opinion on the matter.

"Nothing could be better for her," he said. "Her nerves were, so to speak, unstrung, her system generally lacked tone. For this condition there was no better tonic to be found than bracing sea-air."

Then there was Mab to consult, and here Joyce's heart misgave her sorely, lest Mab, following the dictates of one of her unaccountable impulses, should steadily refuse to be dislodged from her present quarters. Her misgivings, however, were not

verified, for Mab gave the heartiest welcome to the project.

"The very thing, Joyce!" she cried excitedly. "Oh, I can't tell you how often lately I have longed to get to the sea. I feel——" but here she checked herself abruptly.

"But, dear, why did you not say so, it could so easily have been managed!" queried Joyce astonished.

"If only we knew where to go!" Mab went on with a sigh, a curious wistful expression passing over her face.

"How would you like a quiet little village in Switzerland among the hills and lakes?" asked Joyce, eager to put first the ocean, then the Alps, between Buckingham and herself.

Mab shook her head.

"I don't think the place I want to go to is in Switzerland."

Then she drifted into apologies and explanations.

"It's just this, Joyce: the sea haunts me night and day. How can I make you understand? There is for ever in my ears the rush and roar of a mighty ocean, and when I close my eyes and you think I am sleeping, I see nothing but big brown rocks, steep and bare, and a grand sweep of murky, dashing sea."

Joyce gave a great start. Mab's visions after all might be something other than the picture-parables of mystic truths which she had deemed them. What if they were to throw a clearer light on the miserable darkness than any that their vast expenditure of time, thought, money, had been able to throw?

"Oh, Mab, darling, can you not give the place a name?" she asked breathlessly.

Again Mab shook her head.

"When I was a child," she said, "and went with Uncle Archie across Scotland, I remember spending a day in much such a place. I think it was in Ayrshire, on the coast looking across the North Channel. I would like to go there first, Joyce, if you didn't mind, although it isn't quite the place I see in my—my dreams."

So their preparations for flight were at once begun, Joyce urging them forward with an eagerness which told tales of her failing courage.

In spite of her haste, however, she did not forget to take every precaution to keep their destination a secret. Two days after Buckingham's visit to the house saw them ensconced in an hotel in Carlisle. Here

Joyce took the opportunity of dismissing their London maids and engaging others, thereby cutting off all communication with the London household. From Carlisle they went direct to Newton Stewart, the little town where, in the old days, Mab had stayed with Uncle Archie.

Here they heard of a little sea-side place which seemed in every respect to fulfil Mab's descriptions. Tretwick-by-Sea it was called. Joyce found she could engage a small furnished cottage there for herself and Mab. Other accommodation for visitors there was none.

This little cottage had been built by a wealthy inhabitant of Dumfries, as a last hope of saving the life of an invalid son. The hope had proved futile, and, since the death of the lad, the little house had remained unoccupied. It was well furnished, and fitted with many invalid comforts. It stood half-way up the cliffs, and was consequently sheltered from rough land breezes. In addition, it commanded without interruption a view of a grand sweep of coast and the great rolling North Channel. The coast-guard station stood on a level with it, about a quarter of a mile away. A few fishermen's huts clustered on a lower level, at about five minutes' walking distance. These were the only habitations that Tretwick could boast on the coast-line. Above, on the cliffs, a landscape scarcely less desolate met the eye. The bastion of a ruined castle on a hill made a bold, sharp outline against the sky. Beneath it, in a hollow, stood an ancient church with ivy-covered tower, surrounded with a mossy, sunken churchyard. The few cottagers who attended service in this old-world sanctuary had their homes on the farther side of the castle-crowned hill, and their humble roof-trees were consequently hidden from view. In the foreground stretched an apparently illimitable heath in its full glory of purple heather and golden gorse, but with never so much as a stunted Scotch fir to break its picturesque monotony.

Joyce, as she and Mab posted their last few miles across country into the heart of this solitude, said to herself that, if they had searched England from corner to corner, they could not have found a better hiding-place.

It was burning August weather, and the vivid sunlight threw every feature of the landscape into bold relief.

Mab awakened to sudden animation at her first glimpse of the narrow beach, great brown rocks, and restless ocean flashing

into all sorts of brilliant, shifting tints in the effulgence of sunshine.

"It was something—something like this I saw in my—my dreams, Joyce," she cried enthusiastically. "I feel now we are nearer—" she broke off abruptly and ended with a sigh.

Joyce sighed too. She never heard Mab speak of her dreams without a thrill. Vistas in cloudland though they were, they seemed to suggest possibilities of a glimpse of hope now that all other possibilities were cut off.

But were they possibilities of which she dared take advantage? she asked herself, gazing sadly at Mab's pallid face, and thin, drooping figure.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

DURING the two days that elapsed before Joyce and Mab took flight for the sea-side, Captain Buckingham did not molest them, either personally or by letter.

This line of conduct he had deliberately planned, his reasoning running somewhat as follows:

"This resolute young woman will be bound sooner or later to meet my views. She is not one, I take it, to stick at a trifle, and stand shilly-shallying, when word of hers can end a suspense which must be worse than any certainty. In a day or two there will come an imploring little note, begging a second interview. Well and good. She shall have her second interview, and I will undertake to say that it shall be a somewhat less stormy one than the first. By hurrying matters forward I may simply retard them; better let them alone to take their course. It's a bold game I'm playing, a desperately bold one; but when has audacity, joined to skill like mine, ever failed of a triumph?"

The motto of Danton, "*De l'audace, encore de l'audace, et toujours de l'audace,*" aptly enough expressed the principle on which this man had governed his life.

Put a grain of sand under a microscope, you will see it clearly, not a doubt. At the same time you will be apt to look it out of its proportions, and exaggerate its importance in the scheme of the universe. Captain Buckingham had spent so many agreeable hours in the contemplation of his own prowess, that he had grown to overlook the fact that there were such weapons in the world as truth, honesty, and honour, by which it might be successfully combated.

He gave rein to his thoughts, and let

them career freely among the pleasant probabilities the future might have in store for him when once Mab became his wife.

The work of his Society had of late been pressing and important. A running fire of urgent orders was being received from head-quarters by every mail. Boycotting and moonlighter's work were being carried on briskly enough in Ireland, where Sylvia was proving herself a very efficient agent. But the impression seemed somehow to have arisen at the New York centre, that the work of the Society was beginning to flag in England. The ugly word dynamite had begun to be whispered from one to the other of the council, and the scheme for the destruction of certain public buildings in London—set on foot about a year previously, but abandoned out of deference to cooler heads and clearer judgments—was once more hinted at.

These whispers, of necessity, had reached Buckingham's ear before they resolved themselves into the form of a definite order.

He had shrugged his shoulders over them; had said to himself that he was getting older, and less inclined to risk his life and liberty than he had been in his old harum-scarum days.

"Now," he soliloquised, as he allowed his fancy to run riot in the benefits an alliance with Mab might confer upon him, "married to a rich wife, comfortably settled in New York or London, things would be altogether different. I should take higher standing at once, and they would let me off these risky ventures for the sake of the money and influence I should draft into the league."

It may be conjectured that this man had no intention of playing the part of Barnum towards Mab, although it had suited him well enough to fill this rôle towards Marie St. Clair. She, a poor, illiterate girl, could only have been of use to him as a professional clairvoyante. With Mab Shenstone the case was different. As a tractable, rich wife she would benefit him infinitely more than in any other guise. The clairvoyance, he had from the very first decided, could be useful, only in so far as it helped to form another and closer link. That securely forged, let the lighter and temporary bond be snapped at once.

Hand in hand with these thoughts came another not one whit less exultant, having in its substance more of the barbaric chieftain than of the nineteenth century republican. It painted the hour of

triumph when, on the day that made Mab his wife, he would turn to Joyce and say: "Here we are, brother and sister at last. Now, as a brother, let me give you a little piece of advice—'Forget that hot-headed lover of yours as quickly as possible. He met his death on what would have been his wedding-day.'" That would be a speech worth making. It would be triumph and revenge at one blow. It would pay back, with a fine touch, a score of petty slights, insults, innuendoes which these two had seen fit from time to time to launch at him. He could picture the girl's face as he said the words; the beautiful eyes uplifted, first in expectancy, then in agony, to his. He could fancy the cry of pain that would break from her lips as the full meaning of his words struck her brain. Why, it would be every whit as good as bringing in the young fool himself, and laying him down at her feet, with a dagger through his heart.

He admitted readily enough that the game was not without its risks—whenever was there a game worth playing that did not include risks? But the risks here were small, the triumph large. There would be certain small details that would require nice adjustment, such, for instance, as how to couple his certain knowledge of Frank's death with his perfect innocence in the matter.

Joyce was a vehement, passionate woman, he knew, but, after all, vehemence and passion would naturally become diluted when directed against a sister's husband, and that sister as much doted on as Mab was. And even supposing she were to carry matters so far as to set on foot a police inquiry, there was absolutely not one tittle of evidence to be brought against him.

So in a thoroughly contented frame of mind he reposed for nearly a week upon his resolve to take matters quietly, and not run the risk of spoiling the whole thing by rushing at it "like a bull at a gate."

As the days went on, however, and there came no sign whatsoever from Mab or Joyce, his resolve grew weaker. A slight feeling of uneasiness took possession of him. He began to think that it might be as well to change his tactics and take the initiative.

He accordingly penned a brief note to Mab, asking her to grant him an interview, and then, to make sure of its safe delivery, he decided to be his own messenger.

Captain Buckingham's quarters in Bloomsbury saw a good deal of Ned Donovan's

handsome Irish face just then. On the very day on which Buckingham penned his missive to Mab, he sat waiting in Buckingham's sitting-room, with despatches from New York in his breast-pocket.

Into this young Irishman's demeanour there had come of late a dogged sullenness and reserve which sat ill upon him. Buckingham, keeping a steady eye upon him, had noted it.

"He's doing good work, and work that no one else could be found to do just now," he thought; "but he's doing it at the sword's point. By-and-by there'll be a question or two he'll have to answer, and it'll go rough with him. But that won't be till we've got all the work we want out of him."

And forthwith he had sent Ned upon missions that were hourly becoming more distasteful to him, and had treated him with an arrogant brusqueness which at times set the Irishman's blood boiling.

Naturally the relation between the two men was somewhat strained. Fellowship in a cause is not omnipotent to swamp all minor enmities and discords in life.

The individual must wither before "the world," or in other words "the cause," can become "all in all." In this young Irishman the "individual" was very strong; in spite of disappointments, mortifications, and all sorts of hardships, it showed as yet no sign of withering.

"Why I love my life Heaven only knows," he would sometimes say to himself; "but not a doubt I do love it, and it won't be long before I claim my right to do what I please with it."

Possibly Captain Buckingham read these thoughts, or something akin to them, in the man's face as he entered the room. They added additional fuel to the discontent which had taken possession of him, when on arriving at Eaton Square he had been told that the Misses Shenstone had left town, and that all letters were to be forwarded to Mr. Archibald Shenstone at the Grand Hotel, Cheltenham, as they had not yet made up their minds as to their destination.

With a brief nod to Ned he held out his hand for his despatches, opened and read them in silence.

"There is nothing here to make me alter my present arrangements," he said when he had run his eye over them. "The work in County Down can be well carried through by an inferior officer. It will most likely devolve upon you."

Ned frowned a deep, ugly frown. "The rick-firing and cattle-staking business is not the work I'd choose to set going——" he began.

"Since when has it been the custom of the Society to ask its members what work they would or would not choose?" interrupted Buckingham curtly.

"Nor was it the work I was led to believe would be given me, when I joined the Society," Ned went on doggedly.

Captain Buckingham looked up at him, a curious expression passing over his face. "I suppose you know the penalty attached to insubordination?" he asked meaningly.

Yes, Ned knew well enough, none better, and silence fell on him at once.

"I shall have more to say to you by-and-by on this head," Buckingham went on; "meantime, you had better start for Cork at once. At the end of the week, full directions will be sent to you at your old quarters there. On second thoughts, it will be better for you to cross by way of Milford. You can branch off from Gloucester, and run down to Overbury. A day will be allowed you off duty to spend with your father and mother."

Ned's face brightened. Work in Ireland was rough and risky just then, it would be cheery to get a glimpse of the old couple in the gardener's cottage before he set about it. But what could have put such kindly forethought as this into the Captain's head? he asked himself.

He was soon to get his question answered.

"While at Overbury, I wish you to ascertain the Miss Shenstones' present address, and at once telegraph it to me here," Buckingham resumed. "Through your father and mother, no doubt you can easily get at it. If they fail to know it, go on to Cheltenham, and find it out through the servants at the hotel who post the old uncle's letters. You've done that sort of thing neatly enough before now."

Ned's face fell again, the dogged, sullen look came back to it. He bit his lip, answering not a word.

Of Captain Buckingham's attentions to Mab he had had hints from Kathleen, long before they had been so much as suspected by any member of the family. These hints had roused the wild beast in him, and had had, moreover, the practical effect of making him set on foot a few special enquiries concerning Buckingham's previous career. The result of these enquiries had not been

inspiring, and had contributed its quota to the distrust with which the man viewed his chief.

Captain Buckingham noted his silence and read it correctly. To himself he said: "That man must be brought to book before long, with a good strong hand too." Aloud he said, as he drew his chair to his writing-table and spread his papers before him: "These are all the instructions I have to give. When next you hear from me it will be at Cork. Good morning."

But Ned did not stir.

"I have a question to ask," he said, and Buckingham's quick ear once more detected the ring of rebellion in the man's tone. "Is this—this address you desire me to get for you, required for the work of the Society, or is it required for your own private use?"

Buckingham jumped up from his chair—the commanding officer to his very backbone. "Look here, my man," he said, setting his teeth over his words, "you've had one warning against insubordination, I take it you won't get a second. You've had your orders, they will not be repeated. I've no more to say." Then he went back to his writing-table.

Ned went silently down the stairs and out of the house. Outside, in the open air, he drew a long breath.

"It won't be for long—it can't be for long, now," he muttered, clenching his fingers into the palms of his hand. "Let me get breathing time, that's all, and I'll pay off my debts to the last farthing."

SOME NARROW ESCAPES.

IN THE LEBANON.

SHORTLY after the wholesale massacres of the Christians in Lebanon and Damascus, which took place in the autumn of 1860, the five great Powers of Europe insisted upon a new order of things being established throughout Syria; and obliged the Turkish Government to institute something like justice for the people who had been so foully treated by their Druse and Moslem fellow subjects.

The new Governor of Mount Lebanon was Daoud Pasha, the first Christian who ever had that rank conferred upon him; and amongst those who held office under him were several Christians, both from Constantinople and natives of Syria. The new government of the country in general, and more particularly of Mount Lebanon—

where the greatest and most wholesale massacres had taken place—was entirely organised by the five Special Commissioners sent out to Syria by the Powers mentioned above; and for several months nothing whatever was done in the way of establishing order in the land without their consent.

The representative of England on the occasion was Lord Dufferin, who is now Governor-General of India. Amongst other new organisations, it was settled that the police of Mount Lebanon should be taken entirely out of the hands of the Turks, and put under officers named by the Commissioners. At the time the massacres commenced, I had been some three years in Syria, and had acquired a knowledge of Arabic, which is the language of the country. When it was determined that an entirely new departure as to the police of the country should take place, I was offered, and accepted, the berth of Chief of the Force in Mount Lebanon, and was very soon hard at work organising the same, under the immediate orders of Daoud Pasha. These few lines of explanation are necessary, in order to show how it was that I became mixed up with certain events which will be mentioned in the course of what I am about to relate.

Some three months after I had taken charge of my new office, I was awoke one morning before daylight by a message from the Pasha, to the effect that he wanted to see me immediately. We were then living at the old Palace of the former Emir Beshis, called Beit-ed-Deen. That is to say, the Pasha occupied the Palace itself, and his subordinates lived in such houses as they had been able to secure in the immediate neighbourhood.

The cottage which I inhabited was situated on a hill some two hundred feet higher than any of the other houses. The view from it was magnificent. On the one side there was an unimpeded view of the most lofty ridges of Lebanon, and on the other, looking down the mountain towards the sea, the towns and harbours of Tyre and Sidon could be seen in the far-off distance. The road leading to the house was, however, anything but good. By daylight it was not a little difficult to get over it, without stumbling and falling, and after dark it was almost impossible to do so. This it was that made me grumble when I was awoke at least an hour before daylight, and asked not to delay a moment in going to see His Excellency the Pasha.

Arrived at the Palace, I found my chief

in a state of great excitement. "I have just had news brought me," he said, "that a foul murder was committed a few hours ago, at a spot some ten miles from this. Now, I want you to take the matter up, and do your best to find out who the culprit or culprits are. It is the first crime of the kind that has been committed since I became Governor of the Mountain, now four months ago. If we can trace the murderer, lay hands on him, and bring him to justice, it will be a feather in my cap, and I need not say that you shall get due credit for the work. I leave the matter in your hands. Spare no trouble and no expense in finding out who the murderer is."

As a matter of course, I was not a little pleased with the task which His Excellency had set me. I knew by instinct, as it were, that I should have not a little difficulty in finding out who had committed the crime, and when I came to make enquiries my anticipations were fully realised. It turned out that the murdered man was a Greek * pedlar, who was known to carry about with him, what in those parts was looked upon as a considerable sum of money, besides several articles in jewellery, which he had for sale. His body was found in a stony plain, on the higher part of the Lebanon range, which was the road to more than one large hamlet. Within a radius of four or five miles of the spot there were as many villages, all inhabited exclusively by Druses. As a matter of course, I came to the conclusion that it was by the inhabitants of one or other of these villages that the murder had been committed. But any hope or chance of getting one Druse to inform on one of his co-religionists is out of the question—such a thing has never been known.

As I said before, the spot where the corpse of the murdered man was found, could not have been more than ten miles from Beit-ed-Deen. But a ten-mile ride on the Lebanon is a very different thing from getting over the same distance in any country in Europe. With the exception of one well-constructed bridle-path, which was made by the French army of occupation in 1861, and which goes from within a few miles of Beyrout right over the mountain, and of another broad carriage road, constructed by a French company, which owns the diligences which go from Beyrout to

Damascus, there is not even what can be called a pathway throughout the whole district. Those who have never been on the Lebanon are generally under the impression that it comprises one high mountain. But it is, in point of fact, a series, or range of mountains, some thirty miles long, and about seven or eight miles broad.

The ten miles I had to traverse before reaching the spot where the murdered man's corpse was lying, was, even for horses accustomed to the country, very difficult to get over. The greater part of the distance was over the bed of what, in the rainy season, would be a wide and deep mountain stream. That it takes considerable more time to get over the ground in such a country than it does in Europe, may be inferred from the fact, that we were upwards of four hours doing the ten miles.

And when we got to the spot, anything like a satisfactory enquiry as to the cause of the murder, seemed almost impossible. The corpse was lying, where it evidently had fallen, in the middle of a stony plain, some six or seven miles from the nearest village. The unfortunate man had evidently been murdered; and everything he had in the shape of money had been taken from him, as well as nearly all he carried in the pack that was on his back. It seemed to me at first that any enquiry about the case, or any endeavour to find out who the culprits were, could only result in disappointment. But, as I stood looking at the corpse, and trying to find out with what kind of weapon the man had been killed, a happy thought struck me. I suddenly remembered having heard that a French gentleman who owned a large establishment for reeling the silk off cocoons, had lately received from France a couple of very fine bloodhounds. It is true that the factory was some twenty miles from where we stood, and to go and return that distance would—taking into consideration the roads, or rather the want of roads, on Mount Lebanon—consume at the very least a couple of days, if not more. But it was the only chance I had of getting at the truth, and so I resolved to act upon the idea I had conceived.

In a very short time the note to the owner of the factory was written, and sent off by a horseman to its destination. In the meantime all that was left for those left behind, was to pass away the time as best they could until the answer arrived.

The party which accompanied me on this

* In Syria this word does not mean one who is a Greek by birth, but a member of the Greek Church, and a native of Lebanon or the surrounding country.

expedition, consisted of about thirty individuals. Of these one was a Hungarian officer, who held an appointment in the Police subordinate to myself; one was an Armenian clerk, who accompanied the party for the purpose of keeping a register, or diary, of all that took place; and the rest were all natives of Syria, who belonged to the mounted portion of the force of which I had charge, and held the position of non-commissioned officers and troopers of the police. Our sojourn at the place where we had halted did not promise, nor did it prove, to be a very cheerful one. Beyond one day's provision of bread, water, and corn for the horses, we had literally nothing whatever.

As I have said before, travelling in the stony, rocky paths of the mountain is invariably slow work. I had calculated upon the messenger I had sent for the bloodhounds taking about forty hours to go and return. But as it turned out, when he arrived at his destination, the master of the establishment and his two sons were both absent, and did not return until late in the evening, when both they and their horses were too tired to make a start for the place where we were waiting for them. The result was that forty-eight hours elapsed before I received an answer to my letter. What we should have done for the absolute necessities of life during the time we were waiting would be difficult to say, had it not been for some half-dozen Franciscan Monks who had a small monastery five or six miles from where we were bivouacked. I sent the Fathers a message, telling them why we were halted there, and how we were unable to provide food either for ourselves or our horses. The monks had not much for themselves, but what they had they brought us in the kindest possible manner, and not only supplied us with two or three good homely meals, but also with a few bottles of Lebanon wine, which, although it would hardly pass muster as a first-class wine, is by no means to be despised. By far the most disagreeable incident of our long halt was the corpse of the murdered man. If I had allowed it to be removed, the advantage which I hoped to gain by using the bloodhounds would have been altogether lost. But in a country like Mount Lebanon, where the heat by day is great, the odour from a dead body very soon becomes much stronger than it is pleasant; and to those who have to remain anywhere near it, is

anything but agreeable. Had we retired to any distance from the corpse the jackals and wolves would very soon have disposed of it after their own fashion, and we should have had no hopes of bringing matters to an issue.

The Turks have a proverb, or saying, in which they put great faith. It is to the effect that the man who knows how to wait, will end by governing the world. To a certain extent we experienced the practical truth of this. We waited, and in time we were rewarded by the arrival of the French gentleman who owned the silk factory. One of his sons accompanied him, and with them were two magnificent bloodhounds, by whose special qualifications we expected that much of our difficulties would be solved. Nor were we disappointed. The owner of these animals seemed to understand fully how to manage them. When, after some four or five hours of rest, they were ready to begin their work, the whole party were mounted and waiting to start. The dogs were taken to where the dead body was lying, and put on the scent here and there, round about the spot. Not less than half-a-dozen times they commenced following up some scent which they discovered on the ground, but in each instance stopped short after pursuing it a few yards. I began to despair of these animals being of any use to us, and was not a little vexed with myself for trusting in what seemed almost certain to prove a broken reed. Not so the owner of the bloodhounds.

"Depend upon it," he said, "that sooner or later they will hit off the scent, and show us in what direction the murderers have gone."

And so it proved. After several false casts, the dogs seemed to find a scent which they followed up at once for some two hundred or more yards.

"Now we have got it," said their owner, and he was right. In order not to let them go faster than we could follow, the hounds were held with a string. The scent seemed to get stronger and stronger. We must have gone over some six or seven miles of ground, and passed three or four Druse villages. But our canine guides never turned to the right or left. At last we halted for the night, and at daybreak the scent was taken up again. About noon our hunt after the unseen came to an end. The dogs led us to a very small Druse village, consisting of not more than a couple of dozen cottages, which lay altogether out of our road; and here they halted at the door of, perhaps,

the poorest-looking house in one of the most wretched collection of habitations it has ever been my lot to see in almost any country. The door was opened by a venerable-looking old man, whom, after smelling about him, the hounds tried to attack. They were called off, and we proceeded to search the old Druse's house, as well as his person. Much to our surprise nearly the whole of the goods—certainly everything that was of any value—were found in a very short time; and, what was of greater consequence, the clothes which the murderer must have worn at the time he committed the crime were also discovered, with fresh stains of human blood upon them.

It took our party two very long days to get back to Beit-ed-Deen, when, as I need hardly say, the Pasha was greatly pleased that our search had not been in vain. In due time the murderer was tried before what is called the "mixed medjis," being a Court of which the judges are composed of Druses, Christians, and Moslems. In a country where religious fanaticism is of far greater influence than justice, if a prisoner was tried for no matter how serious or how trivial a crime, he would be certain to be condemned, even if death were the penalty of his crime, provided his judges were of another creed than himself. On the other hand, if he was tried by men of the same religion as himself, they would be certain to pronounce him innocent, no matter how palpable his offence might have been. This is why, on Mount Lebanon and some other parts of the Turkish Empire, the judges—or they might be called judges and jurymen, for they perform both functions—invariably consist of men belonging to different creeds prevalent in the province or district. The prisoner we had captured by means of the bloodhounds was tried. Of his guilt there could be no doubt whatever. He was condemned to be hung; and in a very short time his sentence was known all over the mountain. Up to that time justice had been administered with a very slack hand all over the district; and, in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred, the most palpable crimes had escaped with a very slight punishment. This was the first case of murder that had been brought home to the offender since Daoud Pasha had been appointed Governor of Lebanon, and the Druses felt that it would be a stigma upon their race if one of them was hung. Every possible influence was brought to bear upon the Pasha, to induce him to spare the

murderer's life; but he, very properly, determined that the sentence passed on the man should be carried out.

Some of the more influential Druses took the trouble of going to Beyrout—a very long day's journey, in order to beg the English Consul-General to interfere, and ask the Pasha to spare the man's life. But that official very properly declined to interfere. They then came to me, urging that as this was the first capture I had made of any one accused of a capital offence, I ought, if only for my own sake, and my official credit, to beg that the murderer's life should be spared. When other arguments failed, I was privately given to understand that if I did what was asked of me, a sum of money, equivalent to nearly a thousand pounds of English money, should be made over to me in such a manner that the fact of my having received it could never be proved. Last of all, the brother of the murderer appeared on the scene, and told me in very plain terms that if the culprit were hanged, I should pay the penalty of having captured him with my life; that, according to the custom and unwritten law of the mountains, the nearest surviving relative of any one is bound to avenge a death, and that it would be his business to kill me for having been the cause of his brother being hung. He said he was certain that if I interceded with His Excellency the Pasha, the man now in prison, and under sentence of death, would at any rate have his life spared. As a matter of course, I again refused to move in the matter. I had talked over the affair with Daoud Pasha, and fully agreed with him that it was absolutely necessary, for the peace of the district, that an example should be made, and that the sentence should be carried out. In due time this was done. One morning, just before daybreak, as is the custom of the country, the execution took place, and the body was left hanging on the rough gallows for a whole day, before it was made over to the relatives of the culprit in order that they might bury it. It was part of my duty to be present when the fatal knot was tied, and the man strung up to the cross-beam whence the rope hung.

In a former part of this paper I have mentioned that Daoud Pasha was a Christian. He belonged to what is called the Catholic Armenian Church, or that portion of the Armenian body, which maintain their own liturgy, and acknowledge the spiritual supremacy of the Pope. His Excellency had, at Beit-ed-Deen, his own chaplain,

who said mass in a small chapel which the Pasha had fitted up, about five hundred yards from the Palace. To this place of worship His Excellency proceeded every Sunday morning, about seven a.m., accompanied by all his staff, some twenty-five or thirty in number.

Those who were not of the same creed as the Pasha only accompanied him to the door of the chapel, and waited outside until the mass was over. But in going there not a little formality was observed. Everyone had his exact place, marked out in what might almost be called the procession, and was expected to keep it. It was my duty to walk a little in front of the Pasha, but a good deal to his left, so as to see that the different sentries we passed were prepared to salute in the proper manner, and to keep the road clear for anyone who wanted to present His Excellency with a petition, as many of the poor people invariably did on Sunday morning. We all walked at a very slow pace, so that there could be no difficulty for those who wished to address the Pasha, or to present any paper which they might want him to read.

We had arrived at the chapel, and were about to halt that the Pasha might pass in, when, all of a sudden, I heard my name called by at least a dozen voices, telling me in the most earnest manner to beware, to look out, to throw myself down, and I don't know what besides. The warnings were shouted out in accents of the utmost terror, such as may be heard in the street when anyone is in danger of being run over, and the words were shouted so loudly—in French, Italian, and Arabic—that I was for a moment fairly bewildered. At first I thought that the Pasha must be in danger from some cause or other, and I turned towards him. But such was not the case. On the contrary, His Excellency was evidently in a state of great excitement, and was also calling to me by name to take care, but of what I could not make out. There was evidently some great and immediate danger threatening me, but what it was I was utterly at a loss to understand. At last, turning in the direction in which everyone was pointing, I saw what I never have, and never shall, forget—what I now see as vividly and plainly as I did then, although twenty-five long years have elapsed since the affair happened.

Close to me, at a distance of not more than half a dozen yards, there was a broken wall, of which some four or five feet in height remained. Looking over this wall,

his eyes glaring with fury, was the brother of the man I had made a prisoner of, and who had been hanged chiefly by the testimony I had been able to give against him. What the fellow's intentions were, there could be no doubt whatever. He was aiming point-blank at me one of those short, bell-mouthed carbines, which are so common amongst the natives of Syria, and which, being always loaded with half a dozen or more slugs, each about the size of a large grape, are, at anything like close quarters, the most deadly weapons it is possible to imagine. I was so near the man that, when I had turned towards him, I seemed as it were to look into the barrel of his gun. Now, could there be any mistake as to what his intentions were? He seemed, as Orientals invariably are when they intend to commit any desperate crime, quite mad with rage, and kept calling out in Arabic: "Dog of an Englishman, dog of a Christian, you murdered my brother, and now I will kill you!"

Never in my life did I feel as I did during the one or two minutes that I faced this man, with his gun pointed at me, and within four or five feet of me. Knowing how these bell-mouthed firearms were always loaded, and that it was impossible that the fellow could miss me, I made up my mind that my time had come, and that in a few seconds more I must be murdered. To give an accurate account of what my feelings were is utterly impossible. My whole past life seemed to pass in review before me. I should have liked to fight against the fate that seemed so inevitable, but that was impossible. The whole thing had been so sudden, that I was utterly paralysed, and was incapable of forming any plan whatever.

The man continued his oaths and abuse, and I was so near him that I could see, as well as hear, when he put his weapon on full cock. I had then, so far as I could think of anything, made up my mind that there was nothing for it but to accept what seemed to be my inevitable fate. All this, it must be remembered, passed in the course of less than two minutes.

But a sound—a sound I can never forget—made itself heard. The fellow had drawn the trigger, and I could hear that the gun had missed fire. In an instant, after a tremendous oath, the man was hammering at his flint to make it do better; but he was too late. In a far shorter time than I take to write these lines, all my energies seemed to come back to me; I

had vaulted over the wall, and had the would-be murderer by the throat. We fell together, but I was uppermost; and although he tried his best to get his long knife out of the sheath, I was able to pummel his head against the stones until he was almost insensible. In another moment I had the help I needed; the fellow was bound with cords, and taken to prison. Thus ended by far the most narrow escape I have ever experienced.

I am fully aware that I have not told my tale in such a manner as will give my readers a vivid account of what I endured for the moment I saw the blunderbuss pointed at me, and within very few feet of my head. But it is difficult to depict one's feelings under such circumstances, more particularly when taken, as I was, without any warning whatever. My intending murderer followed the fate of his brother, and was hanged a few days after he tried to kill me.

FOUR IRISH FAIRY LEGENDS.

MR. TAGGART, a farmer in the townland of Roshine, had two servants, named Paddy Reilly, who, for the sake of distinguishing them, were called respectively Paddy-more, or Big Paddy, and Paddy-beg, or Little Paddy. Each man was so unfortunate as to have a hump on his back, which spoiled his beauty, and injured his chances with the girls of Roshine village. But, though alike in name and misfortune, the young men were unlike in temper, Paddy-more being cross-grained and ill-natured, while Paddy-beg was the cheeriest, most obliging of creatures.

One Hallowe'en, Paddy-beg washed his face, put on his Sunday clothes, and went out in search of a spree. As he sauntered along he observed a brilliant light across the fields somewhere about the place where the old Danish fort, a grassy mound, planted round the outer edge with trees, stood on his master's farm. He turned into the meadow where the cows had pastured in summer, and, drawing nearer the fort, the sound of lively music reached his ear. It seemed as if at least three fiddlers were playing the same tune. Paddy was fond of music, and he would have been a fine dancer of jigs and reels if it had not been for his hump; but he felt scruples about inviting a young girl to "take the floor" with him, "an un-signified, wee crathur," as he styled himself in his thoughts.

He drew nearer to the bright light, and saw a grand house with steps up to the hall door, while the music, at its loudest and merriest, seemed to ask him to walk in. A company of well-dressed people sat round a large room, drinking and smoking, and, watching a handsome couple dance a jig on a door taken off its hinges and laid in the middle of the floor. "Come in, Paddy-beg; come in, you good-natured, wee fellow," said the women, making room for him to sit down beside them.

He smilingly complied, wondering how they knew his name, for they seemed to be strangers in Roshine. He glanced from one to another. Very respectable, nice-looking people they were; but he had never seen them before. An old man offered him whiskey, and a woman spread soda-cake thickly with butter and handed it to him.

"Your butter's gude," remarked a crone in a red cloak.

"What wad it be but gude, an' it Mr. Taggart's butter!" was the reply. Paddy recollected that portions of butter had disappeared mysteriously of late, and that his master had suspected the cook of dishonesty. Who were these civil strangers? Where was he? But he had come out for a spree, and he resolved to enjoy himself. So he drank enough to make him merry, and, when his hosts proposed that he should dance, he started to his feet with alacrity, chose the prettiest girl in the company and led her to the floor. "That's a brave little dancer! More power, Paddy-beg, my wee fellow!" were the cries that greeted his flings and capers as he crossed his feet, shook his legs till they seemed strung on wire, jumped half his own height, and came down on the door like a zephyr.

"Now we'll mak' him sing to us," said they, when the dancing was over. Paddy, nothing loth, sang songs and told stories and amused the party.

"What will we do for the civil wee fellow?" said one.

"Tak' the hump off him," returned several voices.

The morning light found him lying on the grass a couple of hundred yards from the old fort. There were the trees on the top of the mound, but where was the grand house? Vanished with the lights and the music.

All Roshine was surprised when Paddy appeared without his hump—a smart, straight little man, who might well be

“any girl’s fancy.” He had always been liked as much as Paddy-more was detested. It was this other cross-grained Paddy who grudged his comrade his good fortune, and expressed his envy in many spiteful ways.

Hallowe’en came round again, and Paddy-more, in hopes of a like adventure, made his way up the grazing field. There was what looked like a house with light streaming from its windows, and strains of gay music issuing forth from it. Paddy was received as cordially as his comrade had been, was given whiskey and other refreshments, and was invited to dance and sing. But his ill-temper soon peeped out. He flatly refused to dance; he would not sing; he could hardly answer civilly when he was spoken to.

“What will we do on him?” asked a voice.

“Stick Paddy-beg’s hump on the top o’ his ain,” was responded unanimously.

When morning came he walked up Roahine Street with an enormous burden on his back; and, as long as he lived, his neighbours called him “Paddy wi’ twa humps.”

Mary Carland lived on the lonely shore of Glenveigh, where wooded hills crept down to the water’s edge, and forests of Oamunda or royal fern growing six feet high, and patches of bog myrtle and fragrant wild thyme, formed the margin of the Lough. Not another human habitation was near. James Carland was gamekeeper to the landlord, who lived on his King’s County estate, merely visiting Glenveigh in autumn, when he generally brought a party of gentlemen to shoot over his mountains. They put up at the shooting lodge at the head of the Lough, and Mary and James waited upon them, lighting their fires, cooking their food, and supplying them with necessaries.

This was the season of Mary’s harvest. How pleasant to charge “the quality” a few pence more than market price for butter and eggs! How nice to charge the people of yonder village a commission on the chickens she managed to sell for them! And it was easy to confess to the priest, and get absolution. It will be seen that Mary’s rectitude was not of an exalted character; but she was a dutiful wife, and no woman in the three kingdoms could have exceeded her in motherly love. She idolised Rhoda, her only child, a lovely creature of four years old; her thefts and peculations being laid by towards the child’s fortune in a worsted stocking, that was hidden in a hole in the thatch of the cabin.

Rhoda trotted after her mother when she went up to the Lodge, and the sportsmen stroked her curly head; and one gentleman gave up a day’s grouse-shooting in order to paint her picture.

This artist and sportsman was not the only person who admired Rhoda. Some beings, but seldom seen by mortals, also thought the child very beautiful. The grouse-shooting was over, and the quality gone, and the Carlands lived at Glenveigh with the golden eagles, who built in a cliff across the Lough, opposite their house, and the white trout, and the rabbits, and sea-gulls. There were other creatures nearer to them than they supposed; but James and Mary had never seen them, and were apt to speak of them slightly.

A sad change came over Rhoda. From being as wild and merry as the rabbits in the fern, she became as quiet as the old grey cat in the chimney corner, who was almost too lazy to catch a mouse. Her mother used to say, “Run outbye an’ play yourself, jewel.”

“No, mammy,” the child replied, unwilling to leave her stool, leaning her heavy head against the wall.

The poor child had a lump on her neck, which grew larger, while she lost her appetite, and became fretful and miserable. One evening the mother sat beside the fire with the crying child in her arms, and the tears fell fast upon the pale, little face. Steps were heard at the door, and a tiny old woman with a hooked nose, long black teeth, a grey beard, and a red cloak, came in. She was a frightful woman.

Mary felt a thrill of disgust at the sight of her; Rhoda’s wail turned into a scream; the dog and cat sneaked off to the furthest end of the room, where they stood snarling and spitting.

“Be seated, good woman. Have you come far?” faltered Mary.

“Not far, ma’am. I’m a neighbour o’ yours. I live on Tullyannon Brae.”

“Whisht, good woman, there’s nae house ava on the Brae!”

“Troth is there, ma’am, just a brave house, an’ I ha’ lived comfortable in it for the last three hundred year. Many’s the time your wee girl has played hersel’ over my kitchen chimney, an’ a bonnie wean she is—me an’ my family noticed her a good deal—it was new for us to see sich a nice wean,” and the hideous woman grinned so as to show her black fangs of teeth.

Mary now knew that her visitor must be one of the “gentry.”

Tullyannon Brae was a hill about a quarter of a mile from the cabin—a wilderness of brambles, nut-trees, and ferns. Nothing could exceed Mary's anxiety to conciliate this strange guest. She produced her freshest butter and best soda-cake, and brewed tea that had cost four shillings the pound; calling her "your ladyship," and "my handsome woman."

"Your wean is sick. Will I gie you a cure?" asked her ladyship.

"A cure, lady? Ay, a cure! Be pleased to cure her," cried Mary, shaking less with terror than with eagerness.

"Weel, I'll mak' a bargain wi' you."

"What bargain, dear lady?"

"This ane. I'll come back this night four weeks an' gie' you three guesses to tell me my name, an' if you canna' tell it at the third guess, I'll tak' the child awa' wi' me to Tullyannon Brae."

"Oh, lady, the bargain's gey an' hard—gey an' hard!" cried the poor mother, shuddering.

"As you please," said the fairy, smoothing her cloak with claw-like fingers.

But as the child's wail grew louder, and her face seemed more pinched in the fire-light, Mary's resolution began to give way.

"I agree," she sobbed. "Cure my wean."

"Vera weel. Gie me a thread o' flax. Look. I bind it round the lump three times, an' bite off the ends."

Before the ends were bitten off the lump dwindled and disappeared. The child smiled, and dashing away her tears, jumped off her mother's knee, and ran to play with the grey cat.

"Good evening," said the visitor, moving to the door. "I'll be back in four weeks, an' if you canna' guess my name, thou handsome wean 'll come wi' me."

Great was James's consternation when he heard the story.

"We know that the fairies live near us," said he, "but we dinna know their names."

The lovely Rhoda grew more engaging day by day, and her unhappy parents more miserable, and as the fateful hour approached they lost all hope.

At length their unwelcome visitor became due. They sat together with the child between them, listening for a footstep.

"There she comes!"

No! an old man crossed the threshold, and asked Mary if she would be so kind as to give him a night's lodging.

The poor woman complied, and while he was at supper the child climbed on his knee, begging for a story.

"Ay, my bonnie wean," said he, "I'll tell you about the ugly witch in the red cloak, who is spinning at her door on Tullyannon Brae an' singing

'Little knows the wife in yonder cot,
That my name is Trittemtrot.'

"Oh, sir, what is that you are singing to the wean?" asked Mary, startling.

"I was just telling your wee girl about the old hag that spins and sings. I saw her a wee minute ago by the light o' a fine fire she has on Tullyannon Brae."

"An' what was she singing? Oh! my darlin' gentleman, say it again."

The stranger obeyed.

"Little knows the wife in yonder cot,
That my name is Trittemtrot."

"Trittemtrot, Trittemtrot," repeated Mary, "she may come now when she likes."

While she spoke steps were heard, and the elfin woman appeared, striking the ground triumphantly with her crutch.

"Well, neighbour, the four weeks are up. Can you tell me my name?"

"Is it Nancy?" asked Mary, rubbing her brow as if puzzled.

"In troth it is not," with a malicious grin.

"Is it Bridget?"

"It is not; it is not. One more guess, an' then the bonnie wean comes awa' wi' me to Tullyannon Brae!"

"Is it Trittemtrot?"

"Who told you?" cried the elf in a rage. "Let me know, that I may tear him to pieces. I'll pinch him wi' the pains—I'll—I'll——"

The stranger went close to her, and whispered something in her ear, and she shrank as she caught what he said, till she was no bigger than the grey cat, and, uttering dismal cries, fled out of the house.

"Now your wean's safe, an' you know that ane's name, but you'll never know who I am," said their mysterious benefactor.

They loaded him with thanks and blessings, and he went away.

But, though Rhoda was safe, the family did not care to remain near Tullyannon Brae. They conveyed themselves across the ocean to the New World, far from elfin wiles and spells, for that the fairies have gained a footing there we have never heard.

Jack Donaghy was a cobbler who lived all alone in a cabin in a very "gentle" place, i.e. a place haunted by the fairies. His house was built on a whin-grown brae,

one small square of which had been stubbed out, and made into a potato garden by the people who had lived there before him. These people had thus incurred the enmity of the "gentry," and were unfortunate in every way, so unfortunate, that they were obliged to leave the spot. The house lay tenantless for a long time, and then Donaghy came to it. The first night as he sat at the fireside smoking, the latch was lifted, and a very small brown-coated man, with a red cap on, came in, and asked for a light for his pipe.

"To be sure—you're heartily welcome," said Donaghy, who was a cheerful, good-tempered creature. "Be seated, sir, an' tak' a glaze o' the fire."

The stranger, who was no bigger than a child of six, but with the wizened face of an ancient man, accepted the invitation, and they smoked for some time in silence.

"Will you listen to a wee advice from me, Donaghy?" then said the visitor in his shrill voice. "I see you're a civil creature, an' I'd like to speak a word for your good."

"Surely, sir, I'll listen."

"Weel-a-weel, you'll sweep up the hearth every night before you go to bed, an' put on a bonnie wee fire, an' if you leave a farrel o' oat-cake, an' a sup o' milk on the table, it'll be nae loss to you, I'm thinking."

So saying, and with a pleasant "good-night," the tiny man got up and went out, Donaghy venturing to ask whether he had far to travel that night.

"Only as far as the whinstane fornenst your door," was the reply.

Donaghy sat thinking for a good hour after his visitor had departed, and the result of his cogitations was that he made his fire, and left bread and milk on the table before going to bed. He could not sleep, and he soon heard the patter of feet on the clay floor, and the whispering of voices. He longed to look round, but was afraid of displeasing his visitors, so he lay quiet, with his face turned to the wall. He was rewarded for his prudence, for next morning he found a silver fourpence laid beside the empty porringer, and every morning regularly he was paid in the same manner for his hospitality. He had no reason to regret his neighbourhood to the fairy dwelling on Whinstane Brae.

The country lads and farm servants brought their boots to him to patch, and as they sat waiting, while he worked on winter nights, a hubbub was often heard

outside his window, many treble voices singing a curious sort of chant:

"Poor little Donaghy, aye in the thrang,
Aye at the whittle, an' aye at the whang."

"What's that, Donaghy? Who is singing outside your window?" cried the boys, full of curiosity.

"Whisht, boys, for ony sake, an' tak' nae notice," returned Donaghy, in a low tone. "They'll no harm yez, if you dinna harm them."

And a succession of young men grew accustomed to the chant.

Kate Maginnis was a sturdy servant girl, hard-working and respectable, but she never staid long in any service, and her mistress was invariably glad to see her take her departure, notwithstanding her usefulness. And the reason was that she was dialiked by the fairies. The first evening she spent at Ruchan Farmhouse, master, mistress, and fellow-servants saw her spoon snatched from her on its way to her mouth, and flung to the farthest corner of the room, while she started and looked behind her.

"That beats all," said the farmer.

"What did that on you?" asked his wife.

"It's them we willna name," faltered the girl.

Another time Kate dropped a dish of smoking hot potatoes, which she was carrying to table, broke the dish, and hurt her foot.

"What made you do that, girl?" asked her mistress.

"It was them we willna name," she answered, almost crying, "and I never offended them to my knowledge."

"Maybe, then, it was your father or your grandfather that offended them, Kate, for the wee folk has long memories. It's the longest thing I mind when Paddy Begley, an' a gude livin' man he was, was walking on his grazing-ground, the Rappagh, not a mile frae this very house, that he met a small, low-set man coming towards him, an' he knowed he was ane o' them. He out wi' his knife, an' gave the dawning man a stab. Wi' that there was voices all round, calling out, 'Hit him again, Paddy Begley, hit him again.'

"But Paddy knowed that one stab will kill a fairy, but a second will bring him to life again, so he didna gie the second stab, an' just left the dawning wee man lyin' dead on the Rappagh.

"Next morning the whole country was turned up. the corn-stooks scattered. the

flax tossed about, the ground dug over, an' there was cryin' an' lamentin'. 'The King's son is dead!' that was what the voices was sayin' in the Rappagh, an' on this farm, an' all the way to Dungen, from the back of every whinbush and dyke. I mind it as weel as if it was yesterday, an' maist pitiful it was."

"Master," said poor Kate, nursing her wounded foot, "I never heered thou story afore; but Paddy Begley was my mother's father."

"Faix an' troth, poor girl, that's the reason you shouldna be here," cried master and mistress together.

Next evening the whole family went to a party, leaving her alone in the house. She was busy scalding a churn, and the large pot of water she was using stood on the hearthstone near her. She heard a sudden splash, as if something had fallen into the water, and there was an outcry in a childish voice.

"Oh, I'm burnt; I'm burnt!" More splashing, and then other voices cried, "What ails you? Did she scald you?"

Kate trembled.

"Na, na," replied the first voice, "me, mysel', burnt my ainsel'."

"Weel-a-weel," returned the others, "if me mysel' burnt my ainsel', we canna help it, but if she had burnt you, we'd ha' burnt her to death."

This occurrence, related to the farmer and his wife on their return, frightened them yet more, and made them part with Kate for her own good the very next day.

IMPRESSIONS.

FROM our babehood upwards, we are making or taking impressions during every hour of our existence. A good many of them are foolish, a great many more of them are wrong; some are pathetic, and others ridiculous; but we take them all, and, unconsciously, the foolish and the bad, as well as the best and the most beautiful, affect every act and thought of our succeeding life. These impressions are as much our education as our school and college days. More so, for they are the lessons which fall directly from the lips of life, and even with the School Board in the land, it must be said that they are the best. Perhaps no man ever quite knows how swiftly, or to what extent, he accepts impressions, or to what depth, they sink into his mind and heart. The analysis of one, with its condi-

tions of cause and effect, is generally too bewildering and complex, or too discomfiting to undertake.

We have received a general impression, that So-and-so is a remarkably clever man, who could see through a stone wall if he wished, and we admire him accordingly. But a kind friend, anxious to put our relations straight, tells us that So-and-so remarked that we were a fool, and straightway a new impression forms in our brain, which leaves us with the conclusion that So-and-so's intelligence is a poor thing after all.

There is a very powerful impression abroad, that rank, and handsome dwelling-places, and carriages, and horses are the dress, and the true heart the gold. It is a beautiful impression, and becomes part of our very life, in that it flavours the words of our mouth, and inspires the writings of our pen. But apparently, there is another impression which is also a conviction, for it carries us round hurriedly to call on a friend who has built himself an extra wing to his house, and makes us set out our best silver, and lay the finest damask on our table, when a friend comes to dine, drawn by his own horses; while we find our time so full of business and cares that it is impossible to pay that long-standing visit to the friend who, by force of circumstances, or the coyness of Fortune, has been compelled to retreat to a back street or a suburban and cramped residence. The impression in our mind that our friend at Peckham has a very worthy heart, is strong. But our friend in Grosvenor Square who has a title, has a worthy heart too. Probably these two combinations form a double impression on our brains; and, therefore, being still stronger, it is only fair that their effect on our conduct should be double too.

If a man walks off with our last new hat and leaves an old one in its place—if we overhear him remarking at one of our social entertainments that a fool and his money are soon parted—if we see him opening to a fellow-man his door, from which a few minutes before we have been sent away, it is no use enlarging to us any more upon the fact that he has been trusted with untold gold, or that he is a man with widely benevolent views. Our sensitively plastic being has received its own impression of him, and it influences our feelings to such an extent that we will neither trust him with our fortunes, nor leave him alone with our last new hat; or the next time

we go and call we hire a brougham, and put on our best clothes.

For if the fashionable or influential world should have left its impression upon our mind, as it probably has, that it is a good thing to be seen at his gates, we shall certainly act upon that impression by hastening to place ourselves there. For amongst all the others that stir and set into motion unregenerate humanity, there is one which is the mainspring of all, and that impression is that, to do well to self is the most laudable action in the world. As long as fire has power to burn us, or water to drown us, we shall always have a strong personal feeling for that mighty, erring creature designated self. But this impression is probably only a result of complex ones, and they vary still more as they affect us or are received by our fellows. We wait at the gates of this man with the impression that we are too great to be disturbed or moved by trifles of jealousy or vexation. We will think of his reputation, and forget the reality as it struck us. But the impression we may be making on our fellows is that of a toady and a snob. It is unfortunate. But perhaps it is neither here nor there after all. Nobody troubles much about the impression of the poor worm, when carrying out the probably carefully-inculcated maxims of the mother-worm, it made haste and went abroad early into the dew, except the early bird who found it there. And as the bird immediately and successfully seized its own opportunity, its impressions naturally would be the most lasting and important. And so great is the impression made on man's mind by success, that the early bird has been metaphorically stuffed and preserved in a proverb, to be quoted to our children as soon as they can walk, while but for its own compulsory and undesirable share in that transaction, the hapless worm would be completely forgotten. It is the greedy but successful early bird which points the moral. Perhaps if most of our impressions could take visible shape, our bodily eyes would open upon a kind of wild Walpurgis, so curious, so wild, so strangely assorted, so widely disproportioned they would seem. The child who has a suspicion that in a certain dark corner lurks a bogey, and carries the fancy with him even into the sunshine, where the roses are blooming as they never will bloom again, and where the daisies and pansies are only waiting for his baby hands to pick, and grows frightened even

out there in the summer sunshine, is but father to the man who bears with him in his brain, some dim impression gathered up years before. An impression which, perhaps in spite of himself, is stronger than truth, and justice, and training—stronger even than love, and friendship, and affection. The impression may be, that the measure of life is success—that all men are liars—that all women are frail—that pleasure is better than life—that revenge is due to a man's honour. The impression is there, and it gathers ground, and stretches like a long black shadow into the daylight and work of his every-day life. It darkens the sunshine, and it warps the work, and poisons the sweet waters of love, and eats like a canker through the bands of friendship. Happily for the world in general, and each of its denizens in particular, the impressions which sow seed, and bring forth the fair and wholesome fruit which nourishes all human life, are innumerable, for a man may no more live without mental or moral impressions than he can live without food, in that, seeing, hearing, thinking, and feeling, are the very essence of his being. The impressions that we gather at our mother's knee live with us and hallow our acts, which pass as outward signs of those first impressions, into the minds and souls of others. The impressions we gain from the lives of our heroes, from the faith of our friends, from the lips that we love, from the beauty of earth and sky and sea, from the strength and endurance of companions who are with us day by day, mingle with the breath of our life, and make us God-like when, but for them, we should be most frail, merciful when we would be cruel, and forgiving when we would fain avenge.

SEALSKIN, AND WHERE IT COMES FROM.

IN FOUR PARTS. PART III.

It has been already remarked that the fur seal does not assume parental duties till seven years old. This seems to be a long period of bachelor life. What does he do with himself all this time? Where does he live? Does he come to land or does he spend all his time at sea? This question is soon answered. The "holluschickies," for that is the local translation of "bachelor," do just as the others: they come up with the bulls and cows in the summer, amuse themselves in their own way, shed

their coats, and leave along with the rest. But they have no family responsibilities; and this fact produces a different condition of society.

We have already got some idea of the breeding-grounds; now for the "hauling"-grounds, the sealers' expressive term for the coast-line where the "holluschickies" haul up. These line the coast of St. Paul, but their tenants are not nearly so fastidious as their more mature relatives. Having no ties or duties they are not bound to a certain spot, but roam about as fancy dictates, covering much more ground and without any appearance of regularity. Usually the hauling-grounds are separate from the breeding-grounds; in some cases as much as two miles intervene, but this is not universally the rule. Not unfrequently the "holluschickies" find room at the breeding-grounds, but their station is always behind it, and, under such circumstances, there is always a broad path left through the rookery, by which the bachelors go up and down, and which is as well defined as one of our own roads. As long as they keep to this all goes smoothly; but if a masher so far forgets himself as to intrude, however slightly, on the harem of an authorised parent, woe be to him. He will be very lucky if he escapes being torn to pieces by the infuriated bull. As may be imagined then, the "holluschickies" preserve a grave and dignified demeanour while passing these enticing regions, and take very good care to keep themselves to themselves. Nowhere in the world, brute or civilised, is the rule of law better observed than here.

The "holluschickie" has no difficulty in getting through the day. Of all living creatures he is the most restless while awake, and sleep, though it comes very often, is not for long. He enjoys his life immensely; he and his brethren make excursions into the country, and take intense delight in crushing down and eating the coarse grass and umbelliferous plants which form the chief part of the vegetation. And when this attraction palls, there is always their natural home, the sea. Any day may be seen hundreds of thousands sporting at the edge of the surf, riding on the top of the roughest waves, just as they break, dipping below to reappear on the crest of the next behind. And when a little rock stands out of the boiling surf, there he and his friends have a grand time, each one trying to get to the top, only to be driven from it by the advancing water and the

pressure of his rivals, a fresh one immediately taking his place, only to be rolled over the next minute in the same way. And then, leaving the water's edge, there is the broad expanse of ocean. The "holluschickies" are the champion swimmers of the world; every fancy trick, turn and tumble ever dreamt of, are here displayed. The bulls and cows seldom indulge in these brilliant feats, their responsibilities render them grave and sedate; but the bachelors do nothing else. A favourite trick is to jump clean out of the water, like dolphins, describing a beautiful elliptical curve, three or four feet high, fore flipper close to the side, hind ones stretched out close together, plunging in head first, and then out again in a few seconds, and so on over, and over, and over again. In this they differ from their congeners; sea-lions and hair seals never jump like this. One very admirable trait in their character deserves notice, especially as they lose it and change for the worse later on—no quarrelling or bad temper is ever exhibited.

There is no difficulty in classing the "holluschickies" according to age, as yearlings, two, three, four, or five year olds. The yearlings come up in the last year's coat, already described, steel grey, both male and female. About the 15th to the 20th of August they begin to shed their coats, and this process takes some six weeks, and is finished by the end of September. It is done very gradually, so that no chill is received by the animal when in the water. During this period the whole coast-line is covered with the matted hair just shed. The yearling cows always retain the same colour; but the males of the same age turn to a nearly uniform dark grey and grey and black mixed. Next year, when two years old, and shedding for three years, it is a much darker grey, and so on to the third, fourth, and fifth season; then, afterwards, with age it gets more grey and brown with reddish ochre and whitish tipped over-hair on the shoulders. The moustache does not arrive at its greatest perfection till the seventh or eighth year.

Shy and wary as the seal is when out at sea, it is perfectly fearless when hauled up for its annual holiday. You may walk through the hauling-grounds without the slightest difficulty, or without creating a commotion in the herd. They simply open up before you twelve or twenty feet, close up behind, and take no further notice. It will therefore be easily understood that

half-a-dozen men would have no difficulty in turning aside from the herd two or three thousand of the lot, and driving them up to the village. And this is what is actually done to get the skins; there is no "hunting," "chasing," or "capturing."

No females are allowed to be killed on any account; the skin of the bull is of inferior quality, and therefore he is safe, but it is in greatest perfection at three years old; and, therefore, the "holluschickies" alone are devoted to slaughter. And this is how it is gone about.

Just at daybreak, in these latitudes about two a.m., the men charged with the duty get behind a certain number, and, by the aid of a little shouting and marrow-bone-and-cleaver music, detach them from the herd and drive them very quietly towards the killing-grounds at the village. In cool and moist weather and on hard ground, the seals may be driven safely half a mile an hour; at a quicker rate many drop exhausted and the fur suffers; the slower speed, therefore, is always preferred. Any old seals that may be in the drove do give in early, and are left to find their way back to the sea. The weaker of the young ones, when they fall out, get knocked on the head and skinned at once, if they are not too much heated. In course of time then the seals arrive at the killing-ground, where they are herded and allowed to cool down. This is finished by seven o'clock, and then all the able-bodied of the village turn out to work. Each man has a club five to six feet long and three inches thick at the furthest end, a stabbing-knife, a skinning-knife, and a whetstone. The chief gives the signal, and two or three hundred of the drove are taken out and formed into a "pod" or cluster, surrounded by a circle of natives, who narrow it down till the victims are well within reach. Then the word is given, and each man raising his club strikes on the head the seal nearest to him, and in a moment every one is stunned and motionless. The clubs are now dropped, the seals dragged out by the hind flippers, then each sealer takes his long knife and drives it between the fore flippers right into the heart, the blood gushes out, and life is extinct. Each seal is then drawn quickly out of the heap and all are laid close together, but without touching, and a second and third "pod" are treated precisely in the same way, and so on till the day's quota is complete. Then, if the day is a good killing one—that is, cold and damp—the skinning is proceeded

with, but if it is at all warm each "pod" is skinned immediately life is extinct. This is done to prevent what is known as "heating." This always occurs sooner or later, but very soon in warm weather. Under this influence the fur and hair come off in handfuls with the least touch, with the effect of course of rendering the skin valueless. This curious change will occur in less than half-an-hour, if the day be warm and dry, and the object, therefore, is to delay this as long as possible, and the only way to avoid is to kill outright and skin at once. This latter operation is performed with the ordinary butcher's knife, sharpened as keen as a razor. The body of the seal is placed on its back, the native then stoops over it, and with his long stabbing-knife makes a long swift cut directly down the middle of the belly, from the chin to the root of the tail. Then straddling over the carcase he makes with his shorter knife a circular cut round each fore and hind flipper, just where the fur ends, then seizing a flap on one side or other of the abdomen, he lifts it up and cuts the skin from the underlying blubber, rolling the carcase over in the way with which most people are familiar. The whole process takes less time to finish than to describe. A skilled hand will turn out a perfect skin in a minute and a half; the average, however, is four minutes. Nothing is left behind but a small patch, on which the moustache grows, the tip of the lower jaw, and the ridiculously abbreviated tail. The skin thus obtained is of an oval shape, with an oval hole near each side edge; these are where the fore flippers were. The carcase thus exposed is covered with a more or less thick—half an inch to an inch—layer of soft oily fat blubber, which conceals the muscles and flesh. It resembles that of all other seals, with this unfortunate difference, that it has a particularly offensive odour, unbearable to any cultivated organ, and actually worse than the smell from the carcasses rotting all round. It is the one pervading scent of the island, and naturally comes in for the objugation of the new comer. Human nature, however, adapts itself to anything, even to this, and in time nobody notices it.

It has been already stated that seal meat forms the staple food of the natives, and one naturally wants to know what it is like. Well, it is much better than might be expected. When not more than three years old it is not at all fishy, as one would think, and is, in fact, as good as a good deal of the beef.

mutton, or pork, one gets at home. The following instructions, however, must be carefully observed. It must not have a particle of blubber left on it, however slight. Cut into thin slices and steep for six to twelve hours in salt and water, then fry or stew with a little bacon, season with pepper and salt, and serve up hot with the natural thick brown gravy, and the most fastidious eater will come again. The meat being naturally dry, always needs bacon. It may be mentioned here, for the benefit of the curious epicure, that sea lion flesh is better still, and hair seal best of all, as being much juicier. The liver of all three is excellent.

Having now actually got our skins, we can follow them comfortably. They are taken from the killing-grounds, examined thoroughly, and then piled up in the salting-house in bins, hair to fat, with plenty of salt on the flesh side. After three weeks of this treatment they are pickled enough, and are ready at any time to be taken out and rolled into bundles of twenty-five skins each, tightly corded, hair side out, for shipment. The average two year old skin weighs five and a half pounds; three years, seven pounds; and four years, twelve pounds. The great bulk are two and three year olds. In this state they are put on board the Company's steamer at St. Paul, and are shipped to San Francisco. Here they are transferred to large hogsheads of twenty to forty bundles, and are shipped to London, either via Panama, or else by rail to New York, and then to London in the usual way, London being, it seems, the great centre of the fur-selling and fur-preparing trade.

There is a popular notion that the seal-skin, as we see it at the furrier's, is just as it is taken off the animal. Nothing, however, could be more contrary to fact. Few skins are less attractive than this at first, as the fur is completely covered and hidden by the dull grey brown and grizzled over-hair. This mask has then to be removed, and this is an operation requiring a very great amount of patience and skill, with a consequent increase in price. The un-hairing is effected by warmth and moisture, which softens the roots of the over-hair, and enables it to be pulled out, or by shaving the inner side very thin, which cuts off the roots of the hair, which penetrate deeply, and leaves untouched those of the fur which are very superficial. Whichever method is employed the hair must be

taken off uniformly or the fur will never lie smoothly, but always have a rumpled look, which can never be corrected by any subsequent treatment. This will explain to some extent the cause of the high price of sealskin jackets and cloaks, and also the cause of the differing prices one hears of, as a good many skins are more or less spoiled in the dressing. Another cause, too, is the quality of the dye, and the workmanship employed in its use. The liquid colour is put on with a brush, and the points of the standing fur carefully covered, the skin is then rolled up fur inside, and then, after a little time, hung up and dried. The dry dye is then removed, and a further coat applied, dried, removed, and so on till the requisite shade is obtained. One or two of these coats are laid on thick and pressed down to the roots of the fur, making what is called the ground. From eight to twelve coats are needed to produce a good colour. No wonder a first-class sealskin is expensive: it is just as true now as ever it was; but in these days of universal cheapness one is apt to forget that, if you want a really good thing, you must pay a good price.

Thus ends the history of the sealskin. As far as can be seen at present there is not the slightest fear that this fur will become either scarcer or more plentiful, consolatory at any rate for the happy possessor of the article.

Till 1890 the annual catch of the Pribylovs is strictly limited to one hundred thousand, and, as far as I can judge, the world takes off regularly the quantity provided. Whether, after 1890 it will be deemed advisable, either commercially or scientifically, to allow an increase of the catch, it is impossible to say. But one thing seems tolerably certain, that this take can be supported to the end of time, supposing the present conditions of climate are continued.

The natives remember that the winter of 1835-6 was a particularly hard one; the ice came down thicker and stronger than had ever been known before, and in much greater masses, and surrounded the island with a dense wall—twenty or thirty feet above the surf—completely blocking the land. This did not disappear till the end of August, and consequently when the seals came as usual they were unable to land, and were of necessity obliged to bring forth at sea, where of course the young at once perished. Seal life was thus almost annihilated, and

years elapsed before it recovered from the shock.

Against such an occurrence as this we cannot be protected; but, short of this, there is nothing to be feared but some mysterious epidemic, such as is known to have ravaged the hair seals of the North Atlantic, but which, as far as is known, has never appeared in the North Pacific. We may, therefore, reasonably suppose that the supply of seal-skin will remain a constant quantity, and be unaffected in price, except that this may possibly be enhanced by the increase of wealth and luxury amongst ourselves and the world generally. On the whole, then, ladies' minds may rest undisturbed.

Knowing, as we do, that the hair seal is taken solely for its oil, we should expect that that from the fur seal would be an article of trade. This is very natural, but there are difficulties. In the first place, there is the objectionable smell, which up to now cannot be removed by any known process that will pay. Secondly, it is thick and gummy, and far darker than any other seal oil, thus presenting a marked contrast to the clear, limpid, and bright colour of the oil of the hair seal. Thirdly, there is the time, trouble, and danger expended in handling bulky casks at a place where a vessel has to be loaded one and a half to three miles from a shore always subject to daily heavy surf and frequent gales; then add cost of casks and cooperage, men's wages rendering and loading, tax of fifty-five cents per gallon, transport to market, refining and putting on the market with a very slow sale at any price, and it is not to be wondered at that the article has no commercial value.

Then there are the bones, which would surely fetch something in these days when the world is ransacked for material for fertilising exhausted soils. Here, again, there are difficulties. The bones of the seal are more like pasteboard than the bone we are accustomed to, and are singularly light and porous, resembling those of birds rather than mammals. When dried, the skeleton of a three year old only weighs seven pounds, and that would be much reduced if kiln-dried, as bones usually are. It is very doubtful if they would pay, after debiting them with freight and charges; consequently St. Paul, in certain places, is covered with bones and rotting carcases. No attempt is made to remove them from the spot where the animal was skinned. Next year the killing-ground is moved a

little on one side, and in three years every sign of slaughter has disappeared, and the ground is ready for another batch of victims. Thus, a relatively small area suffices for the annual operation.

One would naturally expect that the presence of this immense mass of decomposing animal matter would produce an epidemic that would carry off every one of the inhabitants. But it is not so—the cold, raw temperature and the strong winds seem to prevent any evil effects from the fermentation of decay. The natives are no more sickly than any other semi-civilised people. They have the ordinary diseases, which all flesh is heir to, and are strongly prejudiced in favour of the regular wise woman, not unknown to more advanced societies, considering the provision of a properly-qualified practitioner by the Company as a direct vote of censure on their knowledge of medicine. After all the doctor gets little practice; he is never called in till all the charms and spells have been exhausted, and then, as a rule, it is too late.

LOST IN THE VALLEY.

By the Author of "Driven of the Wind," etc.

A STORY IN SIXTEEN CHAPTERS.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE attitude of silent, watchful pity, assumed by all the family circle towards Maurice, irritated him profoundly.

Miss Dudley, too, was, as before, a constant visitor. Maurice was always meeting her light grey eyes fixed upon him with a look of compassionate interest. For she had heard his story, and now regarded him in the light of a hero of romance, an idea which she disseminated freely among the neighbouring families, until Maurice was compelled to shun them all, lest he should be sympathised with against his will.

He spent most of his time quietly reading, or pretending to read, before the fire in his study. He had never been particularly talkative, and had always been subdued and gentle in manner; but the flashes of humour which had before enlivened his conversation were absent now. He hardly ever made any remark at all, and by the time the summer returned, six months later, he had lost all the beautiful boyish look that had formerly given such charm to his face. His notion of happiness appeared to be to spend all his money on

otto of roses, which he sprinkled profusely about his room, and then to sing over old snatches of melodies by the piano in the twilight, with the white cat purring against his feet.

Again and again, in his own mind, all day and all night, he lived through the short period he had passed with Eveline, pondering over all she had told him of her life, and comparing it with what he knew of her character, until his imaginings grew to be more real to him than what was actually happening around him.

In August, when all the family left for the seaside, he begged to be allowed to remain at home alone a little while, and to join them later; and, as they humoured him in everything, he was allowed to have his way in this.

In spite of their kindness, it was with a feeling of relief that he watched them all drive away from The Grange door, as he stood on the steps, waving his hand to them in the sunshine.

"Poor boy, how horribly thin and ill he looks!" exclaimed Mrs. Wilde. "I really think we ought not to have let him stay there all alone."

"Poor little chap, that foreign Countess was nearly the death of him," said Maurice's father.

"He'd get over it in half the time if he'd only talk about it," commented Mary.

Half an hour after their carriage had driven through the lodge gates, the postman entered them, bearing a letter for Maurice Wilde. It had been travelling some days, and was redirected from certain other Granges in neighbouring counties. Maurice was wandering all over the house, as one does when left in sole possession of any dwelling, when the servant came to him to ask if the letter was for him.

"It's been travelling a good deal, sir, and your name isn't spelt rightly," the girl said. "The postmark is Paris."

For a moment Maurice's heart seemed to stand still.

Had she written to him at last?

But the handwriting was strange to him, an angular feminine hand, rather difficult to make out. Taking the letter to read quietly in his study he opened it, and saw that the signature was "Ellen McIntyre."

The letter was worded in the formal, old-fashioned style, which the little lady's person and manner suggested.

"I must ask you to pardon me," it began, "the liberty I take in thus addressing you,

but I am so sure that you are labouring under a misapprehension concerning a very dear friend of mine, that I have endeavoured for some months past to procure your address. You will probably guess that I refer to Eveline Douglas. I have only seen her once since she left Paris hurriedly last November with Dr. Grantley, to stay with his mother at Boulogne."

Maurice put down the letter.

It was Dr. Grantley then, with whom she had left Paris, and not, as Pierre had informed him, M. de Villars.

What a fool he had been to believe the word of that sly-faced rogue who, as he himself had seen, was in the Marquis's pay!

But the supper-party, and de Villars's return to Paris as he, Maurice, had left the city—could Miss McIntyre explain that too?

He took up the letter, and read on eagerly.

"She was travelling with Mrs. Grantley in the South of France last 'spring, and invited me to spend a fortnight with her; and I was most distressed to notice the alteration for the worse in her health and spirits. If not happy, she was at least resigned and cheerful when you first met her. Now she seems altogether hopeless, crushed under the weight of the cruel suspicions cherished against her by those whom she loved and trusted. She would not mention your name at first, but before I left she briefly related to me the events which induced her to quit Paris.

"You must pardon me for saying so, but I think your conduct altogether unjustifiable. Eveline had fully explained everything to you, and you had stated your belief in her words; then, when Pierre, who has since been taken into M. de Villars's service, informed him of your arrival, and he sent you a cruel and calumnious letter against the woman who had repulsed him, you declined to listen to her explanation, and left her with words that wounded her, even more than you could have wished—as if, indeed, she had not suffered enough already through the selfishness and wickedness of men. I myself was with Eveline, when, in despair lest your life should be risked through any fault of hers, she went to de Villars's house, to beg him to withdraw his challenge. I heard him offer to forego his revenge if she would encourage his love; I heard her scornful refusal. And then I heard him make the mean condition that,

unless she entered the supper-room with him, and listened while he spoke to her before his friends, he would meet you, and, if possible, kill you the next morning. I saw her hesitate, saw the struggle between her pride and her affection, and saw her at last, for your sake, consent. And I crept to the half-open door of the room she entered, and saw her sitting there among them, but not of them, with a look of cold suffering on her face that chilled the boldest of the disreputable company. Then, when her short ordeal was over, I accompanied her home, where you were waiting for her—you, for whom she had undergone such a truly humiliating scene, and who, later, rewarded her unselfish affection by coldness and desertion.

"Very possibly you may by this time be married in England, and may have forgotten Eveline Douglas and your professed affection for her; I hear that she herself will shortly be married to a man who has known and loved her for years; but I feel it would be injustice to the noblest woman I have ever met, if I did not strive to clear her from the groundless accusations laid to her charge. Pray do not imagine that Eveline is in any way responsible for this letter; she would be very angry with me if she knew that I had written it. She thinks of you as of a once dear friend now dead, and before the end of the year, I trust, will have become the wife of Dr. Grantley.

"Yours faithfully,

"ELLEN MCINTYRE."

"The wife of Dr. Grantley." This one sentence impressed Maurice more than anything else in the letter. To find that she was innocent and pure, as he had always thought, seemed to him now no new thing. He had never been able to realise her wickedness, and always inclined to think the whole de Villars episode a miserable puzzle, to which he should some day find the key. But that he should be unable to go to her, that she should think of him as of one dead, and be on the eve of marrying another man, when for months past he had been living only on the memory of the time they had spent together, wounded him acutely.

He could not even write to her—from what he could understand she had not been in Paris since he had left it the year before, and he had no idea where she was. Besides, he had voluntarily resigned all claim upon her, all interest in her; and he knew that, despite

her gentleness, she was very proud. She had known him only a few weeks, Dr. Grantley for many years, and when he left her and refused to listen to her explanations, she must have sent immediately for her old friend.

Something at least Maurice felt he could do—he could make her good name clear to his own family, who had all been induced to regard her as a modern Messalina. Before joining them, however, he made a pilgrimage up to Somerset House, and had the satisfaction of reading a copy of James Douglas's will, by which the whole of his large fortune was left to his step-daughter, Eveline, Countess of Montecalvo.

"We have all of us made a cruel mistake about Eveline Douglas," Maurice wrote to his father. "I don't suppose I shall ever be able to clear her name to that unhappy, prejudiced old Madame Ravelli, but when the younger one comes back to England, I mean to explain things to her at least. Don't go and frighten yourself, thinking I am going to marry Eveline. I shall, in all probability, never see and never hear from her again. But I have had a letter from a lady who knows her intimately, and who shows me what a blind fool I was ever to believe anything against her. The money on which old Madame Ravelli is living now is supplied, not by her relatives, but by Eveline; and I have seen in London a copy of her step-father's will, proving clearing the falsity of Madame Ravelli's statements as to the source of her wealth. Her husband was an infamous scoundrel, and her fault was too great obedience to him—that is all. The story is too long to tell you now; but you shall hear it all when I join you, as I hope to do in two days' time. As for myself I have missed the one thing in life to make me happy, and it is my own fault. Eveline Douglas is going to marry a man who knew her during her whole married life, and who loves and sympathises with her as she deserves."

Old Mr. Wilde discussed this letter with his wife and family. They were all somewhat relieved that they were not asked to welcome this mysterious Countess of doubtful antecedents into their midst, and heartily glad to hear that someone else was going to marry her.

And when, a few days later, Maurice joined them, and insisted on relating to them Eveline's whole story as she had related it to him, they listened with interest and sympathy.

He announced, too, his determination of going up to London, and seeing whether it was yet too late to procure the Government appointment which had been offered to him in the spring, a resolution which all his family circle welcomed with applause.

"For of course he won't forget her if he goes mooning about all day, doing nothing," Mr. Wilde said to his wife.

In truth his son was feeling strongly the want of active employment that he might not be continually haunted with self-reproachful thoughts, and with pictures of the happiness that might have been his, had he been only a little more trustful, a little more patient.

By the first days of September, when his family returned to The Grange, Maurice had energetically sought for, and succeeded in obtaining, an appointment in town, with easy hours, fair pay, and little to do, through the influence of some friends of his father.

His employment made it necessary to live in London, but he generally spent Sunday at The Grange, looking thinner and older at each successive visit.

For he was so determined to forget his brief love-story, that he went everywhere, accepting every invitation he received, and, as he was young, good-looking, a good dancer, and well-connected, he soon found half-an-hour's solitude in the dull West-End street where his rooms were situated, a rarity indeed.

But the constant feverish excitement which his many engagements, and the very air of London life brought to him tired him terribly. Society gave him amusements, distractions, acquaintances; but it could not satisfy the craving of his heart for the love of the only woman he had ever really cared for.

Night after night, as, returning tired from a dance, a concert, a supper, or a visit to the theatre, he put his candle out and tried to sleep, he found himself mentally comparing Eveline Douglas to the women he had met, and deciding how very far she eclipsed them all; then, lying wearily awake, he wondered where she was, whether she had indeed married Dr. Grantley, and whether she had really altogether forgotten him.

When little Jeanne returned to England in December as the wife of Jack Dudley, Maurice insisted on relating all he knew concerning Eveline to her too, and

found it not difficult to alter the little Frenchwoman's ideas on the subject entirely, and bring her to think of her former rival in a tearfully sympathetic and affectionate spirit.

It was during the rejoicings at Dudley Manor over the return of the bride and bridegroom, that Maurice's relations suddenly discovered that he was seriously ill—so ill that he had to be excused from his office—and the fortnight before Christmas found him lying white and nerveless on a sofa at The Grange, physically incapable of the slightest exertion. The local doctors said it was low fever; the London doctors pronounced it a nervous illness, brought on by worry. They all recommended rest and tonics. Maurice took both, and grew no better, but rather worse day by day, until his blue eyes began to shine from his thin white face with a startling brilliancy that brought a choking sensation to his father's throat, reminding him, as it did, of his son's fragile little mother, whose eyes had shone just in the same manner when she was dying.

As an invalid Maurice was most docile and submissive: the whole household was always on the alert to satisfy his slightest wish; but he never expressed any, and seemed content to lie in silence, with his eyes closed, all day long.

At last, about a week before Christmas, as he was alone with his father, a light came suddenly into his face.

"Dad," he exclaimed, "these doctors will never do one the slightest good. But I know a man who would. Will you telegraph for him?"

"Of course, my boy," said his father, finding a pencil and a telegraph form at once. "What shall I write?"

"From Maurice Wilde, The Grange, Millthorpe, Warwickshire, to Dr. Grantley, 10, Rue Tronchet, Paris. Can you come at once and see me professionally? I think I am dying. Dictated. Maurice."

His father put down the pencil.

"Dying, my boy! Nonsense! Dr. Sydney says you're a little weak, and want change of air, and this bitter weather tries you, of course, as is does everyone."

"Well, even if it isn't true," said Maurice's soft voice, "it will bring him all the quicker, won't it?"

So the telegram was sent, and the evening of the following day saw Dr. Grantley's arrival at The Grange.

"THE STORY OF OUR LIVES FROM YEAR TO YEAR"

ALL THE YEAR ROUND

A Weekly Journal

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PRICE TWOPENCE.

A DATELESS BARGAIN.

By C. L. PIRKIS,

Author of "Lady Lovelace," etc.

CHAPTER XXXV.

AFTER all, the police had not to bring any extraordinary amount of ingenuity to bear upon the task of discovering Kathleen.

They went a little far a-field at first. Having learned that a young woman answering to her description had taken ticket for Liverpool, they immediately concluded that she was to be found in America, and set the Atlantic wires going: only, however, to discover that she was not, at any rate, to be heard of at New York.

A detective, despatched on second thoughts to her father and mother in Gloucestershire, returned with the tidings that she had sent for a box of her clothes, left behind at Overbury; that she had married Bryan O'Shea, much to the disgust of her parents, who "hadn't much opinion of the O'Shea family;" and that her present address was at the O'Shea Farm, Lough Lea, County Down.

This news circuitously reached Joyce and Mab in their sea-side cottage.

Mab, as usual, had a kind word to say for the girl.

"I don't think, on the whole, we treated either Ned or Kathleen fairly," she said; "we did our best to give them notions beyond their station; and then, when most they wanted our help, we let them slip through our fingers."

Joyce characteristically dismissed the matter.

"She was a weak little goose," she said; "if she meant to marry Bryan O'Shea, why didn't she do it without any fuss?"

With the tragic anxieties that pressed upon her at the moment, a sentence seemed more than enough to expend upon this girl and her ridiculous love affair. But the chances were that if Joyce had had given to her a true account of the facts of the case, she would considerably have modified her epithets. If, for instance, she had seen pretty Kathleen's white, forlorn face, throughout the whole of that long stolen journey to Liverpool on the day of Mrs. Shenstone's wedding, or had heard her talk with her brother Ned, when close upon midnight she had succeeded in unearthing him from his lodgings somewhere in the slums in the heart of the town.

The brother and sister had walked together up and down the dark side of a quiet street, talking in low, constrained tones.

This in substance was their conversation.

"I think you must be out of your mind. I never thought you had much, but what little you had is wanting now," Ned said in a hard, gruff voice.

Kathleen's reply came in muffled tones. "Ned, tell me what I have come all these miles to ask you, and I'll go back home, or to the Shenstones, or anywhere else in the world you like. Where is Mr. Ledyard? What have you, and the Captain, and Bryan O'Shea done with him?"

"What has anyone of us to do with Mr. Ledyard, I should like to know? And also what have you to do with the gentleman? Will you tell me that, my girl?"

"I? Nothing whatever. Only this may interest you, perhaps. Miss Joyce is breaking her heart after him."

"You were not always so particularly fond of Miss Joyce. I've heard you wish her in her grave more times than I could count," sneered Ned.

"Oh, well, she'll be there soon enough without any wishing on my part—and," this added with emphasis on each syllable, "Miss Mab too, for she's breaking her heart as fast as her sister."

"Is that true, Kathleen?" he asked; and there came a softer note in his voice now.

"Gospel truth. Send me back with a message to her."

Ned resumed his walk. His steps at first were hurried, and Kathleen could barely keep pace with him. Presently they flagged, and she laid her hand upon his arm.

"Look here, Ned——" she began.

He turned upon her furiously. "Look here, my girl. The best thing you can do is to be off to Lough Lea as quick as possible, and marry Bryan O'Shea as you promised. Otherwise it may go harder than you think with one or two you care most for."

Had there been moonlight enough to show Kathleen's face, Ned might have noted an odd, resolute look come into it; a pallor and rigidity which seemed to turn her into the marble likeness of herself.

"Very well," she said slowly, "I'll go to Lough Lea and marry Bryan O'Shea; and whatever comes of it, I shan't forget 'twas you gave me the good advice."

CHAPTER XXXVI.

JOYCE was no sooner safely shut in in her sea-side solitude, than she fell to measuring the distance she had put between herself and possible hope. Here was a man who held in his hand the secret she would have paid for cheerfully with her life, and here was she fleeing from him, and stopping her ears, as though she had neither part nor lot in the matter.

It had been easy enough—comparatively, that is—in the height of her passion, to wish she had a thousand tongues to speak their "noes" to the hideous temptation; it was not so easy in a cooler moment to echo the wish. At a crisis her instincts had saved her; now, when she took to reasoning on the matter her brain grew bewildered, her moral sense confused. A hundred thoughts and plans in turn suggested themselves, only in turn to be dismissed as impracticable.

Joyce sorely needed a counsellor in this emergency—but where was one to be found?

Mab, for obvious reasons, was unfitted

for the part; Uncle Archie, with gout threatening and his irritable temper at its worst, was scarcely the one to handle so delicate a matter. The police authorities, except as a last resource, were not to be thought of. Joyce knew that, if she attempted compulsion in any form, the man would simply throw himself into a defiant attitude, and her chance would be at an end.

Of course there was always the supposition that Buckingham's words might have been mere bombast to force her to favour his suit to Mab. But it was a supposition she did not allow herself to dwell upon. Her only thought was how to get at the knowledge he might hold, without striking an unworthy bargain with him.

It was scarcely strange that in this connection Ned Donovan's name should suggest itself. Although she had no facts whereupon to base the conjecture, there had always been present to her mind the possibility that Ned and Buckingham were members of the same political organisation. If such were the case, there might be means of information common to both, which Ned might work advantageously for her now. Also there was the possibility, that as comrades in a league, Ned might have some influence over Buckingham, which he might bring usefully into play.

In addition to all this, there was his devotion to Mab, which, naturally enough, was an open secret between the two sisters. In other circumstances, Joyce would have been reluctant to trade upon a devotion, whose unobtrusiveness and unselfishness years had tested, but had not shaken. Now, however, in this her sore extremity, she felt justified in appealing to it.

Whether direct good to herself might result from it or not, of one thing she felt confident, viz., that no unworthy concessions respecting Mab would be made by him.

So she sat down and wrote a long, passionate, pleading letter to the young Irishman, giving him, in outline, the account of her interview with Buckingham, beseeching him to see this man for her, and get what terms he could out of him.

"To no man living but you would I entrust such a mission," she wrote. "I speak the simple truth when I say I would rather it should be in your hands than in mine; for, alas, that I should have to write it! I feel that your devotion and loyalty to my sister are at this crisis more to be relied on than mine."

Then she concluded with an entreaty that he would use judgement and caution in the matter, remembering how much they all had at stake. Furthermore, she added a postscript imploring him on no account to let Buckingham have her present address; "for, see him again in this world," she wrote, "I never will, or my chance of Heaven will be gone."

It was a desperate appeal to make; but affairs were in a desperate condition with her. When it was done, she knew not whether it had been well or ill done.

She enclosed the letter under cover to Kathleen, at Lough Lea, for of Ned's whereabouts she was totally ignorant.

Then she set herself to fill up the terrible gap of waiting that must ensue, as best she might, with the common-place and the trivial.

The common-place is one of the few things in life of which the supply is in excess of the demand. It will never be elbowed into a corner by tragedy, let it try as it will.

So, at least, Joyce found, as she waited impatiently for letter or message from Donovan.

There came the usual flow of letters to read and answer.

Like this from good Aunt Bell:

"Do spare your uncle as much painful correspondence as possible, Joyce. Poor darling, his temper was always an irritable one, and it doesn't improve under this long attack. If I didn't give in to him in every matter, great or small, the house wouldn't hold us two."

Or this from Uncle Archie:

"I'm a little out of pain to-day, and hope to keep so if your aunt will only let me have my own way as to medicine and diet. It's a little late in the day to complain; but you know she was always inclined to be despotic, and, to keep the peace, I simply have to knock under to her in everything."

And, finally, this from her mother, on her wedding-tour:

"We have had a desperate—desperate quarrel, darling Joyce. I'm coming home at once. Ah, my good looks have been my bane all my life through! If I had been a plain woman I might still have been happy Ernestine Shenstone. It all began yesterday because I told him some people in the hotel where we are staying thought I was his daughter, not his wife. Now, I ask you, was that enough to put him in a tearing rage, and make him call

me 'madam,' instead of 'my child,' all the rest of the day? And he does look like my father—no one who saw us together could deny it. The bald patch at the back of his head gets bigger every day, and he goes to sleep in his easy-chair whenever I begin to talk to him, and if that is not a proof of old age creeping on, I don't know what is. Oh, and do you know, Joyce, he wears a horrible red cotton night-cap at nights, and sometimes he forgets and comes down to breakfast in it. If I had only seen him in it before we married! But there, it doesn't matter; only expect me at Overbury almost as soon as you get this. By the way, dear, there's one thing I should like to ask you to do for me. He is always asking me—at least he has asked me once or twice lately—if I know anything of the interior of a place called Earlswood. Now, between ourselves, Joyce, I don't, but I don't want him to know my ignorance; so if you could just find out a little about the place, and let me know, so that I could give him an answer which might imply I knew a great deal, I should be very much obliged to you. I mean only, of course, if you don't see me back in a day or two. Perhaps, after all, I may alter my mind; one never feels quite sure of oneself in such matters."

And a postscript to the letter, added the next day, showed that Mrs. Bullen had very much altered her mind.

"Darling children," it ran, "we've kissed and made it up again—it was nothing more than a lovers' quarrel, after all. We are off to Venice to-morrow, and most likely sha'n't return to England until next spring, we both hate the cold weather so. I send you the letter just as I wrote it yesterday, so that you may have all our news."

"Your loving Mother,
"ERNESTINE BULLEN."

CHAPTER XXXVII.

NED received Joyce's letter at Cork just as he was on the point of starting for Lough Lea with a sealed packet for Sylvia Buckingham, who was still enjoying her comfortable quarters at the "Abbey House" with a pair of vigorous Nationalists for host and hostess. It raised in him a riot of tumultuous feeling, adding fuel to his slumbering fire of discontent with his work, of animosity to his chief. He anathematised himself for his folly, in swearing allegiance to a league that reckoned the unreasoning obedience of a dog among the cardinal virtues. Cranmer-like, he could

have burned in slow fire that right hand of his, which only overnight had telegraphed to Captain Buckingham Mab and Joyce's address.

She, the woman he had worshipped from afar with such true, unselfish devotion to be handed over to the cruel keeping of a man like Buckingham!

"See him!" he muttered, "ay, that I will, and to some purpose too! I knew the day of reckoning wasn't far off, but I didn't think it was at my door."

Then he had started on his journey to Lough Lea, forming his plans as he went; but it was not until Lough Lea was reached, and he was making his way in the dawn of a golden August morning through the green lanes to the Abbey House, that his plan of action definitely and finally arranged itself.

It was simply this. He would follow on his chief's footsteps, forestall his arrival at Tretwick, if such a thing were possible, meet him within a stone's throw of the house where these sisters had taken refuge, and have a few sharp, strong words with him there. Yes, he knew well enough what those words must be. Chief or no chief, for a brief five minutes he would speak as man speaks to man, when the full heart dictates the words, and give him to understand that these young ladies were not now, nor at any future time, to be molested. Should the Captain laugh his words to scorn and order him back to his duty, well, then he would have a few words to say to him about duty also, and would remind that on one occasion he had somewhat stretched his prerogative which compelled his subordinates to an unreasoning obedience, and that an impeachment to that effect laid before his superiors at New York might be attended with unpleasant consequences to himself.

Had Sylvia Buckingham read the man's thoughts in his face as he presented his sealed packet to her, she could not have treated him with a more repellent harshness. Possibly she took her cue from her brother. This Irishman was evidently out of favour at head-quarters.

Ned kept his discontent to himself. His thoughts were too busy with the course he had mapped out for himself, and its minor difficulties of detail, to allow him to be much stirred by superficial annoyances.

From the Abbey House he took his way straight to the O'Shea farm, separated from it by two or three fields and an occasional bog. It was an antiquated and ill-kept

edifice, flanked on one side by an untidy-looking potato-field, on the other by an equally untidy-looking poultry-yard. A few gaunt cattle grazed in an adjoining field, whose gaping, torn hedges betokened the fact that it had known nothing of repair or hurdle since the last hunt had ridden through.

Whatever revenue the O'Shea family might enjoy, this little ragged homestead most assuredly could not be credited with the responsibility of being its fountain-head.

An old woman smoking a short pipe sat on a bench at the front door. She had a bright yellow cotton kerchief tied over her head, but beyond this her costume inclined to the dusky and ill-mended. Occasionally she withdrew her pipe to exclaim an "Arrah thin, be off wid ye," to the cocks and hens who came straggling in from the poultry-yard, making frantic efforts to slip past her bare feet into the house. This exclamation, alternating with another, a muttered Irish anathema, whose modified English equivalent would be, "That's a fine wife for an O'Shea to bring home! Look at her and admire her." The said anathema following the shadow of a girl down the garden path to the gate, where Ned stood waiting for her.

"Look at her and admire her," assuredly not a difficult task for an eye undazzled by O'Shea ideals. Kathleen O'Shea is not the Kathleen Donovan of a year ago. That Kathleen was a good ten years younger to look at, and about her there hung such a glamour of bewitching smiles, fun, and arch glances, that one never stopped to criticise the shape of her mouth, the colour of hair or eyes. Now that the glamour has gone, the fun, arch glances, bewitching smiles together disappeared, it is possible to take calm stock of her face and features, to discover that her eyes are large, deep blue, that dark rings around them accentuate their look of haunting melancholy, and tell the tale of weary days and sleepless nights. One wonders whether it is the pale face that throws the blue-black hair into such bold contrast, or whether it is the black hair that makes the face show so deathly white in the glinting morning sunlight.

In one respect only is the Kathleen of to-day identical with the Kathleen of last year, and that is in the matter of pretty and neat attire. That bygone Kathleen had been known to spend an hour in front of her looking-glass, arranging her glossy

hair, before she saw fit to present herself to her young mistresses, to perform for them a similar office. Her mother had been wont to assert that the only way in which to get housework done by those dainty fingers of hers would be to banish all looking-glasses from the house, when not a doubt she would set to work to scour the pewter plates on the kitchen dresser, in order to make them do duty as mirrors.

Whether Kathleen through necessity had been driven to perform such an office for the O'Shea pewter plates might be doubtful, but certain it was that those plaits of dark hair, which shone like a raven's wing in the sunlight, must have had abundant aid from a looking-glass, in order to their present elaborate arrangement, as likewise the prettily-tied knot of ribbon which held her collar in its place.

The brother and sister talked in low tones, with many a furtive glance towards the old woman and her pipe. Ned's words, though all but whispered, were vehement and emphatic.

"I tell you," he said, breaking abruptly into Kathleen's queries as to the health and well-being of the old father and mother in Gloucestershire, "life isn't worth a brass farthing to me. I'm hunted, dogged from morning till night, in spite of all the hard work I've done for them."

Kathleen laughed, not the pleasant laugh of old days, but a harsh, scornful laugh. Her voice, too, was harsh and scornful as she answered:

"You work hard, but you don't work well. They say you're not to be trusted—you're too tender-hearted."

"Tender-hearted! I'll give them proof of my tender heart if I get a chance."

"When they set you to stake Mike Kearney's cattle, didn't you let them all alip through your fingers, so that the beasts came back to their sheds so soon as the boys had left ploughing up the fields?" she went on, not heeding the interruption.

"The poor dumb things! I would have cut off my right hand sooner than torture them! If those men had any sense, they would——" he broke off for a moment, as if he dared not trust himself to speak his mind.

Kathleen looked warningly over her shoulder towards the house. "Don't forget you're on the O'Shea property at the present moment," she said sarcastically.

"Confound the O'Sheas, every man of them! Now, what good has your marriage with Bryan done for me. I should like to

know, after all the fine talk he and Maurice made over it!"

"Ah! were you fool enough to expect any good for yourself out of that?"

"I don't expect much from any man or woman, let them be brother or sister a thousand times over; but I don't look to have my footsteps watched and dogged by a man who has married my sister, and that man's own brother."

"They're set to do it."

"I know that. Now look here, Kathleen." Here Ned's voice took a softer tone. "Just get those two off my heels for the next twenty-four hours—I don't want more. Tell them I'm off to Milford on the Captain's business—special business. Swear it, if you like. Tell them I shall be back again in Cork to-morrow night at farthest, and shall report myself there. Tell them any lies you like—you used to be famous at that sort of thing once."

"I may be again when the right time comes."

"Well, the right time has come, take my word for it. Don't you see my necessity? It's a matter of life or death, I tell you."

"I spoke those words to you once before, but you shut your ears to them. I told you Miss Joyce would die, Miss Mab would die, all for a secret you might tell but wouldn't."

Ned's face grew white. "Give over fooling, Kathleen, for the love of Heaven. I tell you this is a matter of life or death to me; that perhaps in this world you and I may never set eyes on each other again. Now will you do what I want you—get me free of those two men, Maurice and Bryan O'Shea, for the next twenty-four hours?"

"It's easy to say 'get me free of those two.' How am I to do it, I should like to know?"

"Do it any way that comes uppermost. Don't stick at a trifle so long as it's done, and that before I'm out of sight of the house. Get them into a row with the O'Germans—you used to be a capital hand at setting men by the ears at one time. Make it a shillelagh business if you like, and then bring out the whisky and deal it out liberally all round. Do it anyhow, so long as it's done. I tell you it's a matter of life and death; not only to me, but perhaps to some others." This added with a significance that must have set the girl's thoughts ranging.

"I'll do my best," she promised; but the promise was given sullenly and grudgingly enough.

"Very well, then, take care that it is your best, or it may be worse than useless to me. Now I'll go. Remember it's to Milford, on the Captain's business, that I'm going. Stick to that, whatever else you're doubtful about."

He turned on his heel and left her. Possibly it was the bright August sun which made him draw his hat low over his eyes, and choose the shadow of the hedgerow to walk in rather than the open road.

Kathleen stood watching him out of sight, leaning over the gate and shadowing her eyes with her hands. Suddenly, to her surprise, he stood still in the pathway, then came back with steps as hurried as those that had carried him away.

"What is it?" she asked. "I've no money—no, not a penny; so it's no use asking me for any."

"I don't want money." He looked right and left to make sure there were no listeners, and his voice sank to a whisper. "It's just this—if anything happens to me—I mean if I'm found one day lying in the road with a bullet through my brain, I want my watch—my old silver watch"—here he laid his hand upon it—"given to Miss Joyce—to Miss Joyce, do you understand?"

Then before she had time to make her reply, he did a thing she had never known him do in all his life before—leaned over the gate and kissed her.

CHRONICLES OF SCOTTISH COUNTIES.

STIRLING.

BETWEEN Linlithgow and Stirling, the way passes through a flat and fertile country, with Falkirk lying in its midst among the smoke of factories and workshops, and with tall chimneys rising out of the reek. A great gathering-place is Falkirk for all the country round, with its four great trysts in the year. In the churchyard lies Sir John Grahame, the friend of Wallace, who was slain at the battle of Falkirk, his tomb being still in evidence, renewed from age to age by the patriotic burghers. There was weaving and spinning in the old burgh, no doubt, when the great fight was fought in which Wallace was overthrown; but the wealth of the county then lay in the wide fertile plain to the north, known as the Carse of Falkirk. Hereabouts are the great Carron ironworks, and to the west a little hamlet retains the Arthurian name of

Camelon, and there are traces of a former Roman station, which at some time or other, according to the old chroniclers, was assuredly a great city of the Picts, with its twelve brazen gates. For hereabouts we are upon the edge of the great Caledonian forest. There are few traces of the forest now; but still, away to the west, the hills rise in wild and barren loneliness, and a great part of Stirlingshire, from hence to the shires of Loch Lomond, is barren, uncultivated moor and heath, which has changed little in diameter since the days when Picts, and Scots, and Britons, and intruding Saxons from the shores of Forth, fought their fierce but dimly-remembered battles:—

The war
That thundered in and out the gloomy skirts
Of Clidion the forest:

Stirling, which we are now approaching, rising from its rock that dominates the country round, and the ancient bridge over the Forth below, has been marked out by nature for a national fortress. Thus Stirling is the link of the Lowlands, the tie that unites the fertile Lothians with the rich districts of Fife and Kinross. As a fortress, too, it keeps open the way to Perth and Forfar, to bonnie Dundee and grim Aberdeen, and to all the lowland countries along the coast.

The bulwark of the north,
Gray Stirling with her towers and town.

The town itself has a pleasant modern appearance, spread over the slopes and meadows about the south rock with handsome villas, good shops, and tramway lines here and there. But the place assumes the grim appearance of antiquity, with wynds and courts, and bare gloomy houses, as you mount towards the castle.

Here we have the grey, solid old church of the Grey Friars, built by James the Fourth, who was a frequent guest at the Franciscan convent adjoining—now only remembered in the name of a street or court. Here the King would busy himself in his work of expiation for his crime against his father, often to the disgust of his courtiers, who did not care to share his penances. Hence he is addressed by a poet of the period

Cum hame, and dwell nse mair in Stirling,
Quhair fish to sell are nane but spirling.

This couplet, by the way, rather militates again the tradition—shared by many other places—that once upon a time there was a stipulation in the in-

dentures of apprentices that they should not be fed on salmon more than three times a week. On this point, too, Sibbald is a witness, who says "Many of the gentry get saumon in their powes," thus implying that the townfolk did not get much of the lordly fish. While he goes on to say how "Spirlings are taken in great quantities near Stirling." But if the spirling is the same as the éperlan of the French rivers, a King even might come across many a worse dish than these, nicely fried in oil, and strung upon a skewer. Although with all this, toujours spirlings would pall, no doubt, whether upon the palates of Princes or of 'prentice boys.

But, if tired of spirlings, the King might have visited the Abbot of Cambuskenneth, on the other side of the river, who doubtless never lacked salmon or other dainties, seeing that the Abbey lands were some of the richest in the kingdom, lying among the crooks of the river, of which it is said :

A crook in the Forth
Is worth an Earldom in the North.

We have not yet then, it appears, arrived into the limits of the North; that is a region that flies as we approach; and Scott's epithet, already quoted, of the bulwark of the North, would not be accepted by a chiel from Sutherland or Caithness.

Stirling and the banks of Forth hereabouts, enjoy an exceptionally pleasant climate, and the poet Dunbar recalls with regret, the merry songs of the birds, from all the hills around, to which he listened as he lay awake among the "towers high" of fair Stirling.

And yet we are reminded by the appearance of the cemetery that surrounds the old grey church, that the climate is not altogether that of Italy or Greece. There are statues, marble statues, and monuments, Now everybody knows what a poor figure sculptured marbles cut after a few years' exposure to the rigours of a British winter. But at Stirling, the marble monuments are put under glass cases. The effect is not altogether a happy one; and, with it all, marble must look cold enough in winter, when Ben Lomond and Ben Ledi and all the hills about are mantled thick with snow.

But in summer time the view from the old church-yard is pleasant enough. Below lies the valley, where the tournaments were held.

At one time or other the old church and the old castle have spoken sharply to each other, as in the Civil Wars, when General Monk established a battery in the church-yard; and a contemporary Roundhead informs us how "the Enemy plaid hard against our men that were in the steeple of the Town Kirk, which did much among them."

Happily for the town kirk the siege did not last long, as the garrison soon beat a parley. The reason of their confusion was a mutiny of the soldiers in the castle, who were mostly Highlanders, "and not accustomed to granadoes." The result was surrender, with the honours of war, the garrison marching out with horses, arms, beat of drum, lighted matches and baggage, "as much gear as they could carry." And so we have a flaming account to send to the Parliament of the "Surrender of Stirling Castle, with five thousand arms, forty peece of Ordnance, (twenty-seven faire brasse peeeces, two great Iron guns, and eleven Leather guns) provisions for five hundred men for above a year, thirty barrels of claret and strong water, twenty-six barrels of gunpowder, all the Records of Scotland, with the chaire, clouth, and sword of state, and much furniture of the King and Parliament robes." Then there were "the Earl of Marre's coronet and stirops of gold;" all excellent plunder, and, with the rest, "great stores of the county and townspeople in the castle, which they had liberty to carry away, little or nothing being imbeazled."

Again, in 1746, the Castle fired upon the church, when the tower was filled with Highlanders, firing volleys and waving flags to celebrate the glorious victory of their Prince at Falkirk.

But the old church seems not a penny the worse for its warlike adventures, and looks down coldly upon the calm and ordered life of to-day; when a sergeant's party, or a squad of Highlanders in their white fatigue dress, are all that is left to represent the Royal cortège winding up to the Castle gate.

But hark! what blithe and jolly peal
Makes the Franciscan steeple reel?
And see! upon the crowded street,
In motley groups what maskers meet!
Banner and pageant, pipe and drum.

Assuredly the old tower is not endangered by the blithe and jolly peal of the present day.

A notable display of the honours of the

realm, was the coronation of James the Sixth in this old church of Stirling, the baby King being not much more than a year old; with the Bishop of Orkney to crown and anoint his baby brows, and John Knox to make the sermon, to which the young monarch was happily insensible. The very pulpit is shown close by, and the massive hour-glass that the Great Reformer would turn and turn again in the full fervour of discourse. All this, with the standard weights of Scotland, that once it was the privilege of the burgh to guard, and other curios of the kind, are to be seen at the Guild-house, which is close to the church porch, and is in itself the local habitation of Cowanes Hospital.

Stirling abounds in well-endowed foundations of the kind. But Cowanes Hospital is the richest of all the charities of Stirling; although its founder began life as a pedlar, and roamed the country with a pack on his back, making such a bad start, that on one occasion he is said to have drunk away all his pack among boon companions. Our hero, after all, was of the ancient House of Colquhoun, but spelt his name in a more phonetic and rational manner, for it seems that the Cowens and Cowans were in origin poor relations of the said aristocratic family, who dropped the spare consonants, as they gave up their coat-of-arms, when they took to peddling or weaving. Anyhow, Cowane became Dean of the Guild Merchant, having made a fortune out of wool-stapling and foreign trading; and, having no heirs of his own, made over the reversion of his wealth to the poor. And the spirit that prompted the bequest seems to have survived in Stirling, even to the present day; looking to the recently-founded Smith Institute, adorned with a hundred of Mr. Smith's respectable pictures, and for the rest embellished with many precious relics of old Stirling.

A neighbour and contemporary of Cowanes was a personage of much more exalted fortune. The old house which still exists and bears the name of Argyle's lodging, now occupied as a military hospital, was built by Sir William Alexander, of Menstrie, a plain country laird in origin, but who turned a poetic, or rather a versifying, vein to such good account, that he secured the favour of the Scottish Solomon, to whom the poet dedicated his first ponderous tragedy of *Darius*, in verses that may be acquitted of any intentional satire.

No doubt our warlike Caledonian Coast
(Still kept unconquered by the heaven's decree)
Expelled the Pictes, repell'd the Danes, did boast,
In spite of all the Romans legions, free
As that which was ordained (though long time crost
In this Herculean birth) to bring forth thee
Whom many a famous sceptred parent brings
From an undaunted race, to do great things.

Like his Royal master, the poet is often "super-grammaticam," a fault kindly excused by Dr. Johnson, as "perhaps to be attributed to his long familiarity with the Scotch language." Anyhow, our courtly poet was destined to do great things in the way of personal advancement. He was made Gentleman Usher to Prince Charles; when Drummond of Hawthornden apostrophises him:

Amid thy sacred cares and courtly toils,
Alexis!

In the following year we find him Master of Requests, and his services were rewarded with a lucrative monopoly of the copper coinage of Scotland, and presently with a grant of the whole of Nova Scotia—thus first named in the Royal grant.

More profitable to him were a hundred brand-new baronetcies of Nova Scotia, of which he had the disposal, each of which cost the happy recipient of the title some two hundred pounds. The Nova Scotian settlement, it will be remembered, was something of a failure, and was eventually sold to the French. But the baronetcies remained, and before long Sir William was himself ennobled by the title of Viscount Canada. The fashion of these dignities "in partibus," was not persevered in, and eventually the Viscount received the more homely and appropriate title of Earl of Stirling. In the meantime, with his accumulated wealth, he was able to build this grand house upon the High Street of Stirling, over which he caused to be sculptured the motto, "Per mare et per terras," alluding to his travels and schemes of colonisation, but which was read by his townsmen as "Per metre et per turners," alluding to the sources of his fortune; the poetry that is, and the unpopular coins, whose intrinsic value was far below the humble sum they represented.

The Earl died before the misfortunes of his Royal master reached their climax, in the very year of the reassembling of the Long Parliament. After his death the house was sold to the Marquis of Argyle, who here entertained King Charles the Second, when he reigned in Scotland under the Covenant. There was something unlucky in entertaining the Stuarts, for the Mar-

quis's guest did not hesitate to sign his host's death-warrant soon after the Restoration. And the Marquis's son, the Earl of Argyle, who gave hospitable entertainment to the Duke of York in the same lodging, was served in the same way when the latter became King James the Seventh.

A house that recalls still earlier events in Scottish history is the ruined mansion of the Earls of Mar, which stands between Grey Friars and the highway. The house was built with the stones from the ruined Abbey of Cambuskenneth, and the generally received opinion is that it was never finished nor inhabited. But Sibbold describes the house as actually occupied, and relates how the Earl of Mar is said to have kept a very great port in this house, which occasioned one of the Stirling merchants who had been merchandising in the Baltic, to say, "That the Earl of Mar kept a greater house than the King of Denmark!"

Mar's work was still unfinished in the early part of James the Sixth's reign; for we read how the Earl of Mar defended himself behind its walls, and by that means frustrated an enterprise that might have changed the current of history very materially. It was not long after Queen Mary's flight to England, when Kirkcaldy of Grange still held the Castle of Edinburgh for the Queen, that this bold and skilful soldier planned a raid upon Stirling, where the baby King, not yet perfect in his A B C, had just opened his first Parliament—the Parliament with a hole in it; a hole discovered by the sagacious infant either in the table-cover or the roof of the Parliament Hall. The bold Kirkcaldy had enlisted Scott of Buccleuch, and other Border chiefs, with their wild Border riders, in his scheme, which was to make a sudden dash upon Stirling, and by seizing the chief lords of the King's party, and even the person of the King himself, to end the civil war at a blow.

All at first went marvellously well with the enterprise. The Borderers, with a party of musketeers under Lord Claud Hamilton, reached Stirling undiscovered; they were guided by a man named Bell, a native of Stirling, who knew every turn and nook of his native town; and the whole party of about five hundred men found themselves in the middle of the town without even a dog barking at them. Then they raised their war cry: "God and the Queen!" and surrounding the various houses where the chief lords were

lodged, they presently secured the whole faction with one exception, that being the Earl of Mar, who, "entering the back of his new lodging, which was not then finished, played with muskets upon the street, so that he forced the Queen's men to quit the same." Unluckily for the Queen's party the Borderers had followed their dominant instincts, and deeming the fight well over had dispersed in search of plunder. There was much to tempt them in that way certainly, for the town was full of horses belonging to the lords and their followers, and when these were secured there seemed little left to fight for, and the whole party took to flight with their booty. The captured lords made their escape in the confusion, all but Earl Lennox, the Regent, who, mounted behind Spens of Wormeston, his captor, was shot by the Hamilton party, who thus avenged the death of their kinsman, the Archbishop of St. Andrew's and Abbot of Paisley, who had been hanged not long before by the King's party.

Somewhere near Grey Friars, in a house which was adorned by the arms of the Worshipful Guild of Baxters or Bakers, namely, "Three Piels," lived the gallant Colonel Edmunds, a worthy soldier of fortune, the son of a baker at Stirling, who, taking service in the Low Countries as a humble pikeman or musketeer, rose at last to command a regiment in the wars. An honest-minded man was the Colonel, who, when some wandering Scot from Stirling paid him a visit in the camp, and thinking to gain his favour pretended to be charged with messages from the Colonel's kinsman, the Earl, and his loving cousin, the Lord such-a-one, replied sternly that he was of no kin of lords and noble gentlemen, but the son of an honest baxter of Stirling. When the Colonel returned to his native town with the modest fortune he had acquired in the wars, he was met by all the magistrates and chiefs of guilds, who escorted him with all honour to his parents' humble roof. And when the Earl of Mar invited him to dine in the now ruined lodging, the stout Colonel made it a condition that his father and mother should be of the party and be placed above him at the table.

The old burgh of Stirling, indeed, has produced many worthy examples of the old Scottish character. Its merchants were once known far and wide among the ports of the Baltic and North Sea. Manufactures, too, have always been carried on.

In the time of James the Sixth the weaving of shalloons was the chief industry in the town; more recently the tartans of Stirling became famous, then carpets and cottons superseded the tartans, and there are still carpet factories in the outskirts of the town.

Stories are told of an old-fashioned treasurer of the burgh, whose method of book-keeping was both simple and original. On either side of his chimney hung an old boot. In one were kept the revenues of the burgh, in the other all receipts for disbursements. On the day of audit, the boots were carried to the council chamber and emptied out. General Gordon, it is said, had an equally simple method when he was first Governor of the Soudan. Among its other peculiarities it may here be noted, that Stirling was long distinguished for not having a single flesher, that is, butcher, within its boundaries. There was a weekly flesh market, where the housewives provisioned their households, but all those who served it came from the country adjoining. This fact was explained by local tradition as due to the cruelty of a certain flesher's wife who, on one of the early martyrs of the Reformation period being stoned and driven from the town, followed the unhappy victim into the fields and mocked and flouted him in his dying moments. More probably the circumstance was due to some early and wise municipal law, prohibiting the slaughter of cattle within the burgh.

There may be a feeling of disappointment in approaching Stirling Castle, that it hardly answers to expectation in the way of nobility of outline. We may have pictured to ourselves the stronghold

High on a hill, far blazing as a mount,
Raised on a mount, with pyramids and towers,

which are in reality chimney stacks, and the prosaic roofs of barracks and storehouses destroy much of the sentiment of the scene. There still remains, however, the Royal palace, with its quadrangle quaint and bizarre, adorned with the grotesque statues attributed to the taste of James the Fifth, the good man of Ballengiech. The name of the lions' den, sometimes given to the courtyard, recalls the custom of ancient royalty to be attended by a collection of wild animals; a custom of which the lions in the Tower of London are a familiar example. There is a Chapel Royal too; but that was built by James the Sixth for the baptism of Henry, his first son. The

more ancient portion of the palace would be the most interesting, had not fire destroyed the famous room where James the Second slew with his own hand the Earl of Douglas.

But the view from the ramparts makes up for all deficiencies. In rough precipitous descent from the foot of the lofty curtain wall, a ridge of rock slopes down to the river Forth, whose 'auld brig' is commanded by a battery that bears the name of Mary of Guise, who caused its erection. Along the flank of the hill a rude footpath, that once communicated with a private postern, is known as Ballengiech, and the King's secret excursions in search of adventures, amatory and otherwise, when he made use of this footway, earned for him the familiar sobriquet. An isolated mound is the Heading Hill, which seems to make out this fortress palace as the headquarters of Royalty. For what is the King without his headman? A mere cypher, whom every bonnet laird might flout. But with that awful functionary by his side he makes the boldest tremble. Another slope bears the grotesque name of Hurdie Hawkie, as the scene of the winter sports of the Goodman and his courtiers, who would slide down a snowy track perched on the whitened skulls of oxen—a similar amusement to the well-known Canadian toboggan. But all this engages the eye but for a moment, for beyond stretches a panorama of wonderful extent and interest. To the north winds the Forth, link upon link through the rich Carse of Stirling. Yonder is the Tower of Cambuskenneth, overshadowed by the lofty Wallace monument, for the hero won a battle there, by the old Bridge of Kildara. Beyond rise the grassy solitudes of the Ochill Hills bounding a region of hill and dale, pasture and pleasant woodland, where Forth and Teith and Allan Water come nowin' in, sweetly enough to inspire old Scotia's bards with melody.

Shepherds on Forth, and you by Devon rocks,
sings Drummond, with all the elegance at his command, but the old lilt of Allan Water will be more familiar, and Burns's

By Allan stream I chanc'd to rove
While Phoebus sank beyond Benladdi.

They are all there, the Bens, rising one over the other in tumbled confusion, the real Highland hills, peaks and wild valleys, stormy summits and dark, dismal clefts, dimly stretching away to the regions of the setting sun.

In contrast with the wild sweep of mountain and moorland, the view from the other side of the Castle seems tame and placid; but it is even more full of human interest. At the foot of the castle lies the Royal park, now the playground of the townsfolk; and, indeed, always the scene of their sports, in which their monarchs were accustomed amicably to join. From the park of Stirling to the Castle gate ran Douglas of Kilapindia by the King's stirrup, seeking in vain for a friendly glance from the Royal eyes, in his heavy coat of mail, right up to the gate of the Castle; but with never a glance from the King, who left his old favourite to sit like a beggar in the gate. Thus had the mighty fallen, and so low had sunk the heart of the proud Douglas.

The Royal garden, adjoining the park, all waste and deserted, with the outlines of terraces and parterres still marked in the various hues of the turf that now covers all, contains a curious mound, which is now called the King's Knot; but which was known formerly as the Table Round.

A dew fair Snowden, with thy towris he,
Thy chapel royal, park, and tabill round,

sings the old poet Dunbar; and we hear in the old chronicles that Edward the Second, fleeing from Bannockburn, passed between the Castle and the Table Round. Thus the mound existed before the Stuart Kings, and may even be the original Round Table of Arthur and his Knights. Beyond, the ground slopes gently upwards to the Campsie Hills; and between lies the famous field of Bannockburn.

It is but an insignificant stream, this burn of world-wide fame, that could have formed no line of defence against an attacking foe; and Robert Bruce, as a wise and wary leader, made no attempt to hinder the march of the English chivalry, as they came on in long and glittering columns—barons, knights, and men-at-arms—in all the bravery of mediæval pomp and circumstance.

Standards and gonfalons twixt van and rear
Stream in the air.

The Bruce had skilfully taken his position on the rising ground, his right wing protected by a broken and boggy reach of the burn, while his left rested upon the village of St. Ninian. In his front lay the highway to Stirling, which it was the object of the English army to relieve. These latter had no choice but to fight the Scotch on their own ground; for it was already

the eve of St. John the Baptist's Day when they came within sight of Stirling Rock, and, unless the Castle were relieved by the morrow, it must be surrendered to the Scotch, according to the capitulation, to the lasting disgrace of the English name. On that very evening indeed, Lord Clifford, making a detour to avoid the Scottish forces, strove to reach the Castle and reinforce it; and if he had succeeded, the result of the campaign might have been different, for, then the English might have fought at their leisure. But Randolph interposed with a clump of spearmen, and the English horsemen, unable to break through the wall of steel, retired in confusion.

On the following day there was no time lost on either side. As the midsummer sun rose over the fields the whole English camp was in motion; The Bruce was in his saddle arraying his host—his squares of Scottish spearmen, whose hedge of steel was as impenetrable as a phalanx of Thebes or of Macedon. These squares that covered the sloping ground were all his force, except some five hundred horsemen, whom he kept in reserve out of sight of the enemy. Then the English charged with all their chivalry. In numbers they were three to one against the enemy, but the limited front on which they were compelled to attack deprived them of much of their advantage. And then The Bruce had skilfully prepared the ground on his front with pitfalls and calthorps, so as to check the advance of the English horsemen. Still the masses of the Southern cavalry advanced bravely to the charge, while the English archers, swarming over the open ground, sent a terrible hail of clothyard-shafts among the Scottish squares. That terrible rain of arrows striking through breast-plate of warrior no mortal band could endure for long. It was the critical moment of the battle; and, unless the archers could be put to flight, all would be lost.

Just in the same way Wallace and the national cause had come to destruction at Falkirk. But Wallace, in the hour of need, had been deserted by his mounted chivalry. The Bruce was better served; the English archers, having advanced too rashly, were suddenly attacked by Bruce's handful of cavalry and driven from the field. Then was the battle won for the Scotch. Again and again the English horseman renewed their charge, but no horses will face a chevaux-de-frise of spear-

points. The whole array was shaken and confused, and when the gillies came pouring over the hill to begin the plunder of the dead, a panic as at the advance of a fresh army spread through the host and scattered them in wild disorder. As the Scottish Chronicler complacently records, "Owre old enemy gat a gret fall."

After Bannockburn the battle of Sauchieburn, which was fought close by, seems a mere skirmish, although King James the Third lost his life in the flight from the combat. At Beaton's Mill the King was slain, where, perhaps, the mill-wheel still is turning. Robert Chambers, who visited the place some half a century ago, says that the house was still standing in his time, though then a private house, some fifty yards east of the road from Glasgow to Stirling; and the good woman of the house pointed out to him the particular corner in which the King expired.

ABOUT WAITERS.

ONCE I remember travelling in a train in Germany, and was considerably impressed by a young gentleman who sat opposite me. He had keen eyes, a bright face, steady observation, and in talking with him, I found that he had received a good education, and had attended classes in one of the Universities. We spoke of one or two Latin authors, of whom he showed much knowledge and appreciation. I felt interested in the young man, and asked him what his line in life might happen to be. Was he going to be a clergyman? He smiled, and said it was something better than that, and I might guess again. My next guess was that he was going to be a doctor or surgeon. No, it was something better than that. Perhaps he was going into some sound commercial pursuit? He negatived this idea too, and, saving me all further speculation, announced that he was going to be a waiter, a "Kellner," perhaps in good time "Ober-kellner." He explained to me that there was a lucrative and glorious career before him. Of course, he gravitated towards London. The Teutonic mind and the Teutonic body have a great tendency to do that.

On the Continent waiters are an institution more extended than among ourselves. In Continental cities people are much less domesticated than we profess to be. The men mostly dine at hotels and restaurants, and the sum of human comfort al-

most depends upon the waiters. At Paris there was lately an alarming disturbance among the garçon race. They formed societies, and marched in procession, and sang the Marseillaise or something equivalent. The great difficulty they had was in regard to agencies for waiters, for most employment in Paris in the waiting line is done through agents. They did not consider that the agents treated them fairly, and they would have an agency of their own. Another great difficulty among the Paris waiters was a feud, not an uncommon one, between the young and the old waiters. The great crush of business at the restaurants is between eleven and one, for the déjeuner or first dinner, and between six and eight for the second or real dinner. In those busy hours, of course, there is a great need of the highest vigour and alacrity, and here the young naturally have a great advantage over their elders. On the other hand, an old, experienced waiter has his advantages, especially in private dinners and in little suppers.

The greatest social revolution in London within the last generation has been the alteration in the hotels and eating-places. Corresponding with this has been the alteration in the waiters. The old-fashioned British waiter is certainly not extinct, but he is very rare. The waiters are now imported, like so many of the dishes they serve, from abroad. Their slim forms and obliging, nonchalant manners would astonish our ancestors. I know of one restaurant where there are twenty-seven waiters, and each of them pays three-and-sixpence a day for his place. They do not in the least grumble; some of them make money fast. One of them told me that in another year he would have enough money to retire to his native canton, Ticino.

Now about the feeling of the waiters. Some people give too much, while others give too little. What I generally do is to give a penny on every shilling I spend. If I only spend a shilling on a light lunch, I give the waiter a penny. If my dinner runs to six shillings, I give him sixpence. I expect the general run of tips approximates very closely to this.

It has come to be understood, as a matter of social philosophy, that one ought to be on good terms with the waiter. He will serve you well the first time if you are a stranger to him, but if you do not give the "correct tip," he will bear the matter in mind. It is

not alone that he will assume a sour and disappointed manner, but even if he knows his trade sufficiently well to conceal his emotions, he knows how to make you suffer. He has a good deal of a certain kind of patronage at his disposal. A wary diner-out at a public dinner, takes care to establish good terms with the waiter. He, to some extent, is able to make sure of the green fat of the turtle, the back of the grouse, and the old Madeira. The waiter who knows and respects his customer is able to make him thoroughly comfortable; to make his table the picture of neatness; to have everything hot and of the best; and to give judicious hints and disinterested advice.

One day I had a talk with a waiter of the old school, in the well-known hotel of a pretty London suburb.

"Well, sir, I have been pretty well all my life a waiter. I don't call it hard work, that is to say, it is not hard work with the hands, though it is hard work with the head. It does not do to put much beer or wine in one's mouth, I assure you. I have sometimes been carrying a dozen different orders in my head. In some places we get a comparative holiday on the Sunday, except in places near London. A few waiters pay for their places; the head waiter of the old Cook in Fleet Street used to do so. I get a small salary, but I mostly depend on tips. I have buried my wife, and my children are in business, and I am now all alone in the world. I have never been a month without employment, and I have saved up enough money to provide for myself if I were obliged to give up."

"Sometimes," quoth this head-waiter, "there are ways in which a head-waiter may be able to do something for himself, and even get a place of his own. He may have made friends among his customers, perhaps have lent them some money in their younger days, and they may be ready to back him up when he takes a place. Perhaps some gentlemen have an idea that they will start an hotel, say a big one on the limited liability plan, which often means unlimited ruin. They say, 'we will go down and have a dinner on the——, and have a talk with Bob. Bob has been there for the last thirty years, and, if there is any man living who knows all about it, that man is Bob.' And so they offer to make Bob manager; and perhaps he invests his own savings in the venture, and, if he is a good

man and has good luck, he may make his fortune. There is nothing that he might not do—go into the wine trade, and so on."

I had some talk with the people of the inn, who were growing quite grey, and had long reminiscences of this inn before the railway came to the place, or only came within a few miles of it. Now there are three railway stations not far from one another.

"One day there was a gentleman of the Hebrew persuasion who took it into his head to bring his bride here in the evening of the day on which they were married. He wrote to me beforehand on the subject. He wanted the whole place turned into a kind of garden or grove. All the hall, and all the staircase and balustrading were to be got up beautifully. I suppose he meant it for a kind of Feast of Tabernacles. Altogether we were obliged to charge him twenty pounds for it. It was a very good job for the house that.

"One day a gentleman and lady came in to lunch. A nice, quiet, tidy little lunch they had, just the same as in a good house of their own. By-and-by I brings the bill, and wonders what they are good for. The gentleman feels in his pockets, and very soon finds out that there is nothing in them. He takes it perfectly quietly.

"'My love,' he says to the lady, 'have you any money?'

"'No, my dear, I haven't,' she says.

"They had come in a quiet brougham, with a very respectable man-servant; and I slips out to speak to him. 'Your people are a queer lot,' I see. 'What do you call them?'

"'Thought everyone knew our people,' said the man. 'That's Lord and Lady Russell.'

"Our master, of course, said it was all right. They sent the money sure enough, but I think he would have been better pleased if they had not. Lor' bless you, sir, landlords are not the grasping people you sometimes think them. I know one, and a literary gent came and stayed with him two or three nights, and then asked for his bill. 'Tell him, with my compliments,' said the master, 'that there is no bill, and he is welcome to stay as long as he likes.'

"One night, a rather queer-looking gentleman came here. It was a Saturday night. The next morning he wraps himself up in a big cloak and goes and lies down on the brow of our hill. If you have time, sir, you should go and see the view

from our hill. All London, with St. Paul's dome straight before us, is stretched out like a map or a picture. He lay all day long, sir, on the grass rolled up in his cloak and watching the view. He came in here once or twice, but only for a little time. He must go to the hill again. Went away next morning, and left a small bunch of keys behind him. There was a letter soon afterwards, saying that if we had them they were to be sent to an address which he gave; some grand address in the West End. Very glad he was, I daresay, to get those keys again."

I went on afterwards with my talk with the waiter, and said that I knew a waiter at a great restaurant who told me that he had saved eight hundred a year. He had then taken the biggest hotel of a very big town. My friendly waiter shook his head, and did not quite see how it could be done honestly.

The thought of a waiter being dishonest had never entered my head. They are as honest and kindly a set of men as any in the world. But in every profession there are black sheep. Now and then even waiters have curious little histories. The waiters have to watch some of their guests, and now and then there are those who have to watch the waiters. In my own personal history I have never known more than one dishonest waiter. He was a man who systematically laid himself out to please the guests, without due regard to the interests of the proprietor. There is a customer, for instance, who will always give the waiter a good tip for a good dinner. The waiter sets him down before grouse, or salmon, or red mullet, at a time when the price of such dainties is high and the money for the meal does not "run to it." The waiter gets a good tip, but to the landlord it is a dead loss. This particular individual made large savings, but he wasted them foolishly.

There are some waiters who drive a brisk little money trade of their own. Young men, when they lose a great deal of money at billiards, will sometimes have no scruple about borrowing money from the head-waiters. In some instances they neglect to pay it back, and the dishonesty is all on the side of the customers. Still it is quite possible for waiters to be dishonest in other ways than peculation. For instance, there may have been a roystering dinner party, and neither hosts nor guests may be fully competent for the examination of accounts. A waiter may announce the total amount

of the bill, and may quite possibly stick on a sovereign or two. When there is a very big dinner, say five pounds a head exclusive of wines, there is an opening for this sort of thing. Or the figures may be added up wrongly, stray shillings wandering into the columns for pounds. When a guest is so foolish as to become intoxicated—an event occasionally known even amid the mild manners of the present day—he is very much at the mercy of the waiters in respect to what he has with him and what he leaves behind him. As I said before, although there are black sheep in all professions, yet, considering their temptations, waiters are admirably honest.

Sometimes waiters pick up a great deal of curious information and can make good use of it. I knew a man who had been a waiter in a London place of business, and afterwards settled down as the landlord of a most respectable hotel in a provincial city. He had extremely pleasing manners, and was noted for the clear, bright opinions which he expressed on nearly every conceivable subject, and the admirable way in which he supported them, and yet this man was utterly unable to read or write with any degree of correctness. He was asked one day to explain how he came by his multifarious knowledge and large collection of opinions. His explanation was very simple. He had been regularly employed as a waiter at public dinners at the Mansion House, the London Tavern, etc. He had heard all the most remarkable public men of the day speak repeatedly on every variety of topic. He had always listened attentively and with the greatest appreciation. In his own humble way he became quite a public character. There were great men who would always give him a kindly thought, and I have an idea that even in their speeches they would sometimes address themselves to the appreciation and intelligence of their favourite waiter. If they could please that waiter they would be pretty sure of "fetching" the general public.

The waiter is a favourite character in English literature. Some of our greatest humourists have delighted to delineate him. Tennyson's lines about the head-waiter at the Cock have become classical:

O plump head-waiter of the Cock,
To which I most resort,
How goes the time? 'Tis five o'clock,
Go fetch a pint of port.
But let it not be of the kind
You set before chance-comers,
But that whose father-grape grows fat
On Lusitanian summers.

Charles Dickens used to revel in descriptions of waiters, for whom he evidently had kindly feelings. At Bella's wedding breakfast, in "Our Mutual Friend," the head-waiter at the Greenwich dinner is likened to the Archbishop of Canterbury invoking a blessing on the young couple. In "David Copperfield," the waiter tells the very young hero how Mr. Top Sawyer fell dead after drinking very strong beer, and considerably takes both beer and chops, that his youthful charge may not incur such serious danger. The waiter in the coffee-house near Gray's Inn, is a familiar figure, and so is that wonderful waiter in "Somebody's Luggage."

We need not, however, go on with the enumeration. Such touches show the kindness that ought to subsist between the public and their most faithful and assiduous servant. When we meet the same waiter, perhaps, half-a-dozen times a week for any number of years, it is difficult not to consider him as a kind of personal friend. And there are good people who, when the waiter has vanished from his scene of action—perhaps lost his situation or been laid up by illness—follow him to his humble abode, to continue the tips and to recognise the heaven-forged links that bind together "all sorts and conditions of men."

SEALSKIN, AND WHERE IT COMES FROM.

IN FOUR PARTS. PART IV.

It will not have escaped notice that the expression of myriads and hundreds of thousands has not unfrequently been met with. This must not be considered a figure of speech. It is really and actually correct, only not correct enough. Millions is the exact word required.

Now we all know what a million is—a thousand thousand. It is very easy to talk of a million, but how very few can actually realise what the word means! Did you ever count a million of anything? When you have done so, you will not speak of millions quite so carelessly as before, but regard that number with very considerable awe. When talking of the seal rookeries and hauling-grounds, we may safely use the word, for it is strictly within the mark. And this is how we get at it.

A characteristic feature of the breeding-grounds which cannot fail to strike an intelligent observer, is the fact that the

seals are distributed all over in the most regular manner. There are no bare spaces here, and overcrowded spots there. It is evident that there is some law of distribution observed, simple no doubt, as the basis of all natural laws if one could only get at it. This law of seal life appears to be that a certain area is necessary for a certain number of individuals, no more and no less. We are all familiar, in idea at least, with that blissful time, when, according to the poet, "Every rood of ground maintained its man." It may have been so once with human beings; it is so at the present time with the seals. But the earth does not maintain them, therefore a rood for each seal is needless; but a rood of ground will harbour a certain well-defined number, and consequently a certain small area will accommodate one individual. The law then is, as far as we can judge, two square feet to one seal, and thus we get at our computation. Get the area of the breeding-ground in square feet, divide by two, and there you have the number resting on it.

To measure the superficies is simple enough. The ground is either well defined by natural formation, and completely covered by the creatures, in which case calculation is easy, or it is boundless in extent, and not filled up. But in this case the extent of the covering is strictly defined, and there is no difficulty about measuring it. It is as easy as taking a chain, or taking sights along a hedge, or a wall, or a fence. You may walk quietly all through the seals without exciting any disturbance.

You find that a certain area contains a certain number of seals, and that this proportion is observed. Whether the ground is one thousand times or one hundred thousand as great, there will be found just one thousand or one hundred thousand times as many seals.

Having found the law, the next thing is to find the week of greatest volume of life, and this is fixed, say on the tenth to the twentieth of July every year. After that the organisation breaks up, the seals scatter out in clusters, the pups leading, and instantly cover two or three times the ground they did the week before. Of course, each cow doubles herself by producing her young, but as she frequently takes to the water and spends perhaps not a quarter of her time on land, again the same ground practically suffices for nearly twice the number that

landed. Perhaps not one-half the mothers are on shore at once. The males being four times the size of the cows, of course take up more room, but then their number is so much less, say one-fifteenth only, that they occupy only one-eighth of the breeding-ground; and this surplus area is more than balanced by the number of cows which come to breed for the first time, and of course produce no young, but stay on land for a few days or weeks, and then spend most of their time afloat.

Thus calculating, we get for the rookeries on St. Paul and St. George, as total of breeding seals and young, three millions one hundred and ninety-three thousand four hundred and twenty. To this must be added the number of "holluschickies." This, however, can only be estimated, as they obey no law, but straggle about all over the place. They appear to be as plentiful as the adults; but to be on the safe side let us take them as only half, say one million five hundred thousand, and we get the grand total of four millions seven hundred thousand of all kinds congregated annually on these, geographically speaking, ridiculous little islands.

It is worthy of remark that in the whole of the North Pacific these are the only places where the seals breed, with the exception of Behring's Island and Copper Island, of the Commander group, situated seven hundred miles to the west, and still belonging to Russia, though now leased, like the Pribylovs, to the American Company. Larger in area, they are, from natural causes, not nearly so fertile in seal life as the latter, producing only nearly fifty thousand skins annually. This, however, is a great improvement on the number taken when the trade was in Russian hands. The American Company entered on their lease in 1871, the previous year's take being twenty-four thousand; in 1880 this had risen to forty-eight thousand five hundred, a sufficient proof of wise, humane, and business-like policy.

It will be asked, what is there in these remote regions that should make these islands, and these only—St. Paul especially—the resort of this astounding quantity of amphibian life? The answer is, that here, and here only in the North Pacific, is found the combination of circumstances which is favourable to the existence, welfare, and reproduction of the species. Man can, will, and does adapt himself to all climates and conditions of life in all latitudes, but the brute creation has not that

facility. These seal demands certain conditions, and must have them, or after a vain struggle it finally disappears altogether. In these regions it finds cool, damp atmosphere; sloping, shingly breeding-grounds; and quiet; and this combination is exactly suited to its organisation and its wants. There is plenty of aloping beach to be found elsewhere; plenty of shingle; any quantity of cool, damp climate; but these are the only spots where these conditions are found all together. The atmosphere just mentioned is that most favourable to the animal; it is in this that it attains its greatest perfection. A few fur seals are to be found on the Galapagos Islands, just on the equator off the coast of Ecuador; but they are poor, miserable specimens, and their fur is ragged, scanty, and utterly valueless—a proof of low physical condition. Then as to the aloping beach. Shingle or rock alone will do. It must not be clay, however well fitted in other respects, for the huge animals continually moving about in their resting-places naturally hollow out the ground; water then runs in and forms pools which plaster the coat all over with clay, preventing natural perspiration and producing sores. Clay will never do, and sand is, if possible, worse still, for it blows into the big eyes of the seal, which are extremely sensitive, and causes intolerable agony. Now everything on the northerly part of the coast is either clay or sand, except the islands we have described, so where else can the creatures go to? No-where but to where they do go; and may they go there long and prosper, as Rip van Winkle says.

When we think that these insignificant islands supply practically the world's demand for sealskin, it is melancholy to reflect that there were at one time sealing-grounds in the South Pacific and South Atlantic, to which St. Paul is but a speck on the map. Hardly a rugged coast in the lower south latitudes but was frequented in the aggregate by millions upon millions of fur-bearing amphibia. Turn to the map of the world on Mercator's Projection, and off the coast of Chili we see the Island of Juan Fernandez—Alexander Seabird's Island—and near to it the Island of *Jasa Fuera*. These two were at one time *very* swarming with seals. If we are to believe Captain Fanning, of the ship "Betsey" of New York, he got a full cargo of skins in 1798 from the latter, an insignificant *islet* of only twenty-five miles in circumference, and left some five hundred thousand or

seven hundred thousand seals. Subsequently fully a million were obtained by the sealing fleet, which consisted of thirty vessels, many of which were of the largest size. One can form an idea of the exuberance of sea life there, when we hear that, notwithstanding the inroads made by this horde of devastators, Captain Fanning still obtained some skins in 1815; and even twenty years later it is reported that four hundred and eighty thousand skins were taken in a single season. At present the two islands are leased to a Chilian merchant, who employs the settlers in cutting wood, tending cattle, and, during the season, in sealing, the average catch being about two thousand annually.

And now going south we come to the west coast of Patagonia, a good thousand miles as the crow flies, from Chiloe Island to Cape Horn, with nobody knows how much coast-line—twenty thousand to fifty thousand miles, when we consider the innumerable islands, bays, and inlets of the most deeply indented coast known. Every yard of this is admirable sealing-ground, and was so occupied a century ago; but fifty years of indiscriminate slaughter has left its mark, and now the trade is a lottery. Punto Arenas, or Sandy Point, in the Straits of Magellan, is the headquarters of the trade, but the annual catch amounts only to a paltry one thousand annually. South of Cape Horn are South Shetland and South Orkney; higher up to the east are the Falkland Islands and South Georgia, all of the same character as the Patagonian coast, all in former days the resort of the countless multitudes of seals, and all to-day beneath notice as sealing-grounds.

Carry your eye over the map eastwards, and every name you see in low latitudes was known at the beginning of this century to sealers, as a place where a good cargo was to be got. Sandwich Land, about 60° S.; Tristan da Cunha, much higher up; Gough Island, south-west of the Cape; Prince Edward and Marion Islands, south-east; Crozet Island, Kerguelen Land; Macquarie and Emerald Islands; south of Tasmania and Antipodes Island, south-east of New Zealand. From this last insignificant spot, Captain Pendleton, of New York, secured sixty thousand skins in 1801, and in 1814 and 1815 the enormous total of four hundred thousand was taken. One ship is said to have loaded no fewer than one hundred thousand, which, owing to faulty preparation, spoiled on the voyage to London.

and had to be dug out with spades and sold as manure. This, of itself, shows the spirit of utter recklessness which pervaded the fur trade. To get the skins, no matter how, to fill your ship and get to market, was the only thing thought of. A skin was a skin, whether belonging to an old bull or cow, an adult male or a pup, not even cows just ready to bear were spared. To kill the goose that laid the golden eggs is, and was then, proverbially the height of foolishness; but this is what seems to have actuated the sealers. Nothing that had life was spared, and, consequently, there was a glut in the market, and skins were unsaleable.

Then, again, thousands upon thousands of old worthless skins were procured which could never pay for carrying, and the result to the ship was an adverse balance on the season's transaction, a loss both to the public and the trader. All that was wanted was an enlightened policy; but what was everybody's business was nobody's, and so the breeding-grounds were devastated and the amphibians exterminated. Of course, nobody ever thought of a close time, or preservation, and, if they had, there was no authority to enforce it, for most of these breeding-grounds, besides being out of the way, really belonged to nobody. It could only have been observed by a common understanding of those in the trade, and, after all, what was to prevent an outsider from slipping in and helping himself to all he could lay hands on?

Outside Behring's Sea, the only rookery protected is that on Cape Corrientes, which is cared for by the Government of Buenos Ayres. This is a very small one, producing only five thousand annually; and Lobos Island, on the north coast of the Rio de la Plata, is responsible for ten to fourteen thousand. The total catch of the world, outside Behring's Sea, will hardly mount up to fifty thousand annually.

Taking the supply from the Pribylows at one hundred thousand, and from the Commander group at fifty thousand, we thus get two hundred thousand as the maximum number of sealskins brought to market every year; and when we find that it takes three to make a lady's cloak, it will evidently be a long time before everybody has a sealskin jacket.

Before leaving the subject it will be found interesting to learn something about the government, constitution, and management of those out-of-the-way islands.

In June, 1870, Congress passed an Act authorising the Secretary of the Treasury

to lease the Islands of St. Paul and St. George to private parties, subject to certain rules and regulations. The matter was publicly advertised and tenders invited, with the result that a company of traders of San Francisco, under the style of the Alaska Commercial Company, were the successful bidders, and a lease (not transferable) was thereupon granted for twenty years, from the first of May, 1870.

The following are the chief points. The Company agrees to pay to the Treasury fifty-five thousand dollars annually; we may call this rent. Besides this the Company agrees to pay an internal revenue tax or duty of two dollars sixty-two-and-a-half cents for each seal-skin taken and shipped; fifty-five cents for each gallon of oil obtained from the seals for sale on the islands or elsewhere; to furnish, free of charge to the inhabitants of St. Paul and St. George, annually, during the continuance of the lease, twenty-five thousand dried salmon, sixty cords fire-wood, and a sufficient quantity of salt and a sufficient quantity of barrels for preserving the necessary supply of meat; and to maintain a school on each island suitable for the education of the natives for a period not less than eight months in each year. Further, the Company covenants and agrees not to kill upon St. Paul more than seventy-five thousand fur seals, and upon St. George not more than twenty-five thousand yearly; not to kill any fur seals except in the months June to October, both inclusive; not to kill the said seals at any time by fire-arms, or means tending to drive the said seals from the said islands; not to kill any female seals, or seals under one year old and not to kill any seal in waters adjacent to the said islands or on the beach, cliffs, or rocks, where they haul up from the sea to remain. Furthermore, it is covenanted and agreed that the Company and its agents shall not keep, sell, furnish, give or dispose of any distilled spirituous liquors on either of the islands to any of the natives thereof.

Philanthropically speaking, these conditions need no comment. The very fact that spirits are prohibited is enough to show that a wise and humane policy dictated the terms of the lease. The supply of a certain large quantity of food, gratis, is another proof of the same beneficent spirit. These, of course, were the doings of the United States Government, and had to be accepted before the lease was granted. Let us see how the Company has acted.

There is a resident physician on each island, whose example, seconded by that of the other whites, has already induced greater cleanliness and a more healthful mode of living among the natives. Each island has a competent schoolmaster, and a well-warmed and convenient school-house, open from the first of October to the first of June. The difficulty, however, has been to induce parents to send their children. They doubt their ability to learn both English and Russian, and, as the latter is the language of their Church, it naturally gets the preference.

To the natives is reserved the monopoly of the killing of the seals and preservation of the skins. They have full liberty to come and go as they like, and the right to work or not, with the understanding that, in the latter case, their places will be filled by others. This is right enough. The Company is a despotism tempered by sound and enlightened commercial principles. Its members have gone far beyond the letter of their bargain; not that they are lovers of their species more than other folks, but because they approach the subject through that organ which is the tenderest and most sensitive of all, the pocket. It pays them best to be liberal.

If there is one thing better known than another to intelligent men of business, it is this: that if a man is well fed, well housed, and well clad, we can get better work and more of it out of him, than under opposite conditions. Under Russian rule the natives were housed in miserable tumble-down cabins half under ground, built of sods and roofed with earth, damp, dark, and indescribably filthy, everything in them being coated with the black, shiny, greasy soot from the burning of the seal fat, which gives out an intolerably offensive smell. Under such conditions vitality was necessarily at a low point, and there was not the physical capability of getting through the hard work of the slaughtering season. But now everything is changed. Each family has a snug wooden house lined with tarred paper, and furnished with a stove and outhouses complete. Streets are laid out regularly, and a plan drawn with every house marked thereon. There is a large church on St. Paul, and a smaller one on St. George. The results are naturally encouraging. In 1872 seventy-six men in fifty days secured seventy-five thousand skins; in 1873 seventy-one men in forty days took seventy-five thousand skins; in 1874 eighty-four

men secured ninety thousand skins in thirty-nine days. The Company is allowed to take one hundred thousand skins annually, and naturally takes that number or as near to it as they can. At first it was physically impossible to manage it under three or four working months. What was the result? The skin from the fourteenth of June, when it first arrives, up to the first of August, is in the finest possible condition. From the first of August to the end of October it deteriorates rapidly as the animal approaches its moulting time, and is in this condition practically worthless. The object then is to get all the skins in six weeks. Under the old dispensation the catch was perhaps a quarter prime, and the rest middling down to rubbish. To-day the whole take is prime, and fetches the top price. We can all see that this is business.

The results expressed in hard cash are most satisfactory to the United States Treasury. The terms were not arranged, and the lease delivered till the thirty-first of August, 1870, and the vessels and agents did not therefore arrive till the first of October. As the season was nearly over only nine thousand two hundred skins were secured that year. Since then, however, the catch has nearly approached the lawful maximum, with the highly gratifying result that the rent and tax paid into the Treasury to the end of 1880 amounted to three million four hundred and fifty-two thousand four hundred and eight dollars, a very good interest on the purchase-money of the whole of Alaska.

So much for the fur seals. With the Editor's permission I may have something more to say some day about those out-of-the-way regions, and the animal and bird life there to be found.

LOST IN THE VALLEY.

By the Author of "Driven of the Wind," etc.

A STORY IN SIXTEEN CHAPTERS.

CHAPTER XV.

MAURICE felt a thrill of intense excitement as the doctor's tall, well-knit figure appeared in the doorway of his room.

"You've been reducing yourself to a beautiful condition, certainly," was Dr. Grantley's first remark as he sat by the side of Maurice's sofa, after shaking hands with him. "You look older than I do," he continued cheerfully. "And why did you telegraph that you wanted to see me

professionally, when you simply wanted to ask me all about Eveline Douglas?"

"Because I thought that would make you come," answered his patient quietly. "Also, perhaps you can tell me what is the matter with me? I believe I am dying; but I should like to know now."

"I can tell you what started your illness," said the doctor gravely; "but I can give you no hope of cure from without. You must cure yourself."

"Have you married her, Dr. Grantley?" Maurice inquired irrelevantly.

"Married! married whom? No; of course not. What put that into your head?" said the other sharply, his colour deepening. Then, as his patient was silent, he continued: "If you must know, I asked Eveline, for I suppose she is the only 'her' for you, to be my wife, and she was silly enough to say 'no.' She said she did not love me in the right way. I told her from what I had seen of the right way of loving, it did not wear any better than the wrong, and I was quite ready to put up with her as she was."

"Did she send for you that evening in Paris, after I left her?" asked Maurice, raising himself on his elbow, and looking earnestly at the doctor.

"Yes; she sent for me, if you please, to beg me to go up and talk you round, which I promptly declined to do. I told her," Dr. Grantley went on, as he bent over a prescription he was writing, "that it was a very good thing that all the nonsense was over, and that, if she had any sense and any pride she would leave Paris for a time, and you altogether."

"And may I ask what right you had to give her such advice?"

"The right any man has to prevent the moral suicide of a fellow-creature. You were the last sort of man for her to marry; you had already mistrusted her, and would certainly have mistrusted her again. And a nice time she would have had of it among your relatives here—very excellent people, but not the sort to appreciate Eveline and to make allowances for her. You were too young for her, much too young."

"You see she didn't think so," said Maurice.

"I dare say not. Women and children never do know what is good for them. As I was telling you, I appealed to her pride and self-respect. Quite useless; she didn't appear to have any. But when I reminded her how much older than you she was, and

how extremely unhappy your parents would make you if she didn't leave you alone to go home and marry some nice girl without either antecedents or ideas—just the right person for you in fact—with their consent, she listened to me at last, being a very affectionate, weak-minded young woman, and went peaceably off with me to my old mother's. And she has been with that most admirable woman ever since, until a few weeks ago, when she took it into her head to go away, because I asked her to marry me. A most absurd proceeding on her part, for I had been wanting to marry her several years, and never expected for a moment that she would have me at the first asking. Being a woman, of course she can't see that I am the right man for her. However, I mean to ask her annually until she says yea."

"You—you don't think she is fond of me still, then?" asked Maurice.

"I don't think she ever was fond of you, except in a half-sentimental, half-motherly way," Dr. Grantley replied decisively, "so you may make your mind easy on that point. Of course, she was a good deal hurt at first when you went off like that; but she's quite got over it by this time, and never mentions your name to my mother."

"Is she well?" asked Maurice after a pause; "and is she in Paris?"

"She was quite well when I saw her last, about a month ago, and as blooming as a rose. She returns to Paris for the New Year. But although she is in England I don't mean to see her."

"In England! Is she in England? Where?" asked Maurice excitedly.

"Oh, travelling about," answered the doctor vaguely. "She came over to buy a property on the east coast because it had a ruined abbey on it, and had appealed to her romantic imagination. Probably she found that the ruin let the rain in, for she has written to the O'Haras to say that she returns to the Boulevard Haussmann in a fortnight. And now, my dear boy, take my advice, pull yourself together and forget all about her; she is not the sort of woman for you. She has been through such horrible experiences that you are nothing more than an episode in her life—you never can be anything more. Marry some nice girl with no ideas but those you instil into her mind yourself, and no memories you cannot obliterate. Eveline is a pure, good woman, who married an arrant scoundrel against the advice of her friends, and has had to suffer for it ever since.

Her principal fault is that she is too good-looking—the last thing that Mrs. Grundy will forgive. Also, she is too easily bullied. I don't agree with her friends in Paris, who blame you for believing de Villars's story. It was perfectly natural and proper on your part. Don't worry about her any more. She has certainly forgotten all about you. If you forget all about her, you'll soon get well. Medicines won't cure you, but here's a prescription that won't do you any harm. I'm going back to Paris to attend a consultation tomorrow, but I'll cross over again and see you next week, as I take a great interest in you, and always have done. You are a nice lad, far too good to fret yourself into a decline about any young woman, however fascinating. And don't imagine you are dying; death is a most slippery thing. When we think we hold him he eludes us, and when we think we are out of his sight he is at our elbow. You are still a good head and shoulders in front of him, and can outstrip him altogether if you choose to try. And now, good-bye."

"Good-bye, and thank you," said Maurice. "You have done me more good than you think."

He lay back peacefully on his couch until he heard the front door close on Dr. Grantley. Then he started up and rang the bell.

"Ask Miss Ethel to come to me at once," he said to the servant.

He was turning over in his mind, not the doctor's advice, but seven words of the doctor's conversation:

"A ruined abbey on the east coast."

When his sister came, he begged her to search in the library for a ponderous work in two volumes, called "Antiquities of England and Wales."

"And now, dear," he said, when she brought it, "I want you to read every word concerning ruined monastic buildings on the east coast of England. And if you only do this properly, I shall get quite well in no time," he added coaxingly.

Ethel was engaged to be married, and love lent her discernment. She divined at once that Eveline Douglas was connected with abbeys on the east coast, and she read every word concerning them for two good hours without making any comment.

Only she showed her suspicions by exclaiming suddenly, while skimming the page with her eyes before reading it aloud.

"I believe this is the likeliest one, Maurice."

Brother and sister were both almost equally excited as she read, so rapidly as to be almost unintelligible, with Maurice looking over her shoulder, a short description of the Abbey of St. Basil, on the coast of Essex.

"Part of this beautiful ruin was converted into a dwelling-place at the beginning of the present century by the then owner," the book informed them. "It is situated within half a mile of the sea-shore. The ruined chapel and cloisters, surrounded by a profuse vegetation, present a most beautiful and impressive appearance, particularly by moonlight. The house, a substantial, comfortable structure, is chiefly built with materials taken from the old abbey, the side entrance being directly through the cloisters. The grounds are extensive and beautiful. St. Basil's Abbey is at present in the possession of Mr. Stephen Graham, the eminent brewer."

"He died this year," exclaimed Maurice. "The property must have been sold and

"And she must have bought it," said Ethel.

Maurice looked at her a moment; then he laughed.

"She! Who?"

"Don't be vexed with me, Maurice," she said. "Of course I know you wouldn't get so excited unless it was something about her. I won't say a word about it unless you like. Oh! I do hope you'll write to her, and she'll come here, and it'll all come right, and you'll marry her, and get quite well and happy."

She gave her brother an affectionate hug in conclusion.

"Thank you, dear," he said. "But she has a much better man than I in love with her—Dr. Grantley, whom you saw just now. And she has forgotten all about me, they tell me."

"Who told you so?"

"Dr. Grantley himself."

"And you believed him!" exclaimed Ethel contemptuously. "Why, Maurice, you must be silly. If any other girl who was in love with my Ted came to me, and told me he had forgotten all about me, I should simply laugh at her, and think her a jealous and interfering cat."

"Wise little woman," said her brother. "I do believe there's a good deal in what you say. Now run away, and mind, not a word to any one about St. Basil's."

Ethel readily bound herself to secrecy, and Maurice lay back on his pillow. to

think over all he had heard. Another glance through the volume by him convinced him that Dr. Grantley's description could apply only to this particular estate, there being indeed no other habitable abbey on the east coast of England.

"And she is there now; will be there for a fortnight longer," he said to himself. "And she loved me as she will never love Dr. Grantley, I'm certain of it. Miss McIntyre had to own that parting with me saddened her, and she only sent for Dr. Grantley to get reconciled to me. She is so tender, so gentle, that when I tell her how I have suffered I know she will forgive me, and she may marry Dr. Grantley later on, if I can only find my way to her first, tell her everything, and die in her arms with her lips on mine."

He leaned back against the cushions, and, closing his eyes, thought of her as he saw her last, sitting by him in her blue velvet gown, her sad brown eyes sometimes filling with tears while she told him the story of her life that evening in Paris more than a year ago.

The white cat came and rubbed herself affectionately against him in the firelight. He picked her up.

"We were quite right to be fond of her," he informed her, "for she really loved us all the time."

Going to the window, he looked out at the bare trees, idealised now by glistening snow, and at the heavy sky beyond.

"I shall have a cold journey to-morrow," he said.

Then he made a rush at his medicines, which he had rather neglected, and wondered whether in twelve hours he could take sufficient tonics to set him up in health altogether.

He surprised and delighted the rest of the family by appearing at dinner for the first time for some days, and by talking incessantly.

"I mean to get well," he said as they crowded round him in affectionate concern at the sight of his flushed cheeks and glittering eyes.

Early next day he insisted that he must have a drive; it was the one thing to complete his cure. And, as they humoured him in everything, the brougham was brought round, although the snow was four feet deep under the hedges, and the sky was dark and lowering.

By his special request, Ethel was his sole companion; his mother and sister Mary saw them start, and filled the car-

riage with all the available rugs and furs to keep the invalid warm.

"Where are you going, Maurice?" Ethel inquired, as they drove through the lodge gates. She had divined some hidden motive in what appeared to the rest of the family only a whim.

"To the station first," he answered, "on my way to St. Basil's Abbey."

"It will kill you, Maurice," she cried, "such a journey in such weather, and in your state of health."

"It will kill or cure me," he replied quietly; "and I will risk being killed for the chance of being cured."

"Let me go with you," she pleaded.

But he would not allow that, and, all remonstrances being in vain, she had to be content with seeing him into the train and listening appalled while the guard related the many changes Maurice would have to make, before he could hope to reach the sea-side village where St. Basil's Abbey was situated.

"Why, you won't get there till nearly ten o'clock," she exclaimed; "and what shall I say to them all at home when I get back without you? It is simply madness, Maurice," she murmured helplessly as she fluttered to and from his carriage window, and loaded her brother with sandwiches from the refreshment room, and wraps and rugs from the carriage.

"Keep them quiet, there's a good little girl," he said. "Don't let them know how far it is if you can help it. I will telegraph when I get there. I simply must go. If I only find Eveline, I shall be all right."

His hand, as his sister held it in hers, at parting, was hot and dry, his eyes were shining with the restless brilliancy of fever. As the train steamed out of the station, Ethel burst into a passion of tears, for it seemed to her that she had been looking on her brother's face for the last time.

CHAPTER XVI.

MAURICE himself felt happier and more hopeful than he had done for a long time—if, indeed, the curious state of ecstatic calm into which he had drifted could be called happiness and hope. He waited patiently over meagre fires in chilly waiting-rooms during the many changes he had to make in his tedious journey, while the grey light waned in the sky, and the snow began to fall with a slow persistency that pressed long continuance.

It was past seven o'clock in the evening before he reached Colchester, where he changed trains for the last time but one. He had been so anxious to keep up sufficient physical strength to attain the object of his journey, that he had taken every possible care of himself, keeping out of draughts, enveloping himself in a carriage rug, eating the sandwiches Ethel had provided him with, and trying to distract his thoughts with a novel he bought at a station book-stall. But for all his precautions, by the time he entered the train which was waiting at Colchester his head ached maddeningly, his eyes were burning, and a feverish restlessness had taken possession of his entire frame.

It was a bitterly cold night; the carriage windows were by this time obscured by a border of frozen snow several inches in height; outside a slight wind had risen, in which the falling veil of white was tossing and swirling.

The last station at which Maurice changed was half-an-hour's journey from his destination. Here, as he stood shivering on the platform under the insufficient shelter afforded by a slight wooden erection; straining his eyes to watch the approach of the train down the snow-covered track, on which the lines were scarcely visible; the thought occurred to him, had he come on a wild-goose chase after all?

What if Eveline had left St. Basil's, or had never been there, but to some other ruined Abbey? What if the doctor had accidentally or intentionally misinformed him as to her movements? Eveline hated cold, Maurice knew, and might well have shortened her visit to England when this bitter weather began, and fled to a warmer climate.

His heart sank within him. He seemed to be chasing a shadow that eluded him. In a sudden seeming clearness of vision, brought on by dejection and fatigue, his conduct appeared the height of rashness and folly. How much wiser to have written first to ascertain if she was really there!

But it was too late to go back now, his train was already advancing, a red spot in the expanse of moving, misty white before him, and he was soon being carried slowly along the flat, uninteresting coast scenery towards the sea-side village where St. Basil's Abbey was situated. The place took its name from the ruin, which was fairly well known. As the train entered the station Maurice's old attention to

details suggested to him a way by which, at least, he might end his suspense.

As he alighted, the only passenger, with the exception of a few farm-labourers, he called the solitary porter, and asked the way to the Abbey.

"It's about ten minutes' walk from here, sir, and the roads are very hard. But I'm afraid you'll get no conveyance to-night."

"Can you tell me the name of the present owner?" was Maurice's next inquiry.

"Mr. Henry Graham, sir. But are you ill?"

Maurice had staggered back as the man spoke, but he soon recovered himself.

"I'm all right, thank you. I've made a mistake. I fear, I thought some friends of mine were stopping at the Abbey. Is there a train back to Colchester to-night?"

"Not to-night, sir. The last went half-an-hour ago. Perhaps your friends may be at the Abbey, for Mr. Graham has let it for some months to some ladies: Mount Edgcombe, I think, the name is."

Maurice hesitated. Could this be a bad shot at Montecalvo? He would chance it at least; since he could not leave St. Basil's to-night, he might as well freeze to death in the lanes as shiver to death in some chilly inn.

"Will you tell me the way?" he asked.

"I'll send my boy with you," said the man, good-naturedly, touched by the delicate appearance of the solitary first-class traveller, who was misguided enough to visit St. Basil's on such a night as this, without any luggage, and apparently without any idea where he was going to.

"If your friends are not there, Tom, my boy, will take you to the Queen's Head, where you can put up for the night," he said.

Maurice thanked him, and followed a shy, rosy-cheeked boy of twelve, who carried a lantern in his hand, out of the little station, and past some straggling cottages to a dreary country road, where they both stumbled at each step into deep cart-ruts in the hard, frozen ground, while the snow pricked their faces, and thawed in a continuous stream inside Maurice's collar and down his back.

The boy in front whistled unceasingly, trying, with praiseworthy persistency, to possess himself of some well-known air that always eluded him after the third or fourth note, in a manner that seemed to put a finishing touch to Maurice's misery; but he staggered along after him in the darkness, every step he took seeming to re-echo in his aching head. Suddenly the boy left

off whistling, and knocked his lantern against two iron gates encrusted with snow, that stood a little back from the road.

"'Ere's the Abbey," said the boy, "but I dursn't go in, because there's a ghost that 'aunts the cisters, with 'is 'ed under 'is arm. Jim Purvis seed it last week."

The snow had collected so thickly round the gates that it was with difficulty the boy opened them. The moment they were ajar the boy retreated, casting a frightened glance into the darkness within.

"I'll wait outside a few minutes until you've seed if your friends is there," he said, as Maurice put a shilling into his hand. Then he whistled louder and more discordantly than ever, until the bold young gentleman, who, apparently, feared not ghosts, entered the rusty gates, and was lost to view; soon after which, being overcome by spiritual terrors, the boy turned round and ran home as fast as his feet could carry him.

Inside, Maurice crept on, feeling his way between tall hedges of evergreens, that shook snow down upon him from their branches as he caught at them to support his tottering footsteps. Passing through a Gothic archway, thickly hung with ivy, he found himself at last within the ruined cloisters. Here, for a few seconds, he rested, seated on the ledge of one of the tall windows, protected a little from the storm outside. For the roof above still remained intact, and the worn stones under his feet, which for so many years the monks had trodden daily, were almost free from snow. Straight on ahead a narrow line of red light proclaimed the vicinity of the house; and, as his eyes grew accustomed to the darkness, Maurice found that it proceeded from a large French window built right up against an arched doorway, which had formerly been the entrance from the cloisters to the old Abbey. He could see too, now, the delicate tracery of the cloister windows standing out dark against the moving white sky beyond; and he could hear, or fancied he could hear, the sound of someone singing, some song that seemed strangely familiar to him, in the intense silence. But, in the dizziness and numbness that was gradually creeping over him, he could not recognise either the air or the words, and the line of light in front of him seemed to grow more and more distant as he watched it.

There was a large square tombstone a few feet distant from the window ahead; if only he could crawl to that. Maurice

knew he should be able to see into the lighted room—see her, perhaps, whom he had come in search of, before cold, and pain, and weariness overpowered him altogether.

But when he rose, and moved slowly onwards, supporting himself against the low edge of the cloister windows, the light seemed to recede before him, seemed as distant as heaven itself. Was he dead already, he wondered, or was it a woman or an angel that was singing ?

He reached the tombstone at last, and sinking down upon it, he listened with all his soul to the music that sounded very near him now, struggling to command his exhausted senses, and to concentrate his wandering attention on to what he should see and hear.

The crimson curtains of the room, into which he could see, were partly drawn. Suddenly a woman's figure appeared between them—not Eveline's, but, thank Heaven ! Miss McIntyre's.

For Maurice knew, as he recognised her, that he had not come in vain, and, at that moment, all his heart was lifted in joy and thanksgiving. Then the singing, which had for a few moments ceased, recommenced. He knew the song quite well this time, for it was one of his own, the one she liked best.

Some day we two shall meet,
For I shall come once more,
As one who treads an old, old street,
Stops at the well-known door :
And then I know at eventide
I shall not come in vain,
Thy heart of hearts will open wide
And take me home again.

The tears were filling Eveline's eyes as she sang the last words.

"Poor boy," she murmured softly. "Are you there still, Ellen ?" she asked, turning suddenly at a sound that seemed quite near her. But Miss McIntyre had already left the room.

"How strange," Eveline said to herself, rising from the piano ; "I felt certain I heard someone call my name. It must have been only fancy, I suppose, for I am absurdly nervous to-night. I shall be believing in the story of the Ghostly Monk next, and hearing him groaning in the cloisters, as the servants say he does——"

She stopped suddenly as she was crossing the room, for something seemed to tap against the window, and a voice that was almost a wail, to utter her name again.

Eveline was really frightened. Her first impulse was to call Miss McIntyre or one of the servants to her assistance ; her

second, and the one she followed, to go to the window, draw aside the curtains sharply, and peer out into the cloisters.

At first she saw and heard nothing ; but as she was slowly leaving the window, some dark object, lying out of the line of light from the window, at the foot of the moss-grown tombstone, met her eye. She turned faint and sick with fear at first sight of it ; then, although no feature of his face was visible, a sudden instinct made her guess who it was that lay there in the cold and darkness. Bursting open the window, she bent over Maurice, and, clasping her arms round him, turned his face up to the light.

It was ashen-grey in colour, fixed, and rigid as death.

She pressed her lips to his in a wild effort to impart warmth and life into them, then, exerting all her strength, she raised him in her arms, and, dragging him by slow degrees into the warm room, she laid him on the sofa before the fire and knelt by his side, chafing his hands in hers in a passion of terror lest he should be already dead, pressing her soft cheek to his, and raining hot tears upon his still face.

By the time Miss McIntyre re-entered the room Maurice's eyes were open and fixed, at first blindly, upon the face of the woman he loved.

The whole household was soon on the alert, the doctor was sent for, and every attention lavished upon the invalid. It was not until two hours later that the power of speech returned to him. Then he only whispered to Eveline as she knelt beside him :

"I ought to be kneeling to you. Will you forgive me ?"

"My poor boy," she answered, "I have nothing to forgive."

"If I get well you must marry me," was his next remark.

"No, Maurice dear, you must not ask me that," she replied with tender firmness.

"Then I shall not get well," he said.

But when his parents came to see him a few days later they found him lying by the fire, with his head on the shoulder of the most beautiful woman they had ever seen, and with a look of restful happiness on his face that brought back all its old youthfulness and charm.

And he introduced her to them as :

"My wife, Eveline."

"THE STORY OF OUR LIVES FROM YEAR TO YEAR"

ALL THE YEAR ROUND

A Weekly Journal
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PRICE TWOPENCE.

A DATELESS BARGAIN.

By C. L. PIRKIS,

Author of "Lady Lovelace," etc.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

AFTER all, the sea-breezes did not do so much for Mab as Joyce had hoped they might. Without any definite illness, there was yet that in her condition to cause Joyce serious anxiety—a muscular weakness so great as at times to incapacitate her from walking, or even from lifting her hand to her head. She appeared to have a disinclination for bodily exertion of any sort. She would spend the whole day, if allowed to do so, lying with closed eyes on her couch, or listlessly reclining in a high-backed chair at the open window.

Joyce, as she sat beside her, watching her in silence, could only wonder over a certain mystic beauty that seemed so to overspread Mab's face, as to render it difficult to identify that face with the pained, anxious countenance of a year back. A feeling akin to the awe that one feels in the presence of the unknown and supernatural, took possession of her. It was second only to another feeling: that of apprehensive terror lest her darling might be plucked out of her hand by another and a stronger one than Captain Buckingham's—the iron hand of death itself.

She began to think it would be as well to get Mab nearer home, or at least near some big city, where, in case of need, good medical advice could be readily had.

She hinted as much to Mab as they sat together two days after she had despatched her letter to Donovan.

Mab did not seem to hear her. As usual, she was leaning back in her easy-chair, with closed eyes.

The window was open. The sun had just sunk into the sea, amid flames of violet and ruddy gold. The waves lay steeped in all the changeful glory of the after-glow. Not a sound, save the lapping and soft dashing of the waters on the beach, broke the outside stillness. Joyce never allowed Mab to spend this sunset hour in solitude. She had learnt from experience that this was the time when her visions took deepest hold on her, and the world seemed to let her slip.

Joyce was just then fighting a far harder battle than ever Mab had fought against the voice of her own heart. "Those dreams of hers may cost her her life," the doctor had said, when called in to attend Mab in her fainting fit. And those dreams seemed now to Joyce's fancy the only door, which might chance to open and let in a ray of light.

She sometimes felt herself to be in the plight of a man who, having been denied a life-boat and a plank as a means of safety from shipwreck, says, "Now I'll die sooner than touch the rope you fling to me."

She had shut her ears, and had fled from Captain Buckingham's temptation; now she was as good as putting her right hand across Mab's eyes, and saying, "You, at any rate, shall not pierce the darkness!" her left hand, as an after-thought, across Mab's mouth, adding, "or, at least, whatever you see, you shall not tell me."

She dared not reason the matter out with herself. Instinct, nothing else, guided her in her extremity just then. She seemed to be living out her life in painful jerks, snatching at what was right, but holding it slackly, and praying that it might slip through her fingers; fleeing from evil, as she had fled from Buckingham, but all the while as it were with her head looking

over her shoulder, hoping that evil might overtake her.

These still, sunset hours, which seemed to bring naught but peace to Mab, always found Joyce at her worst. All her doubts, terrors, misgivings, regrets, seemed then to swoop down upon her like so many evil birds in a mighty, clamorous flock.

Suddenly Mab's soft, uncertain tones broke in on her thoughts.

"Joyce," she queried, "do you ever feel people to be near you before you see them?"

Joyce started, for, at that very moment, chancing to lift her eyes to the open window, she had caught sight of the figure of a man on the beach below, whose outline recalled that of Ned Donovan.

"Whom do you feel near you to-night, dear?" she asked eagerly, still keeping her eye fixed on the man on the beach.

She had a reply she did not expect.

"Captain Buckingham," answered Mab in slow, clear tones.

Joyce's impulse was to cry aloud: "Oh, Mab, don't let that name pass your lips! That man is temptation incarnate, and he will turn us both out of the road to Heaven if he can!"

But she held in her impulse, biting her lips till they blanched.

She rose from her chair, went to the window, and looked out, shading her eyes with her hand. What if that were Captain Buckingham on the beach, and in another five minutes she should be called upon to face him, and go through a second fiery ordeal!

With a great thrill of thankfulness she saw that her fears were groundless. The man was Donovan, not a doubt. Most probably he was coming to the house to answer her letter in person, and, not knowing the exact geography of the place, had come along the coast instead of by the cliffs.

She would not have him shown into the room where Mab was, she decided. It would take him a good five minutes to get to the house; presently she would creep out of the room quietly and see him alone downstairs.

Mab's voice again broke the silence.

"Last evening, just at this hour, Joyce," she said, her eyes still closed, her voice growing more and more soft and slow, "I had a sweet, strange vision. I feel I must tell it to you."

"Dream, you mean, darling," interposed Joyce nervously.

"Call it a dream if you like, Joyce. I

thought I was crossing the heath in the dead of night. It was pitch-dark, but somehow I did not miss my way. Suddenly, looking up, I saw straight ahead of me, shining out of the darkness, a clear, soft, white light. I thought it must be the moon rising from out the trees in the little churchyard in the hollow."

She paused. Joyce went over to her side, putting her arms round her. Mab's dreams at such a moment were not to be put on one side unheeded.

"As I drew nearer," Mab went on in the same slow, faint tones as before, "I saw there was no moon, that the light, instead of coming from the sky, came from the churchyard itself, and was streaming upwards, a full, clear, quiet blaze of light into the dark heavens."

"Go on, dear."

"I wondered what could be the source of this light. But not until I had entered the little gate, half hidden by those two dark yews, did I know. Then, Joyce, an awful and wonderful sight lay before me. On every grave—every mound, every tombstone—stood an angel clothed in light, begirt with light. Upward, downward, round about them streamed this light; every dark tree, every pebble in the path, every cloud in the sky was boldly, beautifully outlined by it."

Joyce's heart was beating wildly, she trembled for what was coming.

Mab went on softly and dreamily still.

"And what struck me most was the intense stillness that prevailed. There was this mighty host—for it was a mighty host, on some graves stood two or more angels—and yet never a sound. The silence was in itself grand and awful. I felt fascinated, yet I was not afraid. Step by step I went nearer, till I could feel—yes, feel—their light falling upon me, and could see their marvellous and beautiful faces. Some were old, noble and stern-looking; some were young, like lovely girls or boys; some were mere children; others like cherub babies. Some stood as though praying, with arms outstretched to heaven; some were kneeling on the graves, with bowed heads; one or two had drawn swords in their hands, which flashed golden-bright in the white light. For the moment I thought it must be the day of resurrection, and that these were the souls of the dead rising out of their graves."

"Oh, Mab!" broke in Joyce, in an awe-stricken voice.

"But the next moment it was borne into my mind that the dead were lying quietly sleeping beneath in their graves, and that these bright, beautiful beings were their guardian angels, those who had watched over them and taken care of them in their lifetime, and who had not given them up now that they were coffined and hidden out of sight."

Again Mab paused, and now her voice sank to a deep, solemn tone.

"And suddenly as I stood there gazing and wondering, I saw in the midst of all this radiancy one dark, blank space; it was a grave with no angel upon it. It made my heart ache, and I thought I would make my way through the light to this forgotten grave, and say a prayer for the poor soul lying beneath. The air struck chill and damp around the spot, the darkness was so dense I could feel it, just as I had felt the light. I could not see the name graven on the stone, so I traced it out with my finger. And it was the name of George Ritchie Buckingham."

Joyce gave a great start, but words would not come.

"And as I knelt there I heard a voice, a sweet, strong, sad voice speaking out of the stillness and saying, 'Who will come and be the angel of this grave?' I looked up as I knelt and said, 'Here am I, Lord, take me!'"

Her voice, low as it was, vibrated with passion as she finished speaking.

And, as she lay back in her chair, pallid, with upturned, luminous eyes, Joyce's wildly-aroused fancy could almost believe that her offer of herself was at that moment being silently accepted, and that the translation from body to spirit was being wrought.

She clasped Mab tightly in her arms. "My darling, my darling," she cried, "stop, stop, or you will break my heart! You, you to be——"

Then she broke off, thrusting back her words unspoken, fearful of the uncouth note of contrast they might strike to Mab's brain.

She made a great effort to steady her nerves, which Mab's eerie talk had shaken. She scarcely felt fit to face Donovan and his possible revelations. He must be almost at the door now. She got back as much self-control as possible, and rang the bell for Mab's maid, to stay in the room during her brief absence.

She gave one long, steady look out of the window as she passed

There were no signs of Donovan anywhere now. The after-glow had faded; one or two faint, twinkling stars shone out in a pale green sky; the greyness of early night was settling down upon the sea.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

JOYCE waited in vain for Donovan.

Neither on that night, nor on the next day, did he make his appearance.

She grew wildly impatient, and made every possible enquiry concerning him of the coastguard-men and fisher-folk. No one, however, appeared to have seen a man answering to his description.

Joyce felt that she must start for Lough Lea there and then, and find out for herself whether Kathleen had faithfully delivered her letter. She would have done so, not a doubt, had not a sudden change for the worse shown itself in Mab. Without any apparent cause, there had come to her so great an accession of muscular weakness as to compel her to keep her bed during the early part of the day. It set Joyce measuring once more the distance between herself and good medical advice. She despatched a messenger to Newton Stewart for the best doctor to be found in the place. By the same hand she sent an urgent telegram to Kathleen, at Lough Lea, asking whether her letter had been given to Ned, and what was his present address.

Then nothing remained to do but sit still, and stare at the blank wall which once more seemed to confront her.

In the afternoon the doctor arrived. Mab's condition seemed to puzzle him. He prescribed for her rest, quiet, and a tonic, and departed, promising to come again on the following day.

An answer to Joyce's telegram arrived in due course from Kathleen. It briefly stated that the letter had been delivered to Ned, but that where he was at the present moment she had not the slightest idea, nor had she any means of finding out.

Then Joyce, at her wits' ends, telegraphed to Morton, requesting him to do his utmost to discover Ned's whereabouts as quickly as possible.

To find him, she felt, was an absolute necessity. If he could not be found, and induced to face Buckingham for her, what alternative remained?

Here Joyce's heart supplied the inevitable answer, an answer that had been growing into definite shape during the last few days of impatient waiting.

"You must see him yourself! And then Heaven help you, that's all!"

Joyce covered her face with her hands and sank into a chair beside Mab's bed. For the last twenty-four hours, which had magnified themselves into as many days, she had felt herself drifting to this point.

See Buckingham again! That meant concession on the one side, victory on the other; there could be no middle course.

But on which side was victory likely to fall? Heaven help her, indeed!

She looked down on Mab's white, yet withal tranquil face, and thin hand, lying on the coverlet.

In fancy she saw the wedding-ring on the slender finger; through her instrumentality, Buckingham triumphant; her own agony of suspense at an end.

Then a sudden terror fell upon her. She sank on her knees beside the bed, bowing her head on her hands.

Surely never before did dry eyes and dumb lips plead so passionate a prayer!

How long she remained thus she did not know. The afternoon sunbeams gave place to the long, slanting shafts of evening. Still she knelt there in her dumb agony. Time stood still for her, as it does in sleep, as it may in death.

Mab's soft voice recalled her to consciousness.

"Joyce," it said, "I would like to get up now, and go down to the beach, and see the sun set."

Joyce did not oppose the wish. To say truth, there was not left in her much strength to oppose anything—least of all Mab's sudden impulses, in which of late she had learned to acquiesce without demur.

So they two went down and sat upon the beach together, watching the great sun sink low and lower till it disappeared, a burnished fiery ball, beneath the waters.

It is all very well for the poets to say that Nature has a voice and speaks a message to every living soul. The truth of it is, the living soul first puts its message into Nature's mouth, then takes it out again, rings the town-crier's bell, and says: "Oyez, oyez, oyez! This is what great Nature has to say."

Mab, as she sat there with eyes upturned to the fading sky, said to herself:

"There is evening's rest after morning's toil for all creation. It must come; Heaven sends it."

Joyce got for herself an altogether different message out of the grand, desolate

seascape; the gaunt, brown rocks; stony beach; dashing surf. They seemed to laugh at her littleness, her weak resistance to fate, to bid her fold her hands and confess herself beaten at last.

"Compare your strength, your duration with ours, and what are you?" they seemed to say, in one mocking voice. "O you less than a speck on the folds of Creation's garment, find a Providence for yourself if you can!"

The crunch of feet on the pebbles broke in upon their thoughts. It was an old fisherman approaching. As he passed he said something in broad Scotch, pointing with his finger a little distance ahead.

Joyce could not catch his words, but her eye followed his finger. She saw a knot of fishermen, and one or two of their wives, gathered together under the deep shadow of the rocks, a little to the left of the footway that led up to their house.

Some bare-legged boys in blue jerseys were running up the cliffs, as though despatched on messages. A coastguard man was descending with a telescope under his arm.

"An accident—some one may have fallen over the cliff," said another fisherman as he went by. "It'll likely be a stranger."

A great and sudden dread seized Joyce, a dread that swamped every other thought, yet a dread utterly unaccountable and unreasonable. It did not follow, because the fisherman had said that it was most likely a stranger who had met with the accident, therefore that stranger must be Frank Ledyard. Yet this was the fear that had taken hold of her now. "My darling, we must, must meet again somewhere, somehow," she had said to herself over and over again, even when her hopes were at their lowest, her fears at their height. Now the thought that chilled her heart was: "What if this be the meeting after all! What if, in the dead face lying there, I recognise the face I am hunting the world to find!"

The little knot assembled under the cliff's side had formed into something of a procession now. Four men headed it, bearing an improvised ambulance on their shoulders, on which lay stretched the lifeless burthen; the women and children straggled beside them and brought up the rear. The twilight was deepening rapidly into the grey of night; the shadows of the old rocks went stretching out nearly to the sea-line. Weird and shadowy looked the dismal little cortège as it moved along slowly,

silently, save for the crunch of the pebbles underfoot, which told that the burthen was a heavy one.

Joyce, the spectre of herself, tottered forward to meet it, her hands clasped, her face bloodless.

But it was from Mab, not Joyce, that there broke that low cry of pain, so like the cry of a wounded dumb animal that has had its death-blow dealt to it.

For in that "it," borne past on the men's shoulders, in that battered form and disfigured face, greyer than the grey twilight that was settling down upon it, she had recognised the face and form of Captain Buckingham.

CHAPTER XL.

THUS, in sudden awful fashion, were Joyce's agonies and questionings for ever set at rest. No need now to dread that mocking smile, that taunting tongue, nor to close her eyes and shudder over the wonder when and where she would be brought face to face with both again. She had but to open them, and there was the cruel face lying low, with no taunt upon its lips, no mocking glitter in its eye.

With her fears died her hopes also. Where was the chance now of getting at the secret this man held? Into his grave with him, not a doubt, it would go.

If it had not been for this recognition of Captain Buckingham's body by Mab and Joyce, he must have been buried under a nameless stone. Several persons, it is true, came forward stating that they had seen him walking along the cliffs two days previously. An innkeeper from Newton Stewart deposed to having supplied him with a "machine," which set him down within a mile of Tretwick. But to one and all he was an utter stranger.

Joyce gave to the authorities of the place Sylvia Buckingham's name and address. With this, her part in the tragedy came to an end.

The first feeling in the mind of the good people of Tretwick was, that Buckingham had met his death by mischance. The cliffs, below which his body had been found, were treacherous and ill-protected, all sorts of gaps and fissures being hidden by the gorse and stunted bushes. A stranger attempting to find his way along them in the late evening, might easily enough, by one false step, lose his balance. There could be no doubt that Buckingham had fallen from these cliffs. He was a heavy man: his fall could be traced down

the side by the uprooted bushes to which he had clung, the displaced, crumbling sandstone, and a torn shred or two of clothing here and there in the gorse.

Joyce, with the thought of her desperate appeal to Ned in her mind, and of his sudden appearance on the beach, wondered whether a darker story might lie behind this.

It was an awful thought this—that incidentally, perhaps, this man's death had been brought about by her instrumentality. After she had written her letter to Ned, she had wondered whether it had been ill or well done. It seemed to her now that it had been very ill done indeed.

Later on, her wonder was to be changed into certainty. When Sylvia arrived, and the inquest was duly held in legal form, other evidence was given which threw a new light upon the whole matter. Two or three men deposed to having met a stranger, tall, and in appearance like an Irishman, walking rapidly in the direction of the sea. A woman stated that, going home late one night from the house of a sick relative whom she had been nursing, she met a stranger of similar appearance, limping, with a handkerchief twisted round one wrist. It was dark, and she could scarcely see his face, for his hat was pulled low, and the collar of his coat was turned up. He had accosted her civilly, told her he had hurt his knee in scrambling up the cliffs, and injured his wrist; he asked if he were in the right road for Newton Stewart. The woman directed him on his way, and then thought no more of the occurrence, until the finding of Buckingham's body recalled it to her mind.

Posters giving as full a description as possible of this man, and offering rewards for his apprehension, were at once put into circulation.

The good people at Tretwick were not a little surprised at the calm and self-possessed manner in which Sylvia Buckingham comported herself, through what must have been a succession of trying scenes to any woman. She travelled alone from Lough Lea, crossing the North Channel at Port Patrick, took up her quarters at Newton Stewart, and thence drove daily to Tretwick. The kindly-hearted people in the neighbourhood were prepared to receive her with warm sympathy, and offers of hospitality for so long as she chose to accept it. Somehow, when they saw her, their sympathy was chilled, and their hospitality not

offered. Whether it was a certain pre-occupied air, which seemed to imply that she had weighty matters on hand, to which private feelings must yield place, that cut her off from their compassion; or whether it was the curt, business-like manner with which she went through all legal preliminaries, and ordered her brother's funeral, that jarred upon their sentiments; it would be hard to say. It is possible that both causes were in operation.

Sylvia made an apparently candid statement as to her brother's occupation, as member of a patriotic league, which she said numbered on its roll some of the noblest names in the land.

Whatever deep feelings she might own to, she certainly kept them well under control. The only matter on which she seemed to evince the slightest amount of anxiety, was the getting possession of the papers and other belongings found upon her brother. They were handed to her intact, and were after all of seemingly small importance. They consisted of a memorandum-book, every entry in which was written in cipher; a purse containing gold and American bank-notes; a gold watch, to all appearance a perfect, well-made chronometer, but from which, strange to say, the hands had been removed.

A jurymen, in handing the property to her, commented on this fact.

Sylvia replied briefly that no doubt it could easily be accounted for, but that she herself was unable to offer any explanation of the matter.

Possibly the fact might have had a deeper meaning for these good people, could they have followed Sylvia back to her hotel at Newton Stewart; have gone with her into her room; and have watched her affix to the numerous letters she was just then despatching, in lieu of her signature, a seal in red wax which bore the impression of a clock without hands.

A DAY IN CORFU.

WITH the exception of Stockholm, Athens is, probably, the only capital of a kingdom in modern Europe unapproachable from the west by an overland railway.

The mountain masses of Pindus, and that perennially unsettled district of Albania, seem to offer an insuperable barrier between Greece and the civilised states of Central Europe. Nor would it be easy to overspread Greece with a system of rail-

ways, even if the northern countries favoured an international line. Its valleys are by no means uniformly connected with each other by gulleys or ravines, which an engineer might turn to practical account. They are rather, in very many instances, isolated basins surrounded with high and precipitous mountains, over which wind and toil the gruesome tracks that now serve to keep one district in touch with another. No railway could follow in the trail of these paths. And it is very doubtful if the most sanguine of promoters of financial schemes would smile favourably at the commercial prospects of a railway association which determined to tunnel through the mountains of Morea, and link its chief towns and villages together, for the good and profit of humanity. King George's kingdom is, on the whole, very impoverished, and there could be no dividend on Morea railways for an indefinite time to come.

No; one has a choice of routes by which to get to Athens, but they all involve a certain length of sea voyage. From Trieste the Austrian Lloyd's send a boat weekly. It saunters down the Adriatic, comes in for a blow off Cape Matapan, and probably lands its cargo at Piræus four or five days after starting. Again, from Naples and Marseilles come the Messageries' boats, steaming their best by Stromboli and old Charybdis and Scylla, and reaching Piræus in two and four days respectively; or an extra day if they touch at the Island of Syra instead of the mainland. An Italian line of no very high repute also goes from Naples; while, lastly, the Austrian Lloyd's run from Brindisi either direct to Piræus, or by Corfu to Patras and Corinth, whence there is a railway to Athens now open.

All these companies charge high prices, so that it is impossible to make the journey to and from Athens under about thirty pounds. And as the different boats rarely start to the minute, and do not strive very hard to arrive punctually, one may reckon a week as the average duration of time from London to the capital of Greece.

But the Brindisi route, by Corfu and Corinth, is the best, if the long spell of railway travelling be not objected to. By this route it is possible to leave London on Tuesday morning, and, by proceeding continuously, arrive at Brindisi on Thursday night at about eleven o'clock. An hour later the mail steamer leaves the harbour for Corinth, which it reaches at noon on Saturday. By the evening train from

Corinth one may then be in Athens in time to sleep there that night, and awake there on the Sunday morning. Five days is certainly not an extravagant amount of time for this long journey, and some people may thank us for the information about this Brindisi route, as it is by no means generally known.

It is a glorious experience to come on deck after the short night from Brindisi to the Albanian coast. The sea is smooth as a pond, and of a blue quite indescribable by reference to English blues. On the one hand, very close, are the grand Albanian mountains, apparently treeless, now sloping into the sea, now abrupt, and now unequivocally precipitous, with higher peaks behind the coast hills, and, yet farther away, a jagged snowy range distinct to the smallest pinnacle against the clear sky. At first sight the coast-line seems quite uninhabitable and deserted; but the eye gets accustomed to the scenery, and at length discovers clefts in the mountains, and tiny levels, where, it may be, ancient glaciers have finally subsided, forming a sound plateau between the rocks; and hereon white houses like snowballs are finally discovered, with one larger than the rest, which is, no doubt, the church of the Hagios Georgios or the Hagios Elias. On the other side of us, out to sea, are four or five steep wooded ialets, their greenery a delightful contrast to the sea and sky. And thus, between these islands and Albania, the good ship proceeds to Corfu, that garden of the Mediterranean, and anchors in its beautiful land-locked bay exactly twelve hours after leaving Brindisi.

One gasps in the effort to describe these lovely spots of earth. Dante is far more impressive when his genius puts forth its strength in the *Inferno*, than when he writes his *Paradiso*: and similarly one does not feel the limitation of one's powers in the attempted depiction of the commonplace. But it is with Corfu as with sweet Helen of Troy, who paralysed the pen, and was best to be seen portrayed in the wonder and admiration of those who were privileged to come face to face with her. One leans over the side of the ship and, as it were, absorbs in silence into one's system the soft contour of its many-sided hills; the stately grace of its cypresses growing in the town and cresting the dark rock which, even as a fortress, impresses with its solemnity rather than its strength; the mellow colour of its old Venetian houses, green and white, soaring high against the

blue heavens; the clamour of its boatmen, discordant enough when one has a personal interest in the hubbub, but otherwise merely strange sounds in a strange place; the orange sails of its fishing-boats at anchor in the bay, their big prows carved with uncouth saints and figures; the ruined island hard by, and the distant rocks of the Lazzaretto against a background of deep foliage where gardens and orange-groves run to the water's edge; the Venetian campaniles of its churches; the villas and villages nestling in the nooks of the hills and mountains, two thousand feet and more above the sea-level; and the majestic grey hills with their snow-capped attendants on the Albanian shore, which, at a distance of five or six miles, form a firm bar on the eastern side of the harbour. There can be no more beautiful port in the world than this of Corfu. To appreciate the disinterestedness of the British Government, one ought to see Corfu. No individual would have given away such a property so freely, even though it seemed ever so reasonably demanded of him.

And Corfu is as interesting in its history as in its configuration. Among its many different names in old times, that of Drepanum is the most apt. For the word signifies a sickle, and as such is a common term for the sweeping headlands of the Levant. But with Corfu it was peculiarly suitable, because the island is distinctly sickle-shaped. The capital town is built on a knoll in the centre of the eastern coast line, and thence north and south the shore curves outwardly.

To begin with semi-mythical times, Ulysses came to grief here. In the course of his unpleasant wanderings, he was shipwrecked at Corfu; and one still sees a pretty little island, containing a white monastery amid some cypress trees, which is reputed to be the sly Greek's ship metamorphosed by Neptune. Thucydides honoured Corfu with an unwilling residence there. Aristotle was banished thither. Alexander the Great set foot on the island. Greeks of Corfu were successful in those games of which Pindar sang that such

Success is mortals' chief reward below.

By their connection with Corinth they played a leading part in the Peloponnesian War, which began the downfall of Athens and of the Greek nation. Cato the Roman met Cicero the Roman in Corfu, after fatal Pharsalia; and there Cato offered to relinquish to Cicero the command of the last Republican legion, because Cicero had held

the dignity of Consul. Antony and Octavia were married at Corfu. Thither went Agrippina to pay funeral honours to the lamented Germanicus—

But it were endless to capitulate the events of which Corfu has been the scene. It must suffice if we add that Helena, the mother of Constantine, and the resolute discoverer of the true Cross, started for Jerusalem from Corfu; that the Crusaders touched there; that the Venetians held the island from 1386 to 1797, in spite of the attacks of the Turks; that when the Venetian rule fell, Corfu passed temporarily to France, but was under British protection from 1815 to 1864, when once again its destinies were joined with those of the Hellenic nation.

The chance of spending a few hours in Corfu was not to be lost, especially as I had introductions in the town. With as little delay as possible, therefore, I clambered down into one of the boats, which for the last ten minutes had been battering each other and the side of the ship, under the force of the swell and their own restlessness.

"You go stay in Corfu, Signore!" asked my boatman.

And on my reply in the negative, he sighed. The native Corfiotes plead an affection for the English, which they profess originated during the English rule in the island. In those happy days, when pounds, shillings, and pence were the currency; and a good many British officers and officials, with their families, lived in Corfu and spent their money in Corfu; all was well.

"Jolly good Government, England!" said the boatman. "Plenty money then. We learn English quick, and great favourite with English noblemen and officers. We row them to Albania for to cock shoot; and plenty fine cock in Albania then. But now—pish! It's a bad thing for Corfu, the Greek King. The drachma, it never worth the same to-morrow and now; and there no one to spend any except when English visitors come to hotel, and there never a cock to be shoot in Albania, because it no good to go; the fellows there they shoot at you in the boat from the houses. Only think! Ah! it was not so in the time when English Lord Maitland was King. No, no!"

The good man made a great noise with his abominable English, and splashed me several times ere he got me ashore; but I believe he was sincere in his professions,

and accurate in his statements. The ill-feeling between the natives of Corfu born under British rule, and the natives of Continental Greece, is extreme. Nor can King George secure the love of the islanders, even by spending a part of the year at his beautiful country house in Corfu.

Though they are less heavily taxed than the Athenians, it is probable that the Corfiotes would be very willing to shake off their monarchical yoke, and set up a small republic of their own, if they could but get one or two of the great Powers to back them.

The day of my arrival chanced to be one of those fortunate days when their honoured patron, Saint Spiridon, was exposed to the public gaze in his handsome coffin. All Corfu was in a state of spiritual ferment, and this showed itself very picturesquely in the multitude of country-folk in the narrow streets, dressed in the very striking native costumes of the Ionians. Such voluminous petticoats and gowns, of the brightest colours and most costly fabrics! Such head-gear; recalling the monstrosities of our own ladies in the time of the first Edward! And such an astonishing weight of massive gold ornaments suspended from the ladies! Did not one understand that it is the pride of a well-to-do Corfiote lady to invest half, or the whole, of her property in bullion ornaments for her person, one would jump to the conclusion that Corfu is one of the wealthiest little places in the world.

"That's what them do," remarked the boatman, whom I had attached temporarily as a guide. "Fine women! But, believe me, Signore!"—and by his fervour it was apparent that he was going to be mendacious—"they no half as fine since the English leave the island. The English make them show 'esprit,' and it do them good, but they a dull race, truly, and only fit for to put in the pot where you make pound-pieces out of the gold."

The lugubrious patriot would like to have melted down his fair countrywomen, and sent them to the Mint! But a Levantine is a true Laodicean: he will blow hot or cold with equal ease; tell fibs with the naivest of airs; bluster and frown and swear polyglot oaths as readily as coo with the sweetness of a mating dove; in short, do and be all things for the sake of filthy lucre. I do not believe that the boatman had much true religious substance in his composition, but, having led me down a long narrow street, the houses of which

soared high on both sides, and with a whisper informed me that we were going into the presence of the good Saint Spiro, he crossed himself effusively at the door of the church, while he squinted over his shoulder to see how I took his devotions.

The church was jammed with worshippers, and the tinkle of the gold bangles of the women, as they pressed against each other, was as lively as the music of a flock of belled sheep in motion. They were all determined to get at Saint Spiro's luckless body ere they went their way, and they sighed, and prayed as they stood, and tried to squeeze before each other.

It seemed a hopeless case, and I whispered as much to the man. But he was of a different opinion, and, taking the lead, cut a way through the silk and satin petticoats and groaning flesh and blood with very little regard for the sex, I am sorry to say. We were, as a consequence of this impudence, soon in the fore part of the church, and able to look about a little.

Save for its Venetian tower and the rich colouring of its frescoed ceiling and walls, one might have credited Christopher Wren with the building of this Church of Saint Spiridion. The interior is a bald parallelogram, though highly ornate. From the ceiling a number of heavy silver lamps and candelabra are suspended, and some of these are still burning before the altar, thereby adding to the heat and closeness of the atmosphere. Within the altar-rails are some soldiers, some priests, and the bevy of worshippers who have been last admitted, to approach the shrine one by one. And seated in the stalls, near to us, are a row of Corfiote women of such sumptuous attire and stateliness that the eye blinks at them.

Imagine, for example, this lady clad in a voluminous gown of blue satin worked with flowers, with a white lace covering over her shoulders; an enormous head-dress of white muslin girt by a vast wreath of natural pink roses and orange-blossom, with ponderous gold earrings reaching to her shoulders; necklace and bracelets of gold, and a thorough breastplate of antique goldsmith's work. She is a marvellous spectacle, and sits still with her brown eyes in a fixed stare, moving only when absolutely necessary, and then with the utmost care for her decorations. Other ladies have towering coiffures of white and crimson; dresses of blue, scarlet, or green; and silver buckles in their shoes; and they are all dotted with bits of gold. Another

picturesque detail is the old Greek feminine head-dress of a crimson skull-cap with a gold coronal, from which a thick gold tassel hangs at one side. Civilisation has ousted this pretty and becoming head-dress from Athens and the Greek cities. Corfu merits the more praise, therefore, for preserving it. Nothing could better harmonise with the regular features which are still a characteristic of the native Greeks. The Corfiote women, however, seem to have more in common with the Southern Italians than with the Hellenes.

And now of Saint Spiridion, who is exhibited to the public on but three days in the year. The Church of Corfu was the only Christian Church which escaped persecution in the time of Diocletian; a relic of a native martyr was out of the question in Corfu. It was necessary to go further afield. And so a certain Bishop of Cyprus, who was mutilated by the persecutors early in the fourth century, but who, nevertheless, attended at the Council of Nicea, in the year 325, and whose body was to be had some eleven and a half centuries after his death, was a prize for Corfu. In the year 1489, the remains of this Bishop, Saint Spiro, or Spiridion, were solemnly installed in a silver case with a glass window to it, and established in a church which has since stood dearer to the island than its cathedral. This silver chest was now to be seen on end in one corner of the sanctuary, and in succession the people stooped and kissed the dead feet of the saint, which were rendered accessible by the removal of a small panel in the lower part of the coffin.

On a closer view one is not impressed by the appearance of this hapless body, which has been breathless for more than fifteen hundred years. The trunk is covered with costly raiment; not so the head, however. This is black as coal, but extraordinarily preserved otherwise; and the sight of it, helplessly lolling against one side of the casket, is not agreeable. Each votary handed a candle to a clerk who sat by the saint, and having thrust his head into the coffin, retired half convulsed with religious rapture. As for me, I was glad to leave poor Saint Spiro un-kissed. It were far better to bury him out of sight, methought.

From the church we walked to a fine open space of garden and lawn, bisected with shady promenades, and studded with statues and other monuments of a country proud of its history. In front of us was

the old Fort of Corfu, a steep rock covered with stone and brick works, and separated from the mainland by a canal. It is one of those laborious erections of the Venetians, so many of which still defy time in different parts of the Levant. But as we went from level to level, and division to division, much of the later handiwork of British engineers was visible; and particularly a piece of tunnelling in the rock, which it were mere platitude to call a shell-proof chamber. This is left, as it was when the British evacuated the fort. Nor is it likely that the toil expended will ever have justification. For the rest, the fort is provided with every convenience of modern siege warfare. Its guns stand there, idle enough, on plateaux, where the grass grows rank between the stones. And from the highest point, whence, with one arm round the flagstaff, it is possible to satiate the eye with beauties of landscape, one understands how judiciously the Venetians made their choice and carried out their plans. The keeper of the flagstaff hands us a telescope; but the air is so clear that the thing seems unnecessary, unless we wish to see the movements of the crew on our steamer below, or the faces of the yachtsmen who are just hauling up their sails to quit the harbour for other waters. On our way down we pass a long piece of roofless building within the precincts. The British were erecting barracks for the use of the officers in Corfu, when the surrender to Greece was ordered; and incomplete the building has remained for more than twenty years.

For awhile I now sit among the numerous coffee-drinkers under the plane-trees of the chief square of Corfu. My guide is bent on a trip to the spot which stands towards Corfu as the Crystal Palace stands towards London. The mere sight-seer who omits to drive to the "One Gun Battery" in Corfu, would as soon pass over the Crystal Palace on a first visit to London.

"It is a pretty fine place," the man had told me already; "and many a cigar have I smoke with the Captains and the Colonels of the noble British army which I have took there. And the lovely ladies, their wives, and children, how glad they was to find themselves there! And they would sit and paint it, and eat the oranges, and the grapes, or the figs as grow by the place herself."

The drive to this battery has been called incomparable. It is certainly charming in

the extreme, and leaves an impression that is difficult to efface. At first the road skirts the sea by the "Strada Marina," a magnificent promenade, for which Corfu has to thank the English, as it has also for its admirable road system elsewhere in the island. Albania is seen for many a mile, and the blue sea north and south to the straits between the extreme points of the island. Much company is also to be seen here at the proper hour. But after a drive of about a mile we leave the shore, and plunge into the midst of olive-woods, orange-groves, thickets of roses, and a multitude of sweet flowering shrubs and fruit-trees, which are little more than a name to the average dweller in the north. The perfume of the land on this spring day was indescribable; and predominant over all the other scents was that of the orange and lemon-blossom. Every cottage had its small grove. But such is the luxuriance of the soil and the bounty of the Corfu sun, that few Corfiotes think it well to help nature: their trees grow as they list, and, therefore, do not bear fruit as they ought.

"Awful lazy!" the boatman pronounced his fellow men in Corfu to be. "They just eat and smoke in the sun, and turn the ground with the end of their shoe, and it give them all they want. It is pity, perhaps, when so much is done for the man; he think it not right that he have anything at all left to have do."

Be that as it may, one may conceive an ideal existence in Corfu. And when at the end of the headland, some three miles from the city, we rose to skirt a fine property of fruit-trees and olive-woods, all enclosed within a substantial wall, which property of several acres, it transpired, was in the market for the sum of nineteen thousand drachmas—at the then rate of exchange equivalent to about six hundred and fifty pounds—it seemed the most desirable and promising speculation in the world, and I was for buying it there and then. We stopped at a "rond point" high above sea-level, with olive-woods sloping to an inland salt lake on the one side, and on the other the sea. Here was a single cannon mounted, the ancient battery of the Venetians, commanding the straits below, leading from the sea into the lake. Remains of a mole running from each side of the land across the neck of water below are visible. This is old Greek handiwork.

Here, too, is the rock of Ulysses, already mentioned—a sweet islet in the blue, and the bells of its monastery sounded

softly through the still air. By the moderns it is called Mouse Island, because of its beauty and diminutiveness. The lake has probably shallowed very much since the time of Ulysses. It is more a salt-marsh than an inland sea now. But the cunning arrangement of fishing-gear over all its surface, shows that it is a reservoir of fish. In its vicinity the land is low, and suggestive of malaria. I asked the boatman if the island was healthy.

"Malista! Yes, to be sure," said he. "Why should it be not? They live until they know not how old they be!"

"No fevers?"

"Fever? Oh yes, in the proper time. But not so much; and it is worse a good deal in Albania; and here we have things blessed by the good Saint Spiro"—he showed me a charm under his waistcoat—"which keep us healthy. And there are other things which make the women beautiful, and help the young ones for to get them husbands quick. Oh, it is fine for a young woman to be the mistress of a house when she is fourteen and fifteen; and it is fine for her man, too—but not so fine."

We drove back to the town by a different road, and were chased for several hundred yards by some little bare-legged boys with great nosegays of roses, picked from the bushes, which grow four or five times as high as themselves. The olive-trees were here very remarkable for their height and the ungainly twistings of their knotted trunks.

In Italy, the cultivators prune their trees; not so in Corfu, where a man would rather be mulcted in the products than put himself to any exertion that was not imperative. It is the same with the vines of Corfu. Nature is the principal husbandman, and, consequently, the Corfiote wine is in request nowhere. I do not know how much of the land is under vine culture; but the density of its olive-woods may be imagined from the number of trees in the island—some five millions.

There are people who attribute all the idleness of this or that nation, and all the failure of such a nation to secure for itself commercial eminence, to those luckless bugbears—the landlords.

In Corfu such people would no doubt find cause to congratulate themselves on the soundness of their principle. For here an eccentric system prevails whereby the landlord—who is generally an absentee—lets his land on perpetual tenancies, the tenants paying their rent in kind proportioned to

the yield of the land. The landlord cannot lay hands on his own land, it appears; his tenants are the sons and grandsons of his and his father's and grandfather's former tenants, and they consider that they have a well-vested claim upon the land, for which they nevertheless pay rent as a matter of tradition, and not to be worse than their ancestors. Improvement under such a system is not to be thought of: Nature, who is good enough to initiate the vines, olives, fig-trees, etc., is bound to look after them; and if the tenant picks a living from the land without more trouble than is implied in the actual picking of fruit from the trees and selling what he does not want, it satisfies him. The landlord has therefore very poor return for his land, as a rule.

But, having delivered my letters, and spent an hour or two in social civilities, it is time to go on board the "Leda" once more. A flying visit to Corfu gives but a fleeting and inadequate impression of the island. In its forty miles of length, and ten to twenty of breadth, it has many and many a beautiful village and valley. It is traversed in all directions by excellent roads. Life is secure from brigandage; though a dozen miles away a man carries his breath in his hands. The peasantry are hospitable, and if it is difficult for a stranger to furnish himself with other than the bare necessaries of Greek life—bread, cream-cheese, wine, olives, and water—he will surely find his appetite so accommodating that he will eventually be content to exile himself for a time from the noxious dainties of the hotels. The absence of ruins, in a land so inseparably connected with ancient history, is an odd feature in Corfu; but the man is to be pitied who does not prefer the blue sky, the laughing sea, grey mountains and green dells, and the wealth of fruits and flowers which this happy island can offer him. One may enjoy time past in Greece; sunny, luxurious Corfu makes one live in the pleasure of the present.

Later in the day, from the "Leda's" quarter-deck, we watched the purple glow, precedent to the sunset, glide over all the mountains of Corfu and those near us on the Albanian coast-line. The changes of colour in the sky were not more alluring than those in the sea around us. From a tract of brilliant blue water we passed to water of a dull, whitish green, and thence suddenly to a pool of vivid spring green. But all too soon the purples, and crimson, and golds of the sky faded and vanished.

The lower end of Corfu robed itself in an ashen-hued mist. The hither mountains and valleys of Albania, here with more traces of population, grew chilly to the eye. The sea began to tumble about us with a cold, leaden glimmer, for we were passing from the shelter of the island. But for many minutes after night had well set in over the ship and Corfu, and the neighbouring coast, the snow peaks towering above the hills and villages kept their crimson flush, and even when the stars were out, and the near land was indistinct, these glorious beacons gleamed from afar; their gradual paling and disappearance was a tranquillising sight not soon to be forgotten.

LEFT BEHIND.

WE started equal in the race—nay, more,
We started hand in hand—how good seemed life!
How shone the little waves upon the shore
Where first we wandered; when he called me
wife,
I could not see the shadow's awesome birth,
For sunshine flooded all the fair young earth.
How has it faded? Love that was so true
In those first days, has lost its early grace.
Soft drifting clouds gather below the blue,
That seemed to be fair Heaven's unclouded face,
That shone above us as we turned to leave
A life of dreams—that love alone did weave.
Yet home was there; for that first home of ours
We did not scorn the voice that called us there!
Our home should e'er be bright as Eden's bowers,
Our love should wax with time more sweet, more
fair.
Work claimed us; life stood no more idly by,
Teaching the happy hours how to fly.
And so we entered where work held the reins,
Nor shirked the future with its heavy load;
At evening there were wanderings in the lanes;
Love's lamp lit up the gloom in our abode.
Yet, who could watch the swallow's eager quest
With tired eyes that only longed for rest?
He had his dreams to dream, just as of old,
His fancies flew above on happy wings;
Escaping all that was so dully told—
The weary march of useful common things.
I could not rise: when quite worn-out with pain,
Or children's cries, I longed for sleep again.
I slipped aside unwitting—but in dreams
I saw alone once more that happy time,
Ere work could separate, or blur the gleams
The sun had lent us—turning prose to rhyme.
He rose yet higher, and I loosed the band;
I would not drag him down from fairy-land.
For he is happy, and his life is sweet,
Nor recks he that so far I lag behind.
Perchance beyond life's mists once more we'll meet,
And in one strand our lives shall then be twined:
One strand so strong, it shall have power to draw
Our hearts together—being one, once more.

TENEMENT STREET.

TENEMENT STREET is not the name officially blazoned upon its outward wall—though it would be if street names were framed with any reference to the

fitness of things. From the fitness of things point of view the official name is a delusion and a snare. There is an Arcadian ring and sense about it, while the appearance, the atmosphere, and the life of the street are, each and all, suggestive rather of pandemonium than of Arcady. As Tenement Street, the place is not only real but typical, illustrating as it does, in a general way, certain of the more characteristic phases of the actual life of the poor. It is inhabited exclusively by those classes of the poor, the extremest forms of poverty among whom is testified to by the fact that the houses in which they dwell—though small, and relatively low rented—are all let out in tenements. A poor person who could afford to rent a whole house, "however so humble," would not care to live in Tenement Street, and the inhabitants of the street would not care to have such a comparative aristocrat among them. The street, like some of those living in it, has seen better days. It was never accounted genteel, but the time has been when the dwellers in it would have considered themselves aggrieved had it been classed otherwise than highly respectable. Now it is habitually spoken of as a "low" street, and is a recognised part of the "outcast" quarter of the district in which it is situated.

"Twere long to tell, and sad to trace each step from splendour to disgrace," in the history of the street. Briefly, it was originally built to "supply a want" in the way of dwellings for a class of well-paid artisans engaged in a then flourishing trade, which, from the course taken by the march of invention, subsequently became extinct. Some among these craftsmen might take a young man lodger into their household, but such lodger ranked as "one of the family." Practically each family had a house to itself. They were six-roomed houses, and though the apartments were small, the dwellings, as a whole, were sufficiently large, and sufficiently subdivided, to make the fullest observance of the decencies of family life an easy matter, and even to afford opportunities for the cultivation of some of the graces of life.

Among the traditions of the street, at any rate, was one to the effect that, in the heyday of the trade referred to above, there were artisan dwellers in the street who possessed pianos, and had daughters who could play them. Such a thing, if true, was of course very sinful on the part of artisans; enough, many good people would, doubtless, be of opinion to bring about the

judgment, in the shape of the extinction of their trade, which afterwards befell them. Perhaps, though, this musical tradition was mythical, was akin to—though higher in conception than—that recurring myth which “crops up” whenever the coal-mining industries are flourishing, and represents the colliers as drinking champagne out of buckets, and clearing the markets of forced peas at a guinea a quart.

The bygone glories of the street, are, however, only germane to the matter here, in so far that they serve to show that the houses—though now each inhabited by at least two, and some of them by three or four tenants—were, in the first instance, intended to accommodate but a single family. Nor, in sinking to the tenement level, have they undergone any structural adaptation to their fallen fortunes. The adaptation to environment has been upon the part of their present occupants, such occupants having, happily for themselves, a good deal of adaptability about them in this connection. Such adaptability can scarcely be regarded as a survival of the fittest, though the laws of hereditary transmission are operative in accounting for it. The great bulk of the tenement-class are native, and to the manner born. They are, and always have been “used to” cabined, cribbed, confined conditions of home and household life; and though they would not say that it is nothing when you are used to it; though, even with the most seasoned among them, it is their poverty and not their will consents to their remaining among such material surroundings as theirs; though this may be, still it remains that immemorial usage has a tempering influence upon the hardships of their lot. That is a point clearly and painfully brought out by the difference between the manner and bearing of the general body of the tenement-class and those stray members of it who have come down to it, who have seen better days, and whose

Sorrow's crown of sorrow is remembering happier things.

Tenement Street, as it meets the eye at present, shows all the outward and visible signs symbolical of the squalor that reigns within the walls of its households. Though not technically a slum, it is essentially slummy—narrow, dirty, and dilapidated. An abnormal proportion of its limited roadway is appropriated to gutter purposes, while the flagstones of its footpaths are extensively battered and broken. As a result of this latter circumstance, the

side-paths are, in rainy weather, little better than a network of sloppy little pools, and—though it is a choice of evils—the strip of roadway running between the gutters is the better track for the poorly-shod pedestrians of the street.

Where the paint has not been worn off doors and window-frames, it is weather-stained and dirt-engrained beyond recognition as to its original colour. Numbers of the doors are broken and splintered, and a greater or lesser degree of paper patching is rather the rule than the exception with the windows. This matters but little here, however, since the blinds and curtains of the windows are so dirty and dusty that the light admitted into the room is, in any case, dim, if not religious.

Except in very cold weather, most of the doors stand open, as do also many of the upper-floor windows, which, to a certain extent, are made to serve as doors to the tenants of that floor. Thus, from the windows, the women will give their orders to such itinerant tradesmen as serve the street, and they will draw up with a string, or even have “chucked” up, some of their lighter purchases. The upper windows also offer special advantages as sentry posts, from which to watch for the entry into the street of rent-collectors or “tally-men,” to whom it may not be desirable to be at home; and they are the coigns of vantage, from which to witness the slang-matches and street rows which, occasionally by day, though more frequently by night, relieve the monotony of life in Tenement Street.

Two-and-seventy stanches,
All well-defined and several stinks

is a poet's, if not a poetical, expression. It is therefore scarcely applicable to Tenement Street, of which it is putting it mildly to say that it is in every respect nothing if not prosaic. As a prosaic and sanitary (or unsanitary) matter of fact, the street is variedly as well as highly malodorous; but the predominating effluvia is that indescribable but unmistakable “reek of humanity” specially characteristic of the more poverty-stricken streets and alleys of the “outcast” quarters of our great cities. At all hours of the day, and but too often far into the night, there may be seen disporting itself in the roadway of the street—including its gutters—a good deal of unwashed, scantily-dressed, juvenile humanity. These juveniles range from babes of three or four weeks old up to the boys and girls of ten or twelve years of age.

who have charge of them. For, where there is not a girl in a family, boys are pressed into the service as baby-minders, which is so much the worse for the individual babies concerned. Not that the boys are wilfully careless or cruel, but they are not the born nurses that the girls are. With girls of the gutter-children class, the rôle of "little mother" to "real live" babies seems to come as natural as does doll nursing to the little girls of the better off classes of society.

To the casual observer the children of Tenement Street look a miserable set of little wretches, but, as a matter of fact, they are happy enough in their way. They are sharp, active, self-reliant, easily pleased, and especially capable in the matter of pleasing themselves. Their games are, for the most part, toyless ones, so far at any rate as "bought" toys are concerned, and that is perhaps why they have a tendency towards the form of dramatic representation. They play at—and in wonderful realistic fashion—fathers and mothers, keeping house, keeping shops, and keeping school. It is perhaps worth remark, that the latter game, as played by gutter-children, does not embrace the idea of the abolition of corporal punishment. The cane—or the stick, strap, or rope's end, used as a substitute for it—is regarded not merely as the emblem, but also as the practical instrument of authority. With it discipline is maintained, and attention to studies secured. The mimic pedagogues of the gutter apply it freely, and with a vigour that is not always sufficiently restrained, even by the fear of reprisals; the recollection that the teacher of one round of the game will be the scholar of the next. The privilege of "larruping" the pupils is evidently regarded as the highest prerogative of the teacher, the one thing that makes the office enviable.

In some of the outdoor games of the gutter-youths there is a good deal of chaunting of doggeral rhymes, and it may well be that the idea of the "action songs," which now form so popular a part of the kindergarten system, was originally taken from these street games.

Stalking about the gutter in search of food, and unnoticed and unscared by the children, are a number of fowls that have strolled through from the back yards in which they roost by night. They are gaunt, ragged-looking birds, with very little crow or cackle in them, their general appearance being suggestive of the idea that, with

them, the moulting season is all the year round. Till recently there used also to be seen prowling about the roadway sundry hungry and abject-looking curs, animals that might have been direct descendants of the lean dogs, that Alp the renegade saw

Hold o'er the dead their carnival.

Dogs of indescribably crossed breeds

- Terrier and pug, mastiff and hound,
In one red mongrel blent.

The new dog regulations have, however, made a clean sweep of Tenement Street in that respect. Its dogs had, for the most part, to be self-supporting. They were wont to wander into the highways, seeking what they might devour. This was the opportunity of the police. The unmuzzled, unled, and confiding mongrels were speedily seized. They were among the earliest victims of the new crusade, and have long gone the way of the Dogs' Home and its lethal chamber. It may be that they died for the public good; if so, they were, in a sense, their country's martyrs. They were harmless curs. Perhaps they had not vitality enough to go mad; at any rate they never injured the children, whose playfellows they were. There are still dogs in Tenement Street, but they are—at least so say their owners—pedigree dogs, champion ratters, having a money value in the open market. Therefore, they are kept close, not only with a view to avoiding—if possible—the payment of the dog tax, but also lest they should be stolen.

The adult inhabitants of Tenement Street are even more a mixed than a rough lot. Occasionally there are to be found among them two or three members of the criminal classes, that is to say, ladies or gentlemen who have "done time" on conviction for larceny, and who are more likely than not to be again convicted and "put away." There are a few of the "as yet unconvicted, no visible means of support" class, and a sprinkling of those who though not classed as criminals, are well known to the police as "drunk and incapable," "drunk and disorderly," wife-beaters, street-rowers, or "terrors of the neighbourhood." But these, all told only, constitute the exceptions. The bulk of the inhabitants are of the "poor but honest" class. A considerable proportion of them are street-folk, costermongers, fish hawkers, licensed pedlars, flower-sellers, tinkers, locksmiths, wire-workers, knife-grinders, saw-sharpeners, chair-caners, umbrella-menders, and the like. Some of

these callings involve in-door as well as out-door work. Thus the wire-worker may not go on his round every day; or if he does, his wife and children will be at home engaged in the manufacture of the sieves, fire-guards, toasting-forks, or other articles which form his stock-in-trade. Such home industries have to be carried on in living, and even in sleeping rooms, a circumstance which, of course, adds to the general unhealthiness of the particular tenement habitations concerned. There are two or three cobblers in the street who work at home for the second-hand or "translating" trade. In a number of the houses firewood chopping and bundling are carried on; and in others there are home-workers—both male and female—in the slop tailoring and shirt-making trades. The women engaged in the latter trade are to the full as ill off, as badly paid, and as much to be pitied, as were their sisters in the day when Hood sang their sorrows and sufferings. The woman who is solely dependent upon slop shirt-making starves rather than lives by it. She soon becomes in very deed

The seamstress, lean and weary and wan,
With only the ghosts of garments on,

who

In poverty, hunger, and dirt,
Sews at once with a double thread
A shroud as well as a shirt.

Happily, many of the shirt hands are not wholly dependent upon the earnings of their needle. Numbers of married women of the poorer classes work at the shirt trade with a view to supplementing the scanty wages of their husbands, and the additional income thus gained, though it may be but three or four shillings a week, sensibly increases the comfort of the household. Considering the wretched prices paid for the work, the surprising thing is that the women should earn even so much at it as some of them do. Take the button-holing—the leading branch of the work in Tenement Street. The holes are rough punched in the factories, the work of the out-door hands being to stitch them round. This button-holing is admittedly "niggling" work, and yet the rate at which it is paid for—by the sweaters—is a penny per dozen collars. As each collar has three holes, the hand, who finds her own needle and cotton, has to stitch thirty-six holes for a penny. Even so, some of the experts, by working long hours, by rising early on summer mornings, and sitting late on winter nights, by living on food that is

"ready to be put into the mouth," chiefly bread and butter, and eating as they work; by acting on these lines, some of the button-holers will earn as much as eight or nine shillings per week. The price paid for the work by the manufacturing firms which give it out in the first instance, are probably such as would enable a skilled and industrious hand to make a living wage; but, as matters stand, such firms are almost compelled to employ middlemen, and the tender mercies of the sweater are cruel. The remaining inhabitants of the street are, for the most part, as to the men, casualty labourers; as to the women, charwomen, washerwomen, or hands in rag-sorting sheds, white lead factories, or other such places in which female labour is employed.

Life in Tenement Street begins early. One of the cobblers of the street adds to his shoemaking trade that of a professional caller. The board above his window proclaiming his profession, bears the announcement: "Workmen Called at Any Hour." That is the usual device of a caller's trade banner; but, generally speaking, the "any hour" is merely a figure of speech. A caller's connection is, as a rule, among a set of workmen who have to catch a particular workman's train, or who are engaged in local workshops, beginning the day's operations at the same hour, usually six o'clock. The art of the business is to so arrange a round, and time the calls, as to suit individual habits or circumstances—to apportion to as great a nicety as may be the times of those who have greater or lesser distance to travel, and adjust time differences between the men who like to dress leisurely—comparatively speaking—and perhaps have a cup of tea or coffee before starting out, and those who, to gain a little more sleep prefer to "jump into their clothes and do a rush" to catch their train or reach their shop in time.

The caller of Tenement Street has an ordinary clientèle of this kind, but he has also upon his list a number of watermen and lightermen, who have to be called according to the state of the tide in relation to the work upon which they are engaged. With him, therefore, "any hour" is not a mere phrase. The gleam of his lantern, and the cock crowing and dog barking to which his setting out gives rise, are often to be seen and heard in the street in the very smallest hours of the morning. Apart from the movements of

the champion caller, as he styles himself, Tenement Street begins to be astir about five o'clock. At that hour, casual labourers who are in employment, and women engaged as factory hands, begin to turn out. About six o'clock, such of the costers and rag, bone, and lumber collectors as attain to the dignity of being barrow men, begin to get out and put together their vehicles. For the back yards being the only "carriage repository" available in Tenement Street, the barrows have to be taken to pieces and carried through to the yards each evening.

The costers and fish-hawkers do not go to Covent Garden or Billingsgate markets. Their transactions are scarcely upon a scale suitable to those great marts. They get their goods from certain local dealers, who make the supply of barrow and basket traders a special branch of their business. They serve that class of customers in smaller quantities than they could obtain at the Garden or the Gate, and at prices very little higher than Gate or Garden rate. Such dried fish as the hawkers of Tenement Street deal in—haddocks, bloaters, kippered herring, and occasionally kippered mackerel—being favourite "relishes" with the working classes, the street traders at once take that portion of their stock on a breakfast round, calling on their way back for the "wet" fish, which is the staple of their later and principal round. The costers, and the itinerant dealers generally, come straight home with their day's stock, and have breakfast, and arrange their goods, before going on round. The women who go out washing and charing, and the girls who go out step cleaning, leave home between seven and eight. The last to start are the travelling craftsmen—the chair caners, umbrella repairers, tinkers, and the like. They do not set out until about ten o'clock, but their going forth thus late is no indication of lack of energy upon their part. Many of them will have done an hour or two's in-door work before taking the road, but they find from experience that it is useless to strike their ground "till turned ten." Earlier than that, they will tell you, "the slaveys, let alone the ladies," are not prepared to give attention to such odds and ends as the re-caning of a chair, or the repair of a leaky tea-pot, or to negotiate the sale or barter of household lumber or cast off wearing apparel.

Those of the inhabitants of Tenement Street who can make it convenient to do so, breakfast before leaving home for the

day; that is, when they are in a position to breakfast at all, which is not invariably the case. The dwellers in Tenement Street have, perforce, to go upon the "streaky" principle in the matter of feeding. One day a family may be without the means to procure a loaf of bread wherewith to break their fast; the next morning they may be in a position to indulge in what they consider quite a "high" meal; to have not merely "a good rough fill" of bread-and-butter with tea or coffee, but a "relish" in addition—a haddock, or bacon and eggs, or it may even be a chop or steak, selected from the "block ornament" tray of the cheap butchers, and purchased over night in a falling market. When they can so indulge, they do. They make the most of the good, as they make the best of the evil, of the passing day.

If fast they must, they bear hunger with but little complaining; if feast they can, they feast unhesitatingly and rejoicingly, though the general course of their lives is rather between than in these extremes. Breakfast and supper are the chief meals with the people of Tenement Street; and, indeed, with many of them, the only meals. They are out from morning till night; and, even though they might be in a position to "run to" a mid-day meal at home, they cannot afford to dine out. On their breakfast they stand their day's work; on their suppers they recuperate after it.

The children of Tenement Street are a tolerably lively crew; but it is not until the return of their elders in the evening that the street is fully alive, alive oh! There is not much stilly night in the street. The dwellers in it, though they rise early, sit up late, and, so long as the weather is at all suitable to such a proceeding, they like to sit out of doors. They lounge on door-steps, window-sills, and—during such seasons as the gutters are dry—kerbstones. Conversation is carried on in a loud tone, and is varied with laughter, and occasionally, even with a little horse-play; for, hard as is their lot, the inhabitants of the street are not so poor of heart that they never rejoice.

Their preference for the *al fresco* method of spending their evenings is a very natural one. Bad as is the outer air of the street, it is better than that of the rooms, though of their rooms, as of the other condition of their environment, the poor, as a body, make the best. This is most strikingly shown in the most difficult case—the case, namely, of single-room tenements. That

the fact of a family having to live and sleep in one small apartment is calculated to be injurious alike to health and morals, goes without saying, though, of late years, a great deal has been said and written upon the point, and that in a very graphic, not to say blood-curdling, fashion.

It is almost a necessity of the case that most of those who have written upon the subject have seen one-room life—if they have seen it at all—in a merely passing sort of way. That being so, it was inevitable that they should have been chiefly impressed by, and inclined to dwell upon, the horrors, moral and physical, of the situation. The horrors do undoubtedly exist; their occasional occurrence being inherently incidental to an unregulated and uninspected system of single-room tenements.

There is no wish here to underrate either the horrors or the urgent necessity for some imperial measure of dwelling-improvement calculated to mitigate them. In justice to the poor themselves, however, it should be pointed that the "horrors" are the exception, not the rule. The normal conditions of household life in a single room are gloomy enough in all conscience. But thanks to the strugglings and strivings of those immediately concerned; to the instinctive craving after higher possibilities of morality and decency of life, which all the sordidness of their present surroundings has not crushed out of them; thanks to these "conditioning circumstances," the picture here, if sombre on the whole, has still its touches of relief.

As will have been gathered from what has already been said, it is a case of all hands to the pump with the inhabitants of Tenement Street. Women, as well as men, have to go out to work, and such children as are not abroad seeking to "scratch for themselves," are either at school or in the street. During greater part of the day the rooms are, in most instances, unoccupied, and doors and windows are left open. The apartments have, therefore, about as good a chance of being aired as it is possible for rooms to have, that are situated in metropolitan courts and alleys. Nor is ventilation impeded by any overcrowding of furniture. With single-roomers, severe simplicity in furnishing and strict economisation of space, are matters of necessity. If the bed is not of a "fold-up" construction, it is usually made to serve as table as well as bed. In many instances, however, the bedsteads are contrived a double debt to

pay; they are beds by night, chests of drawers, arm-chairs, or "well" sofas by day. When this is the case the furnishing has to include a small table, but even with that "thrown in," the plan of "put-away" beds leaves the apartment less lumbered up and more living-room-like. It is very rarely indeed that a single-room tenement boasts of more than one bed, even of the fold-up pattern, but a good deal of ingenuity is displayed in providing more or less comfortable corner shake-downs.

The clothes-horse, which is a frequent feature in the furnishing of these rooms, is used far more as a bed-screen than for its legitimate purpose. Where there is not a horse on hand other rough but effective screens are extemporised, and, as a rule, all that can be done under the circumstances, is done to secure decency and privacy in the sleeping arrangements.

As single-room tenements are associated with the bitterest poverty, it is something to be thankful for that the proverbial touch of the spirit of good in things evil, takes in this connection the form of facilitating that practical "neighbouring," and kindness of the poor to the poor, without which the lot of the poor at large would be even harder than it is. The loan of a bundle of wood, or a shovel of coals, or half a loaf, or even a few pence, is more easily effected between next-room than between next-floor lodgers. In the same way, any piece of good luck that may befall one neighbour is more readily shared with another. As, for instance, when a woman who goes out charing comes in for a gift of broken victuals which, though no longer fit for the rich man's table, are to single-roomers rich and rare. By taking it in turns to boil each other's kettles, two or three tenants of adjoining rooms can economise in the matter of firing, and in the summer time keep their apartments cooler than they would otherwise be able to do. More important still, one woman whose work lies at home, will "give an eye" to the children of another woman, whose work takes her out. By a system of wall rappings she can be in communication with the juvenile baby-minder, and at critical moments render service with very little loss of time to herself. In this way, too, room-neighbours assist each other in times of sickness; in fact, it is usually in this fashion that women, of the class here under consideration, get all the aid in the shape of sick nursing that falls to their lot.

All single-room tenancies do not of

necessity involve the worst features of the system. Many of the tenants are widows with very young children, while others are old couples, whose grown-up children have left them. It is a common practice, too, both with young girls and elderly women working for their own hands, for two or three to combine in renting a room. The worst cases, as affecting health, are those in which a single apartment is used as a work-room, as well as a living and sleeping-room. The cases of greatest hardship are those of people who, having fallen to this low estate, wish to "keep themselves to themselves." This wish, if not shown or expressed in any offensive form, is always respected among the poor, and thus it sometimes falls out that a family may be literally dying of starvation without their next-room neighbours being aware of the extremity of their necessity.

It has been sought here to dwell upon the few relatively redeeming features of the life of our tenement streets, rather than upon its general gloom. But with every desire to see what is by comparison a bright side in it, the life of such streets is a sorry sight, a saddening commentary upon "the higher civilisation." There has been a great deal of talk about improved dwellings for the poor, but, so far as national effort is concerned, there has been little else than talk. Of individual endeavour in that direction there has of late years been a notable increase. The volunteer workers among the poor are a numerous as well as a noble army. Absolutely it accomplishes a great work, but in relation to the tremendous mass of misery associated with the poverty and overcrowding of the "outcast" quarters of our great towns, its work makes scarcely any perceptible impression. The evil is of national extent, and can only be cured—so far as it is curable at all—by measures of national magnitude. It is to be feared, however, that it will not be until the public conscience has experienced the awakening effect of an outbreak of epidemic disease, that any national scheme dealing with the subject will be got framed and made effectively operative.

MARKING TIME.

AMONG the necessaries of daily life, both social and commercial, none play a more conspicuous and important part than almanacs. Their use has become so general that their value is, perhaps, unappreciated by nine-

tenths of those who use them. They are cheap and plentiful; they are referred to as a matter of course; and it never occurs to us to reflect upon their history, or to consider that, like everything else, their completeness has not been achieved all at once. Year by year we may note additions and improvements in these essential accessories of our desks, but a glance at their history will best show the interesting and marvellous changes that they have undergone.

From the very earliest period in ancient Rome, it was the custom to affix a notice on the most conspicuous place of the public resorts, stating that the first of the month had arrived. From this each individual had to make his own calculations of the remaining days until the next "first" was announced, this being done that the people might keep account of the religious festivals in which they would be required to bear a part. Accordingly this date came to be called *Kalendæ*, from the Greek word *καλέω*, I proclaim, and the placards of this notice, *Fasti Kalendæ*. Then *Calendarium* was invented, for the book of accounts referring to each day; but, as regards the word almanac, which, of course, deals with matters other than those embodied in the calendar, it is less easy to trace the derivation. Its etymology has been more disputed than any other word in the English language, and from the mass of opinions expressed upon the subject, Verstegan's has been accepted as probable, though there cannot be the slightest doubt that the Saxons, from whom he obtains his derivation, took their term from the Arabic.

The Saxons, he says, "used to engrave upon certain squared sticks, about a foot in length, or shorter, or longer as they pleased, the courses of the moones for the whole yeere, whereby they could alwaies certainly tell when the new moones, full moones, and changes should happen, as also their festivall daies, and such a carved stick they called an *al-mon-acht*; that is to say *al-mon-heed*, to wit, the regard or observation of all the moones, and hence is derived the name of almanac." One of these squared sticks, of uncertain date, is still preserved in St. John's College, Cambridge; others exist in some parts of the Midlands; and in the excavations at Pompeii was found a square block of marble, upon each side of which were marked three months in perpendicular columns, each headed by a sign of the Zodiac, and containing astronomical, agricultural, and religious information. This

form appears to have been generally used wherever almanacs were known. The Clog, an improved kind, was also familiar in Denmark, and may have been introduced by the Danish invaders into this country, for Dr. Robert Plot, in 1686, gives an account of their popular use in Staffordshire and some of the Northern counties. This clog was a square stick of about eight inches long, intended as a perpetual almanac, to show Sundays and fixed holidays, the first day of the year thus being alone marked.

To describe the different notches and symbols used to denote various days, would be no easy task, and to master them must certainly have been a work of time. Some were comparatively easy, as for instance, the true lovers' knot on Saint Valentine's Day, the harp for Saint David's Day, and the peculiar cross of Saint Andrew on the last day of November. Saint Lawrence had his gridiron, Saint Catherine, her wheel, Saint Paul, his axe, all symbolical of their modes of death. But the bough notched for March the second, the rake on June eleventh, the heart on all days dedicated to the Virgin, and the pot on November twenty-third, were less easy to interpret at the first glance, though we now know that they referred respectively to Saint Ceadda's sylvan life, the beginning of hay harvest, the devotion of Mary to sacred duties, and the custom prevalent on Saint Clement's Day of going round with a pot to beg drink wherewith to make merry. Information of any kind was necessarily of a limited nature on these primitive time-markers, and consequently gave little scope to the astrologers, whose business was subsequently increased to a great extent by the use of written and printed almanacs. The early history of written almanacs is veiled in obscurity, but it is known that they were in use by the Alexandrian Greeks about the time of Ptolemy. In these astrology had no part, but due importance was given to astronomy; though Lalande, who was most diligent in his researches after early astronomical works, states that the earliest almanacs in which express mention is made of this science, were those of Solomon Yarchus about 1150. However, in 1300 Petrus de Dacia published an almanac, still preserved at Oxford, wherein he descants on the planets, and thus touches on their influences:

Jupiter atque Venus boni Saturnusque maligni
Sol et Mercurius cum Luna sunt medicorum

All science was more or less mixed with astrology, alchemy, and other kinds of fallacious learning, that frequently brought sad trouble upon their professors and believers. Oxford was the head-quarters of British science, and hence all the accepted almanacs emanated, so that astrology and kindred subjects got strangely mixed up with genuine knowledge. A manuscript almanac for 1386 sets forth, among other particulars, "The Houses of the Planets and their Properties and the Exposition of the Synes," under which head is the following useful information: "Aquarius es a syne in the whilk the son es in Jan', and in that moneth are 7 plys dayes, the 1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 15, 19, and if thoner is heard in that moneth, it betokens grete wynde, mykel fruite and batel. Aquarius is hote, moyste, sanguyne, and of that ayre it is gode to byg castellis, or hous, or wed." All the old almanacs extant, and they are by no means uncommon, give much space to these questions, for which it may be assumed they were chiefly in request. The first almanac printed in Europe was published at Buda, in Hungary, but contained nothing except the eclipses and positions of the planets for the years 1475, 1494, and 1513. However, it apparently had an enormous circulation, for Hungary, Germany, Italy, France, and England bought up the entire impression, though its price was by no means low. As far as can be ascertained, printed almanacs were unknown in this country, until the "Shepherds Kalendar," translated from the French, was published in 1497 by Richard Pynson. This was full of miscellaneous matter, a great deal of which dealt with the influence of celestial bodies. "Saturne," for instance, according to this authority,

Is hiest and coldest, being full old,
And Mars with his bluddy swerde ever ready to
kyll,
Sol and Luna is half good and half ill.

In 1842, a printed almanac of Lilliputian size was exhibited at the Society of Antiquaries. It was only two inches by two and a half inches in dimension, and consisted of fifteen pages. It had been "emprynted in the Flete Street by Wynkyn de Worde. In the yere of the reyne of our most redoubted sovereyne Lorde Kynge Henry the VII."

Until the sixteenth century, almanacs were not in general use in England, though they had been common on the Continent at the end of the fifteenth century. Even

then the aid of astrology was called in to make them sufficiently attractive to the general public, and a very little sober knowledge, mixed with a great deal of superstition, went a long way towards popularising them. An almanac for 1550 is thus described on the title page: "A Prognoscacion and an almanach fastened together, declaring the Dispoission of the people and also of the wether, with certaine Electyons and tymes chosen both for Phisike and Surgerye and for the husbandman. And also for Hawekyng, Huntynge, Fishyng, and Foullynge according to the Science of Astronomy." In 1553, Leonard Digges, an eminent mathematician, published his Companion to the Almanac, in which he discourses of astral influences. By this time almanac-making had become a profession, known as philomathy; the astrologers, too, forming a separate company, who had an annual dinner to perpetuate their trade. French philomaths had considerably increased the popularity of their productions by prophesying of the affairs of State, and of those in authority over them. This kind of information was precisely calculated to appeal to the populace, but it by no means suited those who sat in high places. Nostradamus, the champion prophet, set the prophetic ball rolling, and often got too unpleasantly near the mark to be agreeable to the great ones of France, whose seats were sometimes ominously rocked by these predictions.

Charles the Ninth had previously required every almanac to be stamped with the approval of the diocesan bishop; but Henri the Third found it necessary to take more decided steps, and absolutely forbade the insertion of any political prophecies into almanacs, a prohibition renewed by Louis the Thirteenth. To this day, in the rural districts of France, the circulation of these almanacs is enormous, and none is more popular than the old "Almanach Liégeois," first published in 1636, by a mythical Matthieu Laensburgh. Specially constructed for popularity, it is so arranged that even the most uneducated can master the superstitious parts. That the moon has reached a stage when it is advisable to take a draught is represented by a phial; a lancet uncompromisingly suggests blood-letting; a pair of scissors intimates the advisability of a visit to the barber. This remarkable book predicted, in 1774, that in April of that year, the reign of a royal favourite would abruptly terminate.

Madame Dubarry very properly took this prediction personally, and spent an uncomfortable thirty days in consequence, constantly repeating: "I wish this villainous month of April was over." When Louis the Fourteenth died, in May, the reputation of the "Almanach Liégeois" went up considerably.

Curiously enough, the prophetic almanac never excited the disapproval of the authorities in this country, but rather obtained favour than otherwise, James the First actually granting a monopoly of the publication of almanacs of every kind to the two Universities and the Stationers' Company, which latter eventually undertook the whole work, until their claim to the exclusive right was contested, towards the close of the last century, by Thomas Caman, a bookseller of St. Paul's Churchyard.

Under the Company, astrology flourished to a great extent, "Moore's" and "Poor Robin's" being the favoured media. The last-named was nominally a humorous production, but was chiefly remarkable for gross superstition and profligacy. To the early numbers, Herrick, the poet, is said to have contributed; but, if this be so, he certainly did not send in any of his best work.

Evelyn, the cheery, chatty diarist, gave his attention to almanac making in 1664; and his attempt was a decided step forward. "The Kalendarium Hortense," as he called it, was the first gardeners' almanac, and contained, besides much useful horticultural information, many sapient remarks.

Prior to this, however, had lived William Lilly, the notorious and most influential almanac maker of the seventeenth century, whom Butler has, in one of his oldest rhymes, for ever rendered famous, as Sidrophel, in "Hudibras"—

Who deals in Destiny's dark counsels,
And sage opinions of the moon sella.

He was a shrewd, knavish fellow, who possibly laughed consumedly at the credulity of his contemporaries, though by this means he rose from a menial to be astrologer to the King.

Partridge, whose fame as an almanac-maker came next to that of Lilly, has been likewise immortalised by two distinguished writers. Attention was first particularly directed to him by Swift, who incessantly worried the prophetic shoemaker by his humorous attacks upon him in "The Tatler," for which publicity and celebrity he could well afford to have fun poked at his trade.

Still greater honour was in store for him, however, for Pope, in a few lines,

This Partridge soon shall view in cloudless skies,
When next he looks through Galileo's eyes;
And hence the egregious wizard shall foredoom,
The fate of Louis and the fall of Rome.

has associated the name of this insignificant person with one of the best-known and most beautifully written poems in our language—"The Rape of the Lock." Nowadays, the purveyor of a patent pill, or the inventor of some new form of super-stition, would sacrifice a great deal to be advertised and handed down to posterity in the "Idylls of the King."

So far as success goes, perhaps, no one did better than Moore, whose almanac exists even unto this day. Doubts have been rife as to the reality of this person, who certainly must have existed under some name, but who was probably a quack physician writing under that pseudonym.

The list of philomaths of this class might be continued at great length, but, happily, a few respectable almanacs claim notice. Primarily among these stands "The Ladies' Diary," a quaint compendium of cookery receipts, biographical sketches of women, hints on household management, and mathematical enigmas. Started by a school-master of Coventry, towards the close of the last century, it was followed by a similar production for gentlemen, with which it was eventually incorporated.

In 1828, the "British Almanac" appeared, and the information therein contained not only astonished and excited the admiration of the public, but awakened them to the fact that they had previously been supplied with a maximum of rubbish and a minimum of knowledge. A reaction at once set in, and the Stationers' Company published "The Englishman's Almanac," which has been succeeded by others of every variety and use, culminating in that marvellous and valuable mine of information—the indispensable "Whitaker."

JANE COSSENTINE.

A STORY IN THREE CHAPTERS.

CHAPTER I.

JANE COSSENTINE'S memory holds one picture more clearly than all others. It is a commonplace picture enough, of a country lane with hedges on each side, and thick white dust on the ground, and overhead an August noonday sky of the deepest, intensest blue, without a cloud. The memory-

picture is sharp, clear, living; it has not only form and colour, but movement and sound besides. There is a sharp little rustle of leaves, and a wren flies out suddenly from the hedge there; a bee comes forth from a foxglove, and buzzes from this flower to that, until a honeysuckle-cup offers him the nectar that is worthy. Somewhere up in the blue a lark is singing; and, on the other side of the hedge, there is a soft, monotonous, rustling sound as of a woman's dress, sweeping over long grass or against the standing wheat. There is a cornfield on that side of the hedge—a cornfield "a-flutter with poppies" and blue corn-flowers, and with the corn growing high—and, between the corn and the hedge is a narrow, trodden path, never meant for two to walk abreast. Jane's picture does not take in the field—only the dusty lane, and blazing sunshine, and blue sky, and high hedges.

She waited in that lane one August day a good many years ago, and it has stood out distinct in her memory ever since.

Two people were walking abreast in the narrow path on the other side. At first there was only the rustle of the wheat as they passed. Then came voices—first a man's, full and deep, speaking in a tone that would have been masterful had it not been tender.

"Now, Dora, you must promise me before I go."

It was a girl who answered; and her voice was pleasant, soft, and musical, as most West-country voices are. She spoke half playfully, half pettishly, in the happy, assured way of a spoilt child, who knows itself to be charming in all moods.

"I'll promise anything," she said, "anything and everything; only do say 'good-bye' now and let me go. You don't know how hot and tired I am—and every bit of colour will be out of my frock! I promise everything. Now you are satisfied, I hope. Good-bye, Mark; say good-bye."

"Not yet," said the man decisively, in a tone that was a little impatient and severe. But immediately the tone changed for one of deep tenderness, passionate appeal. "You'll be true to me, Dora—true to me until I can come back to you? Tell me, dear. It is wrong of me to doubt you—wrong, I know; but—"

"It's worse than wrong, it's horrid," said the girl.

"But sometimes," continued the man, "I doubt everything; I begin to doubt, not only whether you will continue to love me.

but whether you really love me even now."

"How silly of you!"

"Yes, it is silly of me; that is what I tell myself, and what I would like to make myself believe. Have patience with my folly, dear; men are foolish when they love a girl as I love you. And cure my folly, Dora—you know how. Let me feel for one minute that you are in earnest. Look in my eyes; now tell me—let me hear your own lips say it again—that you love me and will be true to me."

"I will love you and be true to you," repeated the girl, in a tone that was purposely parrot-like and expressionless. And then a little, clear, rippling, merry laugh rang through the stillness of the countryside.

"You will not be earnest, then," said the man gravely. "Well, I must accept your promise in the way you choose to make it, and be satisfied."

"Oh, you are earnest—dreadfully, frightfully earnest. I never knew any one in the world so solemn as you—except Jane. I wonder you didn't fall in love with Jane. Why didn't you?"

"Because you were in the world, my Dora."

"But before you knew me?"

"Ah, yes—before I knew you? Well, it did not enter my mind. Do not let us talk of Jane, but of yourself. I am going to walk back to the farm with you now."

"No, don't do that. I shall go three times as fast by myself."

"Why is speed so necessary?"

"Well, it is. Look at my frock!—it is bleaching white. What with a whitey-blue dress and a brownly-white face, I shall be an object to-morrow. Say 'good-bye' here."

"I am going with you," said the man; and the girl was reduced to meekness, as a woman usually is when a man is masterful.

Then, gradually, the steps retreated; the rustling grew fainter and fainter in the distance; the voices became indistinct. Jane—who had been sitting on a low mound of grass beneath the hedge, looking steadily out before her across the lane towards the cornfield whence the voices came—now rose up, and began to move slowly and wearily away.

She had come to listen, and she had listened and heard. She knew now how Mark spoke to Dora, when they two were alone together. She had heard his voice soften, grow tender and caressing, tremble with deep feeling. She had caught the passion

in his tone, and it had thrilled her—as the touch of his hand or his sudden glance had sometimes done. She need never any more doubt the reality of Mark's love. She had doubted it. It had seemed impossible that he could really care—care with his soul—for this child, this silly Dora, with her affected little spoilt-child graces and her self-engrossed, shallow little mind. But the truth had been beaten in upon her brain at last.

Mark loved Dora. And Jane had been loving Mark all her life—or what seemed like all her life, for her memory never went back to things that happened before he came. The sixteen years that stretched back beyond that time were a blank. She had been a cold, impassive child, indifferent to everyone and everything; neither happy nor miserable, with, apparently, both moral and immoral inability.

Her actions had been immaculate always, but it had been a negative faultlessness, implying no positive virtue. She had had no love for her home people, her busy, fussy little mother, her honest farmer father, and Dora, her sister; but she had rendered obedience where obedience was due, and Dora she had borne with and been good to in a loveless, dutiful way. She had gone to boarding-school, and had come home again; and had neither grieved nor rejoiced, either at the going or returning. She had learnt what she had been told to learn. But she had made no friends, and she had returned home unregretting and unregretted. She had settled down to the routine of the home life, performing the duties of sewing, and butter-making, and cooking, and dusting, that fell to her lot, and performing them exactly and methodically. In all things she had been blameless—blameless, but soulless. Then four years ago, when she was just sixteen, Mark had come to stay with them. He was the son of an old friend of her father's, and the farmer, one market day, had come upon the lad in the neighbouring market town, and been struck with his pale face and languid air, and brought him home with him. Mark was in his uncle's warehouse, "serving his time," trying to prove that he was of the stuff of which business men are made; but he was overworked, the long hours and the close atmosphere of the warehouse were telling upon his health.

He had his yearly holiday just then, and Farmer Cossentine brought him back in triumph to the farm. (He had taken to

the cheery, good-natured farmer, and to the fussy, motherly little wife who ruled the house, and to Jane, the pale, quiet-faced girl who went so silently about, looking with lack-lustre eyes at all but him, and smiling at him half reluctantly.

After that fortnight's visit it became the rule for Mark to spend every holiday at the farm. He would walk the six miles from the town; on Saturday, when the warehouse closed, and walk back in the early morning before the warehouse opened on Monday.

He was always welcome. His energy, and business-like promptitude, and intolerance of underhand dealing, were all virtues that recommended him to the farmer; and Mrs. Cossetine loved him for no better reason than that he was a lad, and she could fuss over him. And Jane loved him for no reason whatever. She loved him with that passionate intensity that a very narrow nature is capable of sometimes, and which must be its salvation, though it may be its sorrow.

Jane had been Mark's trusty comrade these four years. He had told her all his secret ambitions; discussed his prospects in life with her; accepted her advice. Dora had been at boarding-school all that while. When, now and then, she had come home for holidays, it had made little difference to Mark. A child with long hair and short petticoats is not very attractive to a sober young man of twenty, be she ever so pretty and ever so pert.

But prettiness and pertness are quite another thing when the hair goes up and the petticoats come down, and the school-girl miss sings love ditties instead of scales, and exacts service instead of giving it.

The first summer that Dora came home from school Mark found out that he loved her, and that life would be savourless unless she smiled upon him. She did smile upon him often; but she smiled on others too, impartially, and Mark wanted a monopoly of the smiles. All old interests sank into insignificance before this new aim, and the pleasant comradeship which had existed between him and Jane was as though it had never been.

For two months now Mark had been wooing Dora. Jane had known it. But what she had not realised, until to-day, was the depth and force of Mark's affection. Now she realised that, too.

Mark was going away. He had proved himself, long ago, to have true business ability, and now he was being sent by his uncle to manage the branch warehouse in

the North. Now it was August; he would be gone until Christmas, and then he could only come for a brief visit to them. To-day he had come to bid Dora good-bye, and to speak "a word" to Dora's father.

"Ay, ay," the farmer had said when the word had been spoken. "I thought that was the way the wind was blowin'. I told the missus so. Well, well, I've no objection to 'ee, lad. But the maid's young yet. Let her bide a bit longer, and steady down a bit. Then you can have her, and welcome. There's no lad I'd fancy more for a son."

"You will let it be an engagement, sir?" said Mark. "I shall go away happier if I feel that I'm leaving my promised wife behind me."

"Well, well," said the farmer, "there's something in that. Dora's skittish. Have it an engagement if you will. What does Dora say to it?"

Mark explained that Dora was willing—or, at least, not unwilling. Then he had taken leave of the parents of his betrothed, and had induced Dora herself to take one last walk through the fields with him, to see him part way on his homeward journey. But then he had insisted on walking back with her, so that, after all, he set out alone.

When he reached the gate that led from the fields into the lane, Jane was waiting there. Some impulse stronger than her will had brought her back to meet him. She had meant to let him go without any parting words; she had trudged, with sick, weary heart, for half-a-mile along the lane in the direction opposite to that which he would take; then her will had failed her, the feeling of heart-sickness and longing had overcome her, and she had hurried back again, with no thought but the fear that she might have missed him. He saw her as he approached, and smiled, beginning to speak before he came up to her.

"I was afraid I should not see you," he said. "No one could tell me what had become of you."

Jane put her little, thin, white hand in his. She smiled at him faintly, because she never could help smiling when his brown eyes looked smilingly into hers. And the smile, faint as it was, gave the severe, cold little face just what it usually lacked. It softened it and made it almost pretty.

"I have stayed longer than I meant," said Mark. "I must walk on now. Can you come a little way with me?"

"Yes," said Jane, "that is what I meant to do."

And she waited whilst he closed the gate and fastened it, and then they turned down the lane together.

They walked on in silence for a little way, then Mark spoke.

"I have seen your father this morning, Jane," he said awkwardly. "I have been having a little—a little talk with him."

Jane did not answer for a moment or two, then:

"About Dora, I suppose," she said quietly. "What did father say?"

"Well, he said just what I expected him to say. He doesn't want Dora to go away from home just yet. But he'll let her be engaged to me; and she has promised to write. She is going to write every week—I couldn't get her to promise for oftener. Jane, will you see that she remembers?"

A bitter little question arose to Jane's lips. "Is it necessary?" she had nearly asked, but she kept back the question. "I will remind her if she forgets," she said.

"Not that I think she will forget," said Mark, "only she is so childish and thoughtless; she would never realise how much it would matter to me. She does not understand my love for her—that is natural, you know. She is little more than a child. She will understand by-and-by."

Mark was not looking at Jane as he spoke. He was looking out straight before him along the road they were traversing; and Jane was looking on the ground. In her eyes, as in his, there was a far-away, unobserving look.

There was a little pause, then: "I wish I were not going away," said Mark anxiously.

"I wish you were not," replied Jane, speaking coldly because she felt so much.

"It is not that I doubt Dora," he continued. "Only, you see, she is so young, and thoughtless, and happy. She takes to every one. Sometimes I fear that when I am so far away, and away for so long, she will begin to forget me. Not that I think she will; do you?"

Jane did not answer. There was a dreamy look in her eyes, so, perhaps, her thoughts were absent. After a moment she said, quietly, looking down as she spoke, but her face flushing suddenly: "Suppose Dora did forget you, Mark?"

Mark looked round sharply. "You

think she will, then?" he said, in that passionless, passionate tone in which a mother may ask sometimes, "You think my child will die?"

Jane looked up at him with a sort of wondering pity in her grave eyes.

"How much you care for her!" she said wonderingly. Then, with a pang that was not for truth's sake, she sacrificed truth. "I do not think she will forget," she said.

"You will see that she does not?" said Mark. "Look after her, Jane—talk to her about me—make her write to me—see that she remembers. Will you?"

Tacitly they had slackened their steps. They were walking very slowly now. And Mark had taken Jane's hand and now held it. Her face was upturned towards his, and he was looking down intently into her grave grey eyes.

"Let me go away, leaving her in your care, Jane. I shall go away feeling secure then—knowing that you are looking after my interests whilst I am not here. I shall not find, when I come back in four months' time, that someone else has taken my place, and pleased her fancy better. I can trust you—you will take care of her, and keep her true for me?"

"Yes," said Jane gravely, "I will do my best;" and then another faint little smile hovered about her lips, called up by the grateful smile on his.

"Thank you," he said. Then, after a minute, he added cheerfully: "After all, it is not likely to be a very difficult task. Dora is much less fickle and careless than she likes to pretend to be."

Jane did not answer this. "I must go back now," she said, when they had gone a few yards further; and they both stood still, facing one another for a moment, each holding the other's hand.

"Good-bye," said Jane very slowly.

"Good-bye," said Mark in a friendly, more cheerful tone. "Good-bye. Give my love to Dora. Take care of her."

And Jane went slowly back through the dusty lane, between the high hedges, to the field where the corn and the poppies grew. The sky was cloudless still, insects were buzzing about the hedges, the hedges were gay with wild roses, and honeysuckle, and foxgloves. And as long as Jane lives she will bear the picture of that lane stamped on her memory.

THE STORY OF OUR LIVES FROM YEAR TO YEAR

ALL THE YEAR ROUND

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PRICE TWOPENCE.

A DATELESS BARGAIN.

By C. L. PIRKIS,

Author of "Lady Lovelace," etc.

CHAPTER XLI.

ALL these details respecting the inquest came to Joyce only in whispers. Even these whispers were unasked for. Four walls now held for her all the best that life had to give her, in so much as they shut in Mab with her fast-waning life, and made a sanctuary wherein she could eat out her own heart with her bitter-sweet memories of the past.

It had not needed the warning of the doctor from Newton Stewart to convince her of the fact that the herald-clouds of the great, dark, silent night were already gathering around Mab, and would soon hide her away altogether from the touch of loving hands, the sight of loving eyes.

Naturally, Joyce's anxieties and responsibilities were doubled by her distance from her friends and the centres of the best medical advice.

She did a good deal of telegraphing. She telegraphed to London, then to Edinburgh, for doctors. Then to Aunt Bell to break the news carefully to Uncle Archie. Lastly to her mother and the old General at their latest address, trusting that, sooner or later, the telegram would follow them and find them out.

After that nothing remained to do but to sit beside her darling, to hold her hand, and watch the white face; the face on which, slowly but surely, was settling the drawn, beaten look that comes to man or woman only once in a lifetime, and which seems to say plainly as voice could say it: "O Death, we have wrestled it out together, and the day is yours."

In due course the doctors arrived, consulted together, and also in due course departed, leaving behind them multitudinous directions for the care and comfort of their patient; but nothing that could be construed into the faintest suggestion of a hope of her ultimate recovery. The shock to her nerves, they said, had shaken her very slender hold of life, and it was now a question not of weeks or months, but of days and hours.

She seemed to be in no pain whatever. From the moment when they had brought her into the room, and laid her insensible on the bed, never a question had passed her lips, nor any sentence that could, however remotely, be referred to Captain Buckingham, or her life in the past.

Joyce wondered sometimes whether that terrible scene in the twilight had fixed itself in Mab's memory as an awful, immutable fact, or whether it had presented itself as one among the many visions, which had helped to efface the border-line between the natural and supernatural to her clouded senses.

All day long Mab lay silent and motionless. At rare intervals her eyes opened, with a wandering, bewildered look in them, as if they held a question that refused to be put into words.

Sometimes her lips would part, and Joyce would eagerly bend down her ear in the hope of catching some word, some sentence, that might tell what were the thoughts the tired brain held. Generally, however, they would close again after muttering some incoherent, unmeaning phrases.

"She will most likely pass away in her sleep," the doctors had said. But was this sleep? Joyce asked herself, as again and again Mab's words would come back to her: "I know now what 'I' means; how

that 'I' may be in the soul or 'I' may be in the body at will." She could almost fancy that Mab, her true, loving Mab, was standing beside her invisible; was wandering through space at will; was anywhere, in fact, rather than penned within that weak, weary form which lay so still on its pillows.

Painlessly and tranquilly the end came at last. Just as the dark night was beginning to creep out of the room through the leaves of the vine which shadowed the window, and the rush of bird-notes outside in the dimness told that day was at hand, Joyce, holding Mab's hand in hers, felt it suddenly grow colder.

Her eyelids trembled a moment, as though they would but could not raise themselves. Then the pale lips moved, and Joyce's straining ears could just detect the whisper:

"In the churchyard in the hollow, Joyce."

"Yes, darling," Joyce whispered back. Her own aching heart told her only too surely to what the words referred.

There fell five minutes of perfect, solemn stillness in the room. Outside there sounded the rustle of the light breeze, the soft wash of the sea on the pebbles.

Then Mab's faint voice whispered again:

"Always the sound of the sea, Joyce."

Joyce's heart was beating wildly. She bent her ear low, and lower. But, for all its straining, it could only catch a few muttered, incoherent sentences.

Once she distinguished the words, "Dieppe — getting dark." Then her thoughts flew back, with a sudden thrill of pain, to the last seaside trip they had taken with their father before his death. There came vividly before her one day, when she and Mab had gone wandering out alone on the shining wet sands at low tide in the twilight, and their father, coming out in search of them, had stood high on the beach calling them by name.

Evidently the same thought was in Mab's mind. A sweet smile for a moment parted her lips, although her eyes still remained closed.

"Coming, father," she said softly, yet distinctly, as though answering a sudden summons.

Then the smile slowly faded, the hand which Joyce held became gradually icy-cold. There came a sigh—and Joyce knew that her darling had gone to claim a better birthright for herself, than any her occult religion could have brought within reach of her hand.

CHAPTER XLII.

JOYCE felt herself frozen into silence and insensibility. Her hopes were dead in her heart now, so likewise her fears. Nothing else, in very truth, of agony, of despair, she felt the years could have in store for her. She shrank from none of the sad duties which, of necessity, devolved upon her in the absence of near friend or relative. She herself chose Mab's last resting-place in the little churchyard, and followed her as sole mourner to her grave.

She scarcely realised her own identity as she went about her mournful duties.

"Now you, Joyce Shenstone," she found herself saying one day, as she stood staring in the glass at the thin white face which she could scarcely recognise as her own reflection, "what do you mean to do with yourself for the next forty years? You'll not die yet, you know; you are made of cast iron or marble, not flesh and blood, certainly."

Mrs. Bullen and the General arrived the day after the funeral. Joyce's telegram, after numerous mischances, had overtaken them in the North of Italy, and, though they had hastened their return as much as possible, wings alone could have brought them in time to say good-bye to Mab.

The General was very silent, Mrs. Bullen as diffuse and hysteric as she could reasonably be expected to be.

Between her fainting fits and floods of tears, she told Joyce a strange story which had met them on their way to Tretwick.

It was to the effect that a certain Irishman, by name Donovan, in the act of stepping on board a Greenock trader just about to sail for the North, had been shot dead by some one standing on the quay. The murderer was supposed to be an agent of some secret political society, and had not yet been arrested.

There could be no doubt of the identity of the man Donovan with their old gardener's son.

Mrs. Bullen had plenty of tears to shed for Mab, but her tears had never been known to clog her conversational powers, even in the early days of her widowhood. Side by side her tears and her gossip flowed together.

"My darling daughter," she sobbed; "we were such companions! I never wanted for sympathy with Mab in the house. Oh, and by the way, Joyce, only think! I met Sylvia Buckingham on the platform at Newton Stewart station. She

was in deep black. She looks horribly sallow in black; years older than I do. Take away her blues and her greys, and her good looks are gone. She was just as kind and affectionate as ever; kissed me again and again, and asked after everybody. She told me all about her brother's awful death through a fall over the rocks here, just when he was so kindly coming to see you and our darling Mab. Poor George! I always liked him, although it was very naughty of him to bring all the funny people he did to my house. I should have liked to have introduced him to you, dear." Here Mrs. Bullen turned to her husband: "He was an old admirer of mine, and such a fine, handsome man."

The General raised his eyebrows, but said nothing.

Mrs. Bullen went on: "Sylvia is a most tender-hearted person. She spoke so kindly of poor Ned, and was going, she told me, straight to Greenock to save his poor father the long miserable journey. She said she should arrange all about his funeral, and take possession—for his parents, of course—of whatever property he might have about him. Oh dear, what a tragedy it all is! It seems death, death, everywhere."

Here a flood of tears prevented, for a time, further speech.

Joyce's heart echoed her mother's last sentence: "Death, death everywhere."

Here was a third door of possible hope shut in her face by Death's unmannerly hand.

CHAPTER XLIII.

THE gardener's cottage at Overbury was an altogether ideal place of abode. It seemed constructed of flowers and creepers only, for scarce a trace of brick or wood-work met the eye. Tea-roses framed the windows, and, trailing across the glass, turned commonplace squares into picturesque diamond panes. Honeysuckle defied the pruning-knife; and, after covering side walls and roof, did its best to render ugly chimney-pots ornamental as well as useful. Boxes on the ledges, filled with the glories of the garden, contributed their quota of colour and odour, while a luxuriant Virginian creeper, "fading here into yellow, kindling there into red," threw its wild drapery heedlessly, lavishly, in all directions.

So much for the exterior. Within all was in sharp, gloomy contrast to this blaze of beauty and colour. For the only son lay

in his coffin in the room which had once been his bed-room, and the old father and mother had wrung their hands, looked in each other's faces, and had sung their *Nunc Dimittis*, though to another tune to that in which Simeon had sung it in the days of old.

"If he had but kept clear of those secret societies, our brave, strong boy might have been by our side now," was the burthen of their lamentations; and then they would fall to weeping again.

Naturally, in their eyes, Ned figured as a martyr. Of his identity with the man for whose apprehension on suspicion of murder rewards had been offered, they knew nothing. Captain Buckingham's death had only touched them remotely. They knew nothing of him personally, only by repute, as the brother of a lady who had shown steady, persistent kindness to Kathleen during her short married life, and who now, in their time of sorrow, seemed anxious to extend a like benevolence to them.

They accepted her kindness humbly and gratefully. The old father said a prayer for her as he knelt beside his son's open grave in the little country churchyard; the old mother sobbed out her wonderment over such unexpected beneficence, with her head on Kathleen's shoulder.

"To think the lady should take such uncalled-for trouble for two old bodies like us that she has never set eyes on," she moaned between her bursts of grief.

Kathleen, who had come from Lough Lea to attend her brother's funeral, seemed to have no tears at command. She stood listening, like one in a dream almost, saying never a word.

The father had a word to say, though, when he came home from the solemn service, with a wisp of crape round his hat, and a face aged by a dozen years.

"I heard from Miss Buckingham this morning," he said; "she sent Ned's purse, to which, she says, she has added a small amount that perhaps you may like to spend in planting our boy's grave. She asks permission to retain his old silver watch in memory of him. What say you, mother?"

Kathleen gave a violent start, and a curious look flitted athwart her face. She had not forgotten the promise she had given Ned as to the destination of his watch, if ill-fortune overtook him.

"What say I?" cried the mother. "There is only one thing to say: let the lady keep

it and welcome. It's only the kindest of kind hearts could ask for such a thing; I love her for her love to our boy."

Later on in the day, when Kathleen contrived to get her father alone for five minutes, she had a question to put about the watch.

"Wasn't it one of two, father?" she asked; "didn't my grandfather give you and Uncle Patrick each a watch on the same day? Uncle Patrick gave Ned his, I know, when he bought a better one. What became of yours?"

The father went to a drawer, and produced the facsimile of Ned's watch.

"I put it away," he said, "on the day my old master made me the handsome present of a gold one, when I won the first-class medal for our grapes and pines." The old man looked sadly at the antiquated, tarnished thing. No doubt it brought a rush of memories of pleasant days gone by. "I wanted to have given it you, child, years ago, but your mother said 'twas not smart enough to go with your gay clothes, and laces, and ribbons, and you wouldn't value it."

Kathleen held out her hand for it.

"Give it me now, father. See, I've no laces, or ribbons, or smart clothes, and I should value it for your sake and Ned's."

The father could hardly believe his ears. "The voice wasn't Kathleen's, the look in her eyes wasn't Kathleen's," as he told his wife afterwards when recounting the incident; "but there—trouble had changed them all, no doubt," he concluded, "and possibly Kathleen found them as much changed as they found her."

The day afterwards another surprise met them, in the shape of an announcement from Kathleen that she was going into service again.

"I shall never go back to Lough Lea," she explained. "I detest the O'Sheas—man, woman, and child. I can't live here to be a burthen on you. I shall ask Miss Buckingham to take me as a travelling maid. She is always moving about from place to place."

The mother had not the heart to utter reproaches, which at one time would have come readily enough to her lips, respecting the girl's folly in marrying a man for whom she had no liking. So she sighed, and said nothing at the moment; but to her husband she spoke freely afterwards.

"I don't seem to know my own child; all her pretty ways and love of finery and smart things are gone," she said, looking

back regretfully to the faults and follies for which she had soundly rated Kathleen times without number. "Her marriage with Bryan is a miserable one; he treats her badly, not a doubt; he's always away from home, she says, now at one place, now at another. If she can't stay here with us I couldn't choose a better mistress for her than Miss Buckingham; but I expect after she has been about the world a bit, she'll come back to the old home, and settle down to cheer us up at the end of our days."

So spoke the mother's hopes—short-lived hopes, however. They died of the good-bye Kathleen gave her—a long, strong, silent one—when, after a letter from Miss Buckingham expressing her willingness to accept her services, she set off for Greenock.

Sylvia welcomed Kathleen with more cordiality than she had ever shown to Ned. Nothing could have suited her plans better at the moment than this companionship of the girl under guise of maid.

"She is a silly little prattler," she thought, picturing to herself the trifter of days gone by, not the girl whom the experiences of life had embittered and hardened. "Her vanity lays her at the mercy of everyone who cares to play upon it. She can only become dangerous by accident; under my eye no such accident can arise. If we want to make use of her as an unconscious instrument, she can be made to do good service."

So Kathleen received a hearty welcome to the Greenock hotel, where Sylvia had taken up her quarters. With great apparent candour Miss Buckingham told Kathleen all she knew of her own plans, implying that she expected her frankness to be repaid with a similar confidence.

"I may go to France," she said, "or it may be to Vienna, or perhaps back to New York. I can't tell in the least till I hear from my friends across the water. Tell me, do you think you will like long journeys and short rests for a time? And what has become of your husband, and when do you expect to see him again?"

To which Kathleen replied with a similar candour, that long journeys and short rests would suit her better than anything else just then; that she felt she needed change of air and scene after the terrible shock of her brother's death. As for Bryan, she had not the remotest notion where he was. Of late, his absences from home had been frequent and prolonged.

She feared, but of course she could not be sure, that he had joined some Fenian society. If so, she knew his home would see but little of him, and as she hated old Mrs. O'Shea and the dilapidated O'Shea farm, she didn't care if she never set eyes on the place again.

Sylvia looked long and steadily at the girl as she finished speaking.

Kathleen bore the gaze without flinching. Whatever suspicions might have arisen in Sylvia's mind, not a muscle of Kathleen's face gave substance to them.

On the day after her arrival at Greenock Kathleen fell into her maid's duties. Sylvia made the kindest of mistresses, putting Kathleen on a thoroughly friendly, confidential footing, and showing a sympathetic curiosity as to the girl's private affairs which might have proved embarrassing to many in her class of life.

Not so with Kathleen. She reciprocated sympathy with an apparently frank confidence, and opened her heart freely to her mistress while she fulfilled the duties of the dressing-room. Every question as to her husband and her married life she answered, with a candour scarcely to be expected in so newly-made a wife.

"The truth of it is, ma'am," she said, while her deft fingers busied themselves with Sylvia's crape gowns or bonnets, "Bryan got tired of me within a week of our wedding-day. It's my belief the O'Gorman girl has turned his head, and he'll be uncommonly glad to be quit of me."

For once, Sylvia's keen eye for character was baffled.

"The matter lies in a nutshell," she said to herself. "The girl is jealous of some attentions her husband has been showing a neighbour's daughter. A jealous woman is a dangerous woman while the fit lasts, and it is just as well that she should be here under my eye, so that danger may be nipped in the bud."

After Bryan and the "O'Gorman girl," they passed in review the members of the Shenstone family.

Kathleen shrugged her shoulders and drew her pretty mouth down at its corners significantly when she spoke of Mrs. Shenstone and Uncle Archie. Sylvia alluded to Joyce and Mab.

"One would scarcely believe they were sisters, they were so unlike," she said, feeling her way to Kathleen's likes or dislikes.

"Miss Mab was all goodness and kind-

ness, and all the world loved her," said the girl in reply; "but Miss Joyce was often hard on me—sometimes I hated her."

As to the deaths of their respective brothers, neither mistress nor maid was disposed to be so confidential.

"Ned knew he was playing with edged tools," once Kathleen said when the matter had been lightly touched upon. And Sylvia thought it wiser not to hunt the subject down.

While Kathleen's fingers and tongue were thus perpetually kept in occupation, her eyes also had never so much as a spare moment. Not a detail of Sylvia's daily life escaped them. Every square inch of every cupboard or wardrobe, as well as every corner of every trunk, was in due course laid bare to them.

Sylvia's morning visit to the post-office to fetch her letters was the time when Kathleen's most energetic explorations of hiding-places were carried on.

Within a week of her arrival at Greenock her work of investigation had answered its purpose, and had come to an end. Ned's old silver watch, discovered alongside of Buckingham's gold one in a small box within a trunk, lay in her hand, and the facsimile watch, given her by her father, had taken its place.

To secure two days' holiday from Miss Buckingham, under pretence of seeing her father and mother before she set off on her travels with her mistress, was a comparatively easy task. The watch, not a doubt, must now find its way to Joyce's hand. What results might follow from its so finding its way, Kathleen had not the remotest idea. Loyalty to her promise to her dead brother, had been the main-spring of her action in this matter, and had taught her treachery towards one to whom, judged by her inadequate moral code, she deemed that nothing but treachery was due. Underlying this thought, was the conjecture that Joyce might find a meaning in Ned's bequest which no one else could. It might be a necessary link in a chain of evidence, of which Joyce held fragmentary portions. Or, it might be the enigmatic answer to some question the young lady had once put to Ned. In any case, she had done her part, she said to herself, as she laid the dead brother's watch beneath her pillow at night, and closed her eyes to dream of the old bygone days when she and Ned played childish games of ball in the little cottage garden, or, later

on in life, walked side by side in the grey-green twilight meadows, building castles in the air, of which, alas, there remained not one stone upon another now.

DUCK DECOYS.

SOMETHING must be done in these bad times. "Make jam," said Mr. Gladstone once; but unfortunately this year there is such a glut of fruit that the figures from jam are as much on the wrong side as those from wheat. "Catch wild ducks," says Sir R. Payne Galloway; and if we could ensure such takes as the Frieslanders get—from one sea-decoy at the mouth of the Maas, owned by Mynheer van Hecken, the yearly take is seven thousand head, many of which are sent off alive; in the decoy on the Isle of Amrum, North Friesland, one thousand five hundred duck, chiefly pintail, were taken in one day—we should certainly make it pay.

It does not need a big bit of land. The Norfolk birdcatchers, accustomed to the "Broads," laughed at George Skelton of Friskney in Lincoln, who in 1807 made the first regular "decoy" in Norfolk, and was content with two acres. They left off laughing when they found that the takes in this "little puddle" averaged over fifty head per night. Many of the best decoys are smaller than Skelton's. You may make one on your "three acres," and still reserve grass enough for the cow. What you will want is seclusion. Ducks don't like railways; "puffing billy," the steam-threshing machine, is as hateful to them as it is to a high-mettled colt. Shooting disturbs them—the Dutch law forbids a gun to be fired within a thousand yards of a decoy. Then, too, your land must be wet, or the right kind of food will not be forthcoming; and your decoy must be embosomed in wood, though that is a secondary consideration, for willow and privet grow apace, and reed screens, which you will always have to use if you work the thing scientifically, will stand in the stead of other shelter till the trees have come on. You might think that, what with drainage, and manufactures, and the noise of trains, a great part of England was wholly unfit for decoy-work; but one of our best decoys is at Hale, only nine miles from Liverpool and seven from Prescott. Along the Lancashire coast there are any number of places like Hale; and even inland, in what we think of as a

continuous mass of mills and houses, there are bits of lonely undrained moorland admirably suited to the purpose.

In all England there are only thirty-eight decoys. In Essex alone, where now there are three, there used to be thirty. In Lincoln they have gone down from twenty-six to one. Suffolk, in fact, and Nottingham, are the only counties where the pursuit of decoying is at all comparable with its past. In the former, seven decoys are working where there were fourteen early in the century; in Notts there never were more than four, of which three are still kept up.

Scotland never had any decoys; in Ireland there are but three in use, against twenty-two known to have existed. Of these one is historic, that which existed at Parteen, two miles from Limerick. In Donnelly's Tour (1681), this is mentioned as "a great decoy belonging to James Fitzgerald, of the Middle Temple, Esquire." Sir R. Galloway thinks that that made in St. James's Park by the Dutchman, Sydrach Hilcus, for Charles the Second, in 1665, was one of the earliest English decoys; so that the art was not long in making its way to the Shannon. Ireland, however, ought to be the home of decoying. The marshes of the Fergus, between Ennis and Limerick; the shores of the Shannon estuary, those of the many shallow loughs, like Sheephaven on the north coast; are as full as they can be of birds; and there can be no reason why the Irish should not catch them as well as the English fen-men used to do, or the Dutch do still.

Farming is in a transition state, and it takes a long time to get us out of our old corn-growing, big-farming groove. By-and-by we shall come to think more of small industries—poultry, butter, and, not least, decoying. All you need do is to stipulate that your decoy shall count among the things for which you are to get compensation when your lease has run out; and then you can start for, say one hundred pounds; and the cost of keeping up, if you do the decoying yourself, is very trifling.

It is a large "if." Few farmers would like to take the trouble to set the decoy-dog to work, and to watch behind the screens while he runs in front of the first screen, behind the next, and so on, till the ducks (most inquisitive of birds) are fairly wild with excitement and swim after him up the decoy-pipe, especially if doggie has a fox's brush tied to his tail and a red rag about his middle.

Silly things these ducks! Yet it is not always that they are so silly. Sometimes they won't enter the pipe at all. The decoy-man may throw his handfuls of grain; the decoy-ducks may swim up and eat it, showing the way to their wild friends; the dog may play his pranks to perfection, but, if dilly is not in the mind, or if he has fed to repletion the night before, he will most provokingly refuse to come and be killed. Birds of this stubborn temper are called "stale," the secret usually being that they have seen your dog often enough to know that he is only a common-place dog, not a marvellous nonsuch, for the sake of investigating whom a duck might deem it well worth while to run into peril.

Once, when a decoy-owner had tried all his own dogs in vain, a lady was persuaded to start her pug at the pipe's mouth, and to signal to him from close by the tunnel net. Pug was very fat, with a red leather collar, a big black spot near it, and a peculiar twist in his tail; altogether, he was irresistible. The ducks tore up the pipe, and a grand catch was the result. Of course, the dog should never look back at the ducks, else they will think he means fight, and, their cowardice being greater even than their curiosity, they will at once turn tail. He must be perfectly silent, too; the least whimper would frighten them off, not for that time only, but for ever and aye.

Cats and ferrets are sometimes used, but they are less manageable than dogs. Sir R. Gallwey tells how he once borrowed an organ-grinder's monkey, after whom the ducks flew in swarms, but soon Jacko sprang to the top of a screen, grinned at his pursuers, and began cracking the nuts with which he had been paid beforehand. No wonder every bird fled, not only out of the pipe, but off the decoy. And, to crown all, Jacko tumbled into the water, and nearly died of cold and fright. Of course, when the ducks have been enticed some four yards up the pipe the decoy-man shows himself at its mouth. What are they to do? Death is behind them; anything is better than facing their grim enemy. True, they are in a covered ditch, but curving round as it does, it seems open at the far end. Anyhow, they will try; and so they scurry forward, and into the tunnel net, of which the man or his assistant quickly closes the valve, and then nothing remains but to despatch the victims one by one. The decoy-ducks swim down the moment they see

the man. They are not afraid of him; indeed, they expect another feed, and he takes care that their expectation is fulfilled. It ought to be said on their behalf, that they do not intentionally deceive their kinsmen. They simply swim up the pipe after the dainty fare which the man keeps scattering in front of them. You cannot blame them, and yet their conduct brings death to those whom it leads forward.

Decoying, then, is a fine art, and it is essentially a Dutch art. The name is Duck-koo, koo, being a cage; and our seventeenth-century writers speak of "the new device for catching ducks, known by the foreign name of a koo." Before that time we caught our ducks as the Romans and old Britons, and I do not know how many other nations, did their game, by driving. Of course, this would only do for young things that could hardly fly, and for older birds that were moulting, and were thereby unable to make good use of their wings. The great takes, therefore, in the olden time were in summer, whereas decoying is especially a winter work. Then to drive the ducks, was needed a whole flotilla of boats, and a crowd lining the banks of the lake, at the end of which was your netted pipe. And this meant a great deal of worry, perhaps a pitched battle, about dividing the spoil.

The decoy-man, on the contrary, worked alone, with at most a son or nephew as assistant. He kept his own secrets, which were handed down from father to son; threw a veil of mystery over his plans; and spread absurdly inaccurate reports as to his methods. "People who wanted to know" he dreaded and abhorred; perhaps they would be setting up a decoy for themselves, and then the chances were that fewer birds would visit his water. When he made a great take he said as little about it as possible, for fear of having his rent raised. You might as well expect a conjuror to explain his tricks as a decoy-man to tell his artifices. It was business and experience against the cunning and wildness of the birds; and why should he let another pick his brains and draw the benefit of his experience?

These men made money; but it was a trying life, and the belief that a drop of "something hot" is the best prophylactic against wet did them a deal of harm. Thus George Skelton, son of the Lincolnshire patriarch, killed himself with drink. One of his patrons found him in a one-roomed cottage, on the Norfolk coast, near

Sandringham, lying on a four-post bedstead, to which strings of wild-fowl stretched all round, served as curtains. They made money; though, when thirty-one thousand ducks were caught in one season at Wainfleet alone, no wonder the contract price a century ago was down to fivepence a piece. A sober man would save enough to buy a farm; this was done by the last man who worked the Leverington decoy, near Wisbech. The Morden decoy, near Poole Harbour (it is best when you can attract birds fresh from the sea), used to bring in three hundred pounds a year nett, which means at least seven thousand birds. Colonel Leathe's decoy, at Fritton, in Suffolk, used to clear the same sum; but the Lakenheath decoy, in the heart of the Fens, was perhaps the best in England. Seven hundred pounds has been made from it in one season; about fifty years ago a ton of ducks was sent up from it to town twice a week. As lately as 1878 an old keeper saw quite three thousand ducks sitting outside waiting for those inside to be taken out, the decoy being so full that you could not prick a pin in anywhere.

The railway from Brandon to Ely (which thereabouts runs on piles, over a bottomless fen), ruined this decoy. Its glories are gone—gone with the big copper butterfly and the swallow-tailed ditto, who used to abound round Whittlesea Mere. The birds do not come any more than the butterflies.

In the Isle of Axholme (where, by-the-way, there are many "peasant proprietors"), there ought to be still room for a good many decoys. In spite of Sir Cornelius Vermuyden—who spent two hundred thousand pounds in draining, and then (never getting fair play because he was a Dutchman) died in poverty near Thorne, in Axholme—the six thousand acres of Thorne-waste, studded with pools, attract not only ducks but wild geese, and even hoopers and silent swans as well. Here it might be more profitable to work a few decoys than to try to reclaim the land by warping, and to burn the peat into charcoal.

Decoying, then, in contradistinction to driving, came in from Holland along with, or soon after the "Bedford Level" draining, of which, in 1653, Vermuyden was the engineer. Before that time there could have been no decoys in the Fens, for the floods would have destroyed them, or, at least, made them inaccessible during winter. Driving was a summer sport. An old sixteenth century print shows a sea-gulf half covered with little boats, before which are

swimming for their lives some hundreds of ducks. At the head of the gulf are three netted tunnels, from which nets, supported on stakes, branch out some distance along the sides of the gulf. A crowd of men with sticks shout and gesticulate to keep the birds from coming ashore. There is no way of peace except up the gradually narrowing tunnels, at the end of which is death.

As I said, the prey at these drivings was either young birds or birds whom moulting hindered from using their wings. Willoughby tells of four hundred boats and a take of from three thousand to four thousand birds in one net.

In 1432 a mob broke into the duck-pools belonging to the Abbot of Croyland, and "drove" six hundred head; doubtless by beating the reeds and driving the birds into the water.

Driving, however, was a destructive game; and killing off the young birds so lessened the supply that, in 1534, an Act was passed prohibiting all driving between the end of May and the end of August. The law, however, like a good many more of Henry the Eighth's laws regulating life and manners, proved a dead letter. Habit was too strong, and the King's writ did not run "on all fours" in the outlying fen. It was repealed in Edward the Sixth's time; an attempt being made at the same time to protect the eggs; and "the poor people, that were wont to live by their skill in taking of the said fowl, whereby they were wont to sustain themselves with their poor households, to the great saving of other kind of victual, of which aid they are now destitute, to their extreme impoverishing," were allowed to go on driving as before. It was not law, but the scantier supply, owing to the drainage, which set the fenners on the method of enticing. They had begun something of the kind before the Dutch plan was brought in.

The oldest of our decoys (that at Houghton, Notts, for instance) have no long decoy-pipe with tunnel at the end and screens for the dog business and to conceal the watchful decoy-man. They consist simply of a high cage at one end of a pool, with a trap-door which can be closed by working a windlass in a "sight-house" at the other side of the water. To make a good job of it there should be two trap-doors, one at each end of the cage, for ducks always swim against the wind; and, for the same reasons, the more elaborate decoys have five, six, or as many as

eight pipes — one for every wind that blows.

The only existing Derbyshire decoy (at Hardwick) is of the cage kind. A channel between two thickly-wooded islands is netted over, and also parted off into two by a network, and furnished with a door at each end. But the takes in such decoys must always be small.

In France a good deal of decoying is done; the ducks thus caught in the little lake of St. Lambert in Picardy, and sold in Paris, bring some thirty thousand francs a year. The Dutch tunnel-traps are arranged to catch the birds alive without damaging their feathers—a large trade being done in fancy live birds. Some of the pipes lead to a box with valve opening inwards. Into this the birds rush, as they rush in anywhere to be out of sight of the dreadful decoy-man, who blocks their retreat. Of course Holland has unlimited feeding-grounds; and the law looks on decoying as a special trade, and protects it accordingly. There are in Holland nearly eighty decoys in active use, and all paying well.

Delightful old Quarles has no picture of a duck-decoy in his "Emblems," although he does sketch a hunting-net, into which the dogs of hell drive those whom "the world's sole sovereign-ranger" does not preserve from them. We may be pretty sure he had never seen a "decoy"; it would have matched so exactly with his "new-drawn net and its entangled prey, and him that closes it," that, had he known of it, he would surely have used it for his purpose. The earliest known picture (1665) of real decoy work depicts a murderous-looking Dutchman, with ringlets and butcher's apron, and a "hanger" at his side, wringing the necks of a netfull of struggling victims.

If you want to read more about decoys, you will find something in Davies's "Norfolk Broads," and a curious account in Dr. Stukeley's "Itinerarium Curiosum." Stukeley is quite correct, whereas the mistakes of writers like Loudon ("Encyclopædia of Agriculture") are as ludicrous as they are astonishing. Loudon's blunders are copied into Brande and Cox's "Dictionary of Science and Art, 1865"—one out of many instances of the "diffusion of misleading error" under the guise of useful knowledge. Writers like Loudon must have been hoaxed by some astute decoy-man, as fond of "greening" inquisitive featherless bipeds as of luring to their doom his feathered victims.

LUMBER-ROOMS.

THERE would be a sad gap in the annals of fiction, if the convenient garret were swept from its pages. Where else should we find the lost wills? Where else would be stowed away the worm-eaten old chest, which contains the important piece of paper, bearing in the unmistakable handwriting of the eccentric deceased, the notice which triumphantly confounds the wicked usurper, reinstates more gloriously than ever the virtuous hero or heroine, and confounds, to the delight of all beholders, the clamour of grasping, squabbling relations?

Where, too, would be found those wonderful garments of a dead-and-gone day, in which the heroines of some of our fiction so delight to array themselves? Straying upon some long unopened cupboard or chest by accident; arraying themselves in girlish merriment of heart in quaint flowered brocades, or short-waisted muslin frocks, and then tripping in frolicsome mood, out of the dusty old lumber-room, down the broad oaken staircase, always to meet, on the way, the hero whose heart is straightway taken captive for ever, by the delicious appearance of the present, decked out in the garb of the past.

Those lumber-rooms must bear a magnetic influence on the being of those heroes—their ransacking by girlish hands awaking some answering thrill in their own breasts, for how else could they always appear just at the critical moment, when the maiden, in rustling brocade, trips or flits down the oaken steps?

Where else, but to the out-of-the-way lumber-room, could be sent the heroines, who, lone and lorn, wish to weep out their sorrows unseen; or who, coy and mischievous, run away to hide themselves from their lovers; or who again, in indignant despair, seek it as a sure refuge from the objectionable choice of hard-hearted guardians when they come to pay a morning call? And what other place so suitable for the passionate outflows of genius, burning in the hearts of literary hero or heroine, which, despised by unappreciative relations, are tenderly deposited by their authors on a turned-up box in the peaceful security of some lumber-room, where they soothe their sensitive souls by writing a three-volume novel, or a poem, which lifts them, there and then, to the pinnacle of fame?

Who has not triumphed with them, when they emerge from the dust and cobwebs into the light and glory of Fortune's day? Who has not thrilled with satisfied approval when they have poured coals of fire on dense heads, by nobly laying the burden of the whole family's expenses upon the proceeds of that novel, or that poem?—the unsympathetic relatives having generally been ruined, while that noble work was forming among the cobwebs.

But, if lumber-rooms play an important part in fiction, how should we fare without them in real life, of which, indeed, the things of fiction are but the mirror? What would our houses be, if there were no corners, in which can be gathered up waste materials, the flotsam and jetsam of our daily life's wear and tear?

Any housekeeper can speak feelingly of the rubbish which accumulates insensibly, in spite of her effort to keep down matters to a strictly utilitarian level. There are things which cannot disappear after the complete and astonishing fashion of pins, of whom someone once suggested, that they must have transformed the world into one gigantic pin-cushion. Books, which gave us a pleasant half-hour; and no more, lie covered with the dust of our gratitude up there, in the lumber-rooms; for the fashion of thought which amused us, the ways of the characters which interested us, yesterday, have already given place, to-day, to new thoughts and different ways. With the straight-backed chairs, or bright-flowered chintzes of the past, they lie hidden away in our lumber-rooms and forgotten. To-day we are aesthetic, and sad, and sage-green-hued. To-morrow we may go back to the cheerful tones and comfortable shapes of our yesterday; but in the meantime forms and colours, in the shape of chairs and hangings and remnants generally, of our yesterday, must be hidden out of sight in our lumber-rooms.

There are few of us who do not find some little amusement occasionally, in looking through them. We most of us fancy that among the rubbish, there may just happen to be some treasure-trove. Probably most of us know, or have heard of, someone who has discovered a Teniers, or a Reynolds, or even a Raphael, lost for many years in such a pile of worthless rubbish. We have heard the animated discussions—the account of the enormous sums it was going to bring the happy finder; the magnanimous and patriotic in-

tentions of offering it first to the paternal Government; the decided proofs of its being perfectly genuine. Then suddenly we hear no more; and, as the lucky finder remains in exactly the same position of moderate means as before, and there is no notice in the papers that the British Government has made itself the fortunate possessor of such priceless treasure, we are tempted to think that the Raphael has retired once again to the dust and cobwebs of the store-house rubbish.

Where too, should we poor mortals be, if in the apparently so strangely contradictory terms of our existence, we had not lumber-rooms in our souls' lives?

Each one in his life, has a chamber in which he gathers up strange and varied things. It is kept under strict lock and key, for they are the flotsam and jetsam of our own souls' making, and no other soul could enter into that chamber and understand as we do. Tender fancies, strong convictions, troubled doubts, eager hopes, loves that make our lives glad, and hates that make them sick with bitterness. All hues, all shapes, all ages. The old maid hides away, in that lumber-room, the dead rose-leaves which were once fragrant, and crimson, and living. That grey-haired, weary-faced man, plodding at the treadmill of daily existence, does not show to other eyes the ambitions, the hopes, the plans, which he has put away, like children's wrecked toys, in the dusky corner of his lumber-room. Why should he? They were part of his youth, and youth has been left so far behind that it is scarcely worth while recalling its foolish dreams. Between them and him, as between the old maid and her roses, lies the dust of the grey monotonous years.

There are other things sadder yet than these. There are talents, wasted and wrecked for want of using. There are opportunities thrust away there out of sight, because we were too lazy to take them by the hand and lead them out into the light of our daily life. There are the pathetic things—like the tiny shoe the mother treasures up in some secret drawer, in memory of the coming and going of little feet, stilled to her listening ears for evermore. The hand-clasp of a dead friend, the tender kiss of first love, quaint, lovely fancies of our childhood, which teach us how to live in the lives of our children.

There are grim things, too, sometimes hidden there; skeletons, of which our friends and acquaintance, sitting and eating

at our board—nay, perhaps the very wife of our bosom—know nothing; skeletons, at whose ghastliness we are compelled to gaze at times. Follies of our youth—treacherous thrusts in the dark, whose scar we know lingers yet to-day in the heart of some fellow-creature—cowardly acts, when all ought to have been brave—base self-surrenders, miserable wantings in the balance. To-day we are prosperous and respected, but yesterday those things lived whose skeletons haunt our lumber-rooms still.

But there is compensation, too, in turning over that which we have hidden there. The dust of time gathers slowly but surely on our sorrows, and deadens the sound of our sobbing; and doubts and fears, which used to lurk like so many ugly shapes in its dim corners, are often found to be only rubbish, covered with cobwebs and harmless to hurt our lives, when we enter boldly into our lumber-rooms, and let the light of wisdom and experience gained in life's school, shine upon them. For there is no doubt that human nature troubles itself much over trifles, and often shrinks from a shadow, which, on closer inspection, betrays itself to be only empty clothes.

THE TRIAL AT JUDD'S FLAT.

A COMPLETE STORY.

CHAPTER I.

SOME ten years ago a rush, that attracted a considerable amount of attention, took place in the far north of Queensland, and resulted in a temporary mining camp which took to itself the name of "Judd's Flat."

Judd, as may be imagined, was the original prospector, who, finding out this spot of promise, had established himself temporarily there in conjunction with one human companion, four horses and one dog, a couple of rifles, pack and riding saddles, some cooking utensils and mining implements, a store of tobacco and matches, and a small cargo of supplies. He and his "mate" had tested the place with some apparent success, for, their supplies running short, they left the major part of their belongings at the scene of their labours, and returned to the nearest township laden with alluvial gold, for a further supply of the necessaries of life; in this case, flour, tea, sugar, and potted meats, termed technically "bully."

But both Mr. Judd and his partner laboured under the popular colonial failing of being somewhat addicted to whisky and rum, and, in consequence of this genial weakness, in a moment of temporary forgetfulness disclosed the position of their El Dorado, and indulged in vivid portrayals of its richness. It was this which led to further action being taken in the matter, and which resulted finally in the mining settlement of Judd's Flat.

The camp itself was situated in the extreme north-east of Queensland. It was a rough and even picturesque spot. Lofty mountains, scrub-covered for the most part, dense, and almost impenetrable, stretched away on all sides. Far away to the horizon, north, south, east, and west, were lifted up the dull-green heads of the hills in seemingly endless chains, the only change in the landscape being a break in the prevailing colour and a gleam of weather-stained grey and brown where the sterile rock, devoid of all vegetation, cropped up and exposed its naked ruggedness in grotesque and fantastic relief. It was a scene of almost savage magnificence; savage in its solitude, in its dead intensity, in its magnitude of detail, in its solemnity of brooding silence.

The long line of tents, gleaming white in the river flat below, the clash and clamour of labour, seemed almost a desecration to these majestic surroundings. All life, activity, and movement seemed out of place in this stronghold and temple of Nature. The everlasting hills, which had been but two short months awakened from their primeval sleep of solitude, were little-fitting adjuncts to the puny labours, the insect toil and strugglings of humanity, going on under their mighty shadows. And yet the desecrating hand of man had dared to encroach even on these silent witnesses of Nature's grandeur; for, winding up from the flat, in an easterly direction, could be perceived the faintly-marked trail that led to the nearest settlement—a mere bridle-track through the scrub, formed by the plodding feet of horses and mules, and intensified by a conspicuous line of blazed trees, growing fainter and fainter in the distance.

The track, winding down from the last scrub-covered hill, narrowed into a rocky gully as it reached the flat, and was almost brought to an abrupt termination by two immense blocks of rock that projected precipitously from the sides of the ravine, and seemed to meet. But a sudden din in

the track avoided the impediment, and, the overhanging rocks once passed, the camp came into view.

The camp itself was of the roughest and most primitive description. All the buildings were of canvas, some hundred and fifty to two hundred in number, erected without the slightest vestige of order or design, crowding round any spot where a neighbouring tree offered some slight shade, and scattered sparsely over the more open ground.

Every tenth or twelfth tent boasted a flaming announcement to the effect that the best spirits could be obtained within, and was furthermore embellished, for the most part, with a flaunting title, such as, "El Dorado Saloon;" "The Diggers' Own;" "Nugget Hotel;" and so on, according to the taste of the proprietor. In Judd's Flat parlance, these adjuncts to enjoyment, not to say inebriation, were known under the comprehensive name of "poison mills," and the particular decoctions they dispensed, under the humorous titles of "Queensland Lay-me-out;" "Sudden Death;" "'Arthquake;" and other trifling appellatives of a like nature.

Three or four tents, of more pretentious size than the ordinary, and with conspicuous signboards outside, bearing the legends "Store;" "Public Store;" "General Store," were the emporia that provided mining humanity, at Judd's Flat, with the necessaries of existence. Painted in the rudest characters, all over these homes of enterprise, were numerous announcements for the benefit of the unenlightened miners, such as, "Best price given for gold;" "Old Abe buys dust and nuggets at full weight. Scales inside;" "The True Blue Store has the best lot of goods in the Camp;" "Rally round Honest Bob, the Miner's Friend;" and so on.

Goods, stores, and necessaries of all kinds were a terrible price in the camp. In consequence of the mountainous country to be traversed from the nearest place where supplies could be obtained, communication by waggon, dray, or vehicle of any kind was impossible; all carriage having to be done by means of pack-horses and mules. This, combined with the long stages that had to be made without grass or water, consequent on the barrenness of the country, the natural obstacles of the road itself, and the difficulty of obtaining carriers and horseflesh sufficient, caused all stores to reign at famine prices at Judd's Flat. A further reason, likewise, was the hostility

of the blacks, that made it unsafe to travel except in companies of three or four; and the continual risk the carriers ran of having their animals speared, and perhaps losing their own lives.

But, despite all drawbacks, Judd's Flat went ahead and increased. Fresh bone and sinew arrived at the camp almost daily. Gold was plentiful, and of good quality. Assayed in Brisbane it realised four pounds two shillings and sixpence an ounce, the highest price reached in the colonies; though in the camp it fetched much less at the hands of the rapacious bar and store keepers.

CHAPTER II.

ONE evening, some three or four months after the camp was first formed, an unusual outburst of excitement disturbed the prevailing monotony of this delectable retreat. The day's work was finished, and Judd's Flat was given over to merry-making and enjoyment—chiefly musical and bibulous. But suddenly the drinking saloons poured forth masses of grimy miners; half-naked figures emerged ghost-like from surrounding tents; cat-like Chinamen flocked from hidden retreats; and in a few moments a noisy, surging crowd had collected in the half-light outside a large tent which bore in front the legend, "Nugget Hotel." That something unusual had occurred, could easily be seen, and something quite out of the ordinary level of Judd's Flat experience, as evidenced by the uproar and excitement. Oaths, noisy demands for information, and cat-calls, testified to the interest the miners derived from the unusual disturbance; but gradually the agitation settled down in a measure as particulars of the cause of the excitement passed from mouth to mouth, and in a short time there was but one word on men's lips as they gathered together in animated discussion, the word—murder.

By some horrible mischance of Fate, a woman, a fortnight previously, had found her way to Judd's Flat. The less said of her and her actions, perhaps the better. She was one of those unfortunates whose home is on the outskirts of civilisation, whose sum of existence is one unenviable record of vice and immorality. Judd's Flat had acknowledged her unexpected presence first in a spirit of derisive curiosity, then with the consciousness of unique possession, and a lenient disregard for frailty and wrong-doing. But now all that re-

mained to it of its sole representative of womanhood, was a bloody mass of disfigured humanity, stretched out in death on the floor of the drinking saloon.

The surging crowd, of which the van had been forced through the open doorway of the tent right into the compartment—room it could hardly be called—in which the body lay, thus brought face to face with the horrible cause of the excitement, disposed itself, after gratifying a first spirit of morbid curiosity, to stormy discussion and enquiry. But before it had time to centre its energies on the matter, a diversion was afforded by the appearance on the scene of the proprietor of the drinking-booth—a short, thick-set man, with a broken nose and a hare lip—who, bursting out hurriedly from the booth, addressed the crowd with great vehemence.

"I take you all to witness, boys," he cried, "that this thing's happened unbeknown to me. It was Hoppy Dave as did it. There's Alligator Joe and Greasy Stewart been inside all the time playing cut-throat euchre with a Chinese, and they'll tell yar the same. Look here, boys, I'm ready to swear it agen Hoppy Dave. He was with her all the evening; they got drunk together. I'll swear it agen him in any court in the country."

In anticipation of this resolve, he thereupon lost no time, but solemnly called upon heaven and earth, together with the several limbs and members of his body, in affirmation of the truth of the accusation. This tirade completed to his satisfaction, he turned to one of the miners standing near and said:

"Have they sent for the police magistrate, Soapy?"

The worthy so addressed nodded in reply, and said:

"He ought to be here by now. There's someone gone for him."

Perhaps one of the most noticeable features of Judd's Flat social life was the peculiar aptness of nickname that characterised each member of the community. Every fresh arrival at the camp, as soon as the taste and discrimination of the residents could unanimously decide on a fit and proper nickname, obtained one; and this thenceforth totally replaced his more lawful patronymic. A good deal of choice humour was evinced in the selection of some of these appellatives; in fact, this sort of nomenclature was quite brought down to a science by the ruling humorists of Judd's Flat.

In the case of the worthy who had responded to the question of the host of the "Nugget Hotel," the name "Soapy" had a certain significance. When the owner of it had first made his appearance in the camp, he had excited hilarity, and even suspicion, amongst the miners, by evincing an unusual and astounding predilection for the daily use of soap and water. This was a course of action so extraordinary, and so diametrically opposed to all the canons of custom and habit, that at the offset even derision was silenced for a time, and profound amazement, tempered with suspicion and distrust, alone greeted the unwonted proceedings. But no immediate disastrous results ensuing, Judd's Flat recovered itself, and, in a fit of retributive pleasantry, dubbed the innovator by the name of "Bar-of-Soap," which subsequently, being found too cumbersome for daily use, was changed to the more familiar "Soapy."

In evidence of the truth of the statement advanced by this worthy, a stir in the crowd and a general cry of "here comes the doctor," announced the approach of the local representative of the might and majesty of the law. As he pushed his way from the dark shadows outside into the flickering half-light that the one sickly lantern hanging outside the booth afforded, his appearance was remarkable and striking in the extreme. He was a man of herculean stature, topping the crowd by fully a head, massive and ponderous of build, a very type of physical strength and vigour. A long flowing beard hid the lower part of his face; but the piercing eye, the straight lines of the nose, indeed the whole expression of his tanned features, spoke of a character full of determination and energy. His dress was not very different from that of the members of the crowd around, except in the distinction of cleanliness. A pair of belted moleskin breeches enclosed his lower person, while a blue-striped Crimea shirt, thrown carelessly open in front, and disclosing the dark lines of a powerful neck and chest, completed his costume.

"What's the matter here? Can't anyone speak?" exclaimed this individual, pushing his way hastily through the crowd.

"It's Swearin' Sal been murdered, doctor," answered Soapy. "She's lying there inside."

"Murdered!"

"Ay; so they say."

"Come, clear out of the road, some of you," ejaculated the other. "Let me get to the woman. Where's Dan Gribblet?"

The proprietor of the drinking booth stepped forward at the summons.

"Here I am. Is that you, Dr. Hamilton?"

"Ay."

"Come on, then; she's lyin' inside. I want to take you to witness that the thing's happened unbeknown to me. You're the police magistrate. and I want to swear agen Hoppy Dave. It was him as did it. Come inside, doctor; come inside, boys; there ain't anything secret about it. I'm goin' to swear a information agen Hoppy Dave to the doctor;" and he emphasized his statement with the usual accompaniment of profanity.

"Shut up," growled the doctor roughly. "You have too much lip altogether. And you," he continued, addressing the crowd more roughly still, "you'd better keep outside, and not interfere. And shut up your row, too."

With that he disappeared inside the booth, accompanied by the proprietor, who still persevered in noisy protestations of his innocence of the affair and accusations against Hoppy Dave.

The crowd outside, silenced in a measure by the all-powerful doctor's words, waited impatiently for results. Evidently the first action of the police magistrate was to clear the room of intruders, for those who had forced their way inside came surging out and joined those outside. The crowd, thus augmented, proceeded to discuss the particulars of the murder, from conflicting points of view, with much argument and animadversion. Soon, however, Dr. Hamilton made his appearance from inside, and a general silence ensued.

"Does any one know anything of this affair?" he asked curtly.

"I do," responded a voice from the crowd.

"Who's I?"

"Alligator Joe," answered the voice, "and there's Greasy Stewart and Thimble-rig Billy, and Ah Kong. We was all there."

"All right," interrupted the doctor, "I shall want you to come with me. Does anyone know where Hoppy Dave is?"

"He's lying drunk in Corrigan's shanty," responded another voice, in tones of disgust. "He's all right there for to-night; he won't move till morning."

"Are you sure he's all right for to-night?"

"Ay; he won't move, not a inch, you can take my word for that," responded the same voice.

"Well, we'll leave him for to-night. Look here, boys, this is a case of murder. It's the first time anything of the kind has occurred here, and we've got to see it through. This woman's been murdered, and it seems that that scoundrel, Hoppy Dave, has done it. I'm going to have a trial to-morrow, and if it's brought home to him he'll get the rope for it. Any of you that knows anything about it had better turn up here at ten o'clock to-morrow, and we'll sheet it home to the scoundrel. Don't make any row about it, but keep your eyes on the cross-eyed brute, and see that he doesn't clear out of the camp. Now break up, boys, and clear out of this, and mind what I've said. We'll make the scoundrel swing for this. Joe, you get Greasy Stewart and the others and come to my tent;" and without more words Dr. Hamilton broke through the crowd and disappeared.

Public excitement was rife, more or less, all that evening. The popular incentives to enjoyment that generally were in vogue after nightfall were, on this occasion, almost entirely abandoned. The cheery strains of cracked fiddles, wheezy accordions, and unreliable concertinas, that usually resounded throughout the camp, were dumb during the whole of that evening. Judd's Flat found enough amusement in profane discussion of the crime; in speculation as to its probable result, and minutiae of its details. The numerous drinking-booths did a roaring trade, especially the two which contained the murderer and all that remained of the victim of the crime. Miners labouring under an overpowering sense of morbid curiosity alternated feverishly between the Nugget Hotel, where lay a motionless heap covered with a dirty blanket, and Corrigan's Booth, where, huddled up in a state of insensible intoxication, reposed a depraved lump of humanity which, when sober, answered to the name of Hoppy Dave.

CHAPTER III.

At ten o'clock the next morning, the drinking-booth that was to serve as a temporary Court-house was surrounded three deep with miners, eager to witness the unusual proceedings. The sole representative of the might and majesty of the law was Doctor Hamilton. In what manner and for what reasons this man had found his way to the abyss of Judd's Flat was not known. He

had come and had stayed—that was all that was known; and Judd's Flat, not labouring under impertinent or intrusive curiosity as to antecedents, had received him with open arms, and, in token of his attainments, his natural force of character, and terrible physical capabilities, had come to look upon him as the head and oracle of the camp. He practised his profession amongst the miners; low fever, ague, and rheumatism—to say nothing of delirium tremens, and a typical indisposition known as the "horrors" or "shakes"—being some of the many attractions that characterised the mining camp.

In one corner of the canvas building in which the majesty of the law was about to assert itself, the remains of the murdered woman had been deposited. The individual accused, only half recovered from his drunken orgie, had been placed in the centre of the room, and regarded the proceedings with a fatuous look of mingled unconcern and cunning on his brutish features. Filling every inch of the place, with a rear-guard stretching through the open doorway, was the crowd of on-lookers. It was altogether a curious and grotesque picture. The bare canvas walls of the compartment flapping heavily to and fro with every breath of wind; the dark and bearded mass of faces; the powerful frames with the bared muscles of arm and chest; the presiding genius of the scene, looking stern and formidable in mighty isolation; and the motionless form outlined so sharply in one corner—altogether formed a picture incongruous in detail and grotesque in its entirety.

The police magistrate was seated at one end, on a barrel placed on an empty packing-case, so as to command the situation. Rising to his feet he opened the proceedings by thundering the word "Silence!" Waiting for a moment until his command had the desired effect, he continued:

"You all know what we're here for, boys. A brutal murder has been committed, and we're going to bring it home to the murderer. But before I commence I want to swear in a couple of special constables to help me. Who'll volunteer?"

Perhaps it was the undoubted novelty of the idea in Judd's Flat experience, or perhaps it was a predominant feeling that a certain, though undefinable, amount of dignity surrounded any office connected with the law. or it may even have been

that the appeal came with a certain humorous application; but, at all events, two or three pressed forward in answer to the doctor's summons.

"There; that'll do," he ejaculated ungraciously. "Any two will do. Candiote, and you, Joe; you'll do. Come up here and I'll swear you in. What are you grinning at? Stop it, I say. You resemble a couple of monkeys quite enough without making the likeness any stronger. Come up here."

This sally, which was received with a general burst of laughter, had the desired effect, and the two volunteer upholders of the law approached with the gravity becoming the solemnity of the occasion.

Of these two worthies the one known as Candiote was a beetle-browed Greek of a most forbidding cast of features. The chief characteristic of the other candidate for statutory honours consisted of an undue development of mouth and jaw, which had gained for him the cognomen of "Alligator Joe." These two worthies having been solemnly sworn in, took their places, at the command of the police magistrate, one on each side of the accused, and the trial then commenced in grave earnest.

The presiding magistrate rose to his feet and proceeded to open the case as follows:

"Now, boys, you've all heard what's on the carpet. We've got to bring the murder of this"—he waved his hand callously towards the motionless form in the corner—"home to the man who did it. We haven't got the power to do more than commit the murderer for trial; but, by the powers, boys, we'll send him down to Port Douglas with enough evidence round his neck to hang him. We haven't got any time to waste fooling round, so let's get through the thing right off. Who's the first witness? Stewart, you know something about it. Step forward and let's hear what you have to say."

The individual who responded to this summons, was a lanky, lantern-jawed, ragged-bearded miner, so filthily dirty and disreputable in appearance, as to be, even amongst the unwashed of Judd's Flat, something quite unique and unapproachable. It was a standing boast of his, that he had not used soap and water, in the way of ablution, for over ten years. Indeed, being asked once by an admirer, if he never used water at all, and conscious in his own mind of only one application of the question, he is reported to have answered, without the slightest perception of there being any

latent satire in the words: "No; I never uses it. It spiles the whisky." This greatly endeared him to the choicer spirits of the camp, and had gained for him the humorous title of "Greasy Stewart."

In answer to the doctor's question, Mr. Stewart scratched his head thoughtfully with both hands before replying.

"Well, it's this way, boss," he said after a pause. "I don't like to go back on a mate. But as this is the lor, why, the lor comes first. Gimme lor, ses I, afore a mate, so long as the lor ain't agen me——"

"Shut up, you fool," roared the magistrate in a sudden access of fury. "Come to the point."

"You take a man up mighty sharp, doctor, you dew," answered Greasy Stewart in an aggrieved voice; "but you were allus rough on a man. Howsomer, this is what I know. There was me and Alligator Joe, and Thimblorig Billy, and Ah Kong, playin' cut-throat euchre in the next room beyond there. And a mighty rough game it was, boys," he continued, forgetting his grievance in the interest of recital. "There was Ah Kong sitting there all night with such luck as never was. Bowers and aces—he held 'em all night. You never saw anything like it. Plank down a ace, there was Ah Kong with a left bower. Shove down a left, and he'd bang the right bower on top of it. Hand out the right, and, by thunder! out'd come the joker and bust you up. Luck such as you never——"

"By thunder!" roared the magistrate, interrupting once again the flow of Greasy Stewart's oratory, "if you don't say what you've got to say, and shut up that fooling, I'll stiffen you."

"Well, as I was sayin'," the greasy one continued hastily, not further noticing this sally, "there was us four playing cut-throat euchre, when, suddenly we hears a scream coming from inside here, and Swearin' Sal's voice yellin' 'murder!' We slammed the cards down on the table, and rushed in here. I was fust, and I see Sal lyin' all of a heap on the floor, and Hopy Dave makin' tracks through the door."

"Will you swear it was the prisoner you saw escaping from the room?"

"Swar? Yes; I'll swar. I seed him plain enough."

"And there was nobody else in the room?"

"No; because we could hear their voices all through the evening. They was drinkin' together alone all the time."

"Was the woman dead when you first saw her?"

"Dead as a coffin, doctor."

"And that's all you know about it, is it?"

"That's all, boss."

"Very well, then, you can stand down. Where's Thimblorig Billy? I want him next."

The gentleman answering to this title immediately stepped forward, and began to deliver his evidence with astonishing fluency. In point it was similar to that delivered by his predecessor, and corroborated that gentleman's statements. The speaker laboured under a predominant sense of politeness, and constantly referred to the murderer and the murdered as this 'ere gent and that 'ere lady. "We all rushed in together," he said, "and I saw this 'ere gent"—courteously indicating the murderer—"vamooseing through the door, and that 'ere lady"—waving his hand with ghastly politeness in the direction of the motionless heap in the corner—"lyin' in a pool of blood on the floor."

There was something horribly incongruous in this grotesque politeness, though the exponent of it evidently prided himself upon its happy use.

The third witness, Alligator Joe, gave similar evidence, and even volunteered further information for the benefit of any one sympathizing with unmerited misfortune in connection with the game of cut-throat euchre, in which he and his companions had been engaged.

"We planked down the cards," he said, in tones of natural indignation, "and rushed out, never thinking that things wouldn't be right, but, when we came back, dang me if the stakes wasn't clean gone—every penny we had anted up for the game. I expect it was that cuss of a Chinaman, Ah Kong. He'd rob a graveyard if you didn't watch him."

The Celestial referred to, who was in the room, contented himself with smiling pleasantly in return, and observing gently:

"Not me, Billy; alle same, 'nother mana. Welly good me. No steales money."

Another witness being called by the magistrate, some symptoms of impatience were exhibited by the audience, whose interest in the proceedings was rapidly on the wane. Judd's Flat was not in the habit of paying strict attention very long to anything outside its usual business, except, perhaps, card-playing and drinking,

and it now felt itself entitled to some reward in consideration of its self-denial and strict observance of all legal etiquette.

A big-boned, athletic miner embodied the sentiments of his companions in a neat little speech. Pushing himself forward, he addressed himself to the company generally.

"This is all A 1," he said, "and all reg'lar and lorful, but it's mighty dry, boys. I propose that this Court adjourns for five minutes, and gets a drink all round."

A chorus of cheers and laughter greeted this interruption, with cries of, "Bully for you, Sam;" "That's the ticket," and other encouraging remarks; but Dr. Hamilton, jumping up from his seat and glaring savagely round, roared in a stentorian voice:

"I'll break the ribs of any man who interrupts this trial; and I'll charge him half-a-dozen ounces of gold for setting them again. Do you hear what I say? Keep quiet."

But even this threat failed to put a stop to the disturbance, and the magistrate, seeing his authority weakening, with the tact that was one of the principal features of his influence in the camp, exclaimed:

"The Court can't adjourn; but there will be five minutes' interval allowed for refreshment. Where's Dan Gribblet? Here. Whisky for the crowd."

A second storm of cheers and shouts ensued, and good humour was generally restored. A further subject of discussion arose, when the whisky was produced, as to the propriety of allowing the accused to participate in its consumption; but on his whining assurance that "he was as dry as a tinker's dog," compassion over-ruled all feelings of a sterner nature, and a quart pot (termed technically a jack-shay) containing about a quarter of a pint of the raw spirit was handed to him. With a diabolical wink the recipient tossed off the welcome allowance, and the proceedings started afresh.

The next witness examined was a Chinaman, who had been in the drinking-booth at the time of the murder. Being called forward, the almond-eyed Celestial showed a characteristic amount of agitation.

"What's the good of asking him?" growled a miner in the crowd. "He don't know enough English to bail up a cow with."

"Silence!" roared the magistrate. "Now, Li Ling, you were in the place at the time, weren't you?"

"Ma no saave!" exclaimed the China-

man excitedly. "Me good evening, chow-chow."

"What does he mean?" ejaculated Doctor Hamilton impatiently.

A half-suppressed burst of laughter greeted the Chinaman's frantic efforts to make himself understood, and there was quite an uproar, until the smiling Ah Kong stepped blandly forward and volunteered an explanation.

"He mean he don't savy anything about it. He was eating his tea."

A fresh burst of laughter greeted this explanation, and the intelligent witness was thrust aside and another called. A second little interval, however, ensued at this juncture by the prisoner's asking audibly for the loan of a pipe. After the whiaky had been passed round pipes had been generally produced and lighted, for in Judd's Flat experience drinking could never be satisfactorily indulged in without the accompanying gratification of smoking. Seeing his fellow miners enjoying themselves in this fashion, Hoppy Dave entreated strenuously for the like privilege, and a lighted pipe being passed to him, he sucked at it with every appearance of interest and gratification.

The next witness called was a miner who had been drinking at the bar, and had seen nothing but the retreating form of the accused murderer. However, he protested that he could identify the prisoner, and so was heard.

"All I saw," he said modestly, "was him a-making tracks like a kangaroo, but I knowed him by the patch on his breeches. There never was any villainy going on in this camp but that patch was mixed up in it. So long as there was any fighting, or lying, or stealing, or cheating, going on, that patch'd be fandandering round in it, sure as eggs is eggs. I'd swear it agen it in any court."

But this witness's evidence being received with incredulity, he very justly retired in umbrage, and refused to lend further countenance to the proceedings.

"Call this lor!" he exclaimed, in irreverently expressed disgust, "I call it rot."

Subsequently to this the proceedings came to a somewhat sudden termination. Three other witnesses were called, and their evidence going to prove unanimously the guilt of the accused, the presiding magistrate exercised his prerogative by hurrying over the remainder of the trial. There could not be the slightest doubt as to the prisoner's guilt—it was thoroughly established in the minds of all; and this stage of

the proceedings arrived at, Dr. Hamilton rose suddenly to his feet and exclaimed :

"That will do, boys. The prisoner is found guilty of murder, and committed to take his trial at Port Douglas. He'll get the rope for it there, there is no doubt about that. I should like to do a bit of Judge Lynch on my own account, but we must mind what we are doing, and act according to the law, or we shall have the mounted troopers down on us. What we have got to do is to send him down to Port Douglas to take his trial before the Supreme Court. I shall send him at the first opportunity; in the meantime, I hold the special constables responsible for his safety. The witnesses will be bound over to attend the Supreme Court sittings at the Port. It's got to be done, boys; so you may make up your minds to it. The Court won't sit for two months, so you'll have plenty of time to make preparations. I look to the two special constables to guard the prisoner until I can find means of sending him down. I want you, Stewart, at my tent. Break up now. The Court is dissolved."

"What, boss!" exclaimed Candiotte with an oath, "do you mean to say Alligator and me has got to look after Hoppy Dave, till you send him down to the Port?"

"That's what I mean," responded Dr. Hamilton roughly. "The public good requires it. I'll get rid of him in a day or two, and you'll be paid for your time."

"Blow that!" exclaimed the Greek violently, aghast at the responsibilities attending his voluntary office. "D'ye think a man's goin' to waste his time lookin' arter—and then have to go to the Port—"

"That's what it comes to, and you've got to do it. The Court's dissolved."

"Well, I'm darned!" interjected Alligator Joe, in disgust, "if this ain't a sell."

"But I say, boss," cried Candiotte.

"I tell you the Court's dissolved. That's enough."

CHAPTER IV.

THE subsequent proceedings of the committed murderer and his impromptu guard, not being immediately under the judicial eye, were enveloped in a certain amount of mystery. After the trial, it being unanimously considered throughout Judd's Flat too late to resume the interrupted labours of pick and shovel, the rest of the day was given over to uproarious dissipation and merry-making. That Hoppy Dave and his guard of honour

—Candiotte and Alligator Joe—participated in the festivities, was an easily ascertainable fact, for the three worthies, directly the proceedings of the Court were finished, became the objects of numerous delicate attentions at the hands of emotional miners. A certain halo of romance surrounded prisoner and guards, which could not fail to excite a morbid kind of admiration in the minds of the indiscriminating idlers.

Not—it must in justice to Judd's Flat morality be stated—that Hoppy Dave was received with any great favour himself; indeed, he was generally shunned for some time; and some latitudinarians, eager for fresh developments, gave loud expression to their conviction that lynching would be a fit and proper ending to the imposing ceremonial at the extempore Court-house. But, as he was perforce a necessary adjunct to the company of Candiotte and Alligator Joe—and was, moreover, not backward in asserting himself—Hoppy Dave received a fair share of the attention paid to those worthies.

Morally speaking, he himself seemed brutishly unconscious of the horror of the crime and his position. Shame was so dead within him that he could mingle, seemingly without a thought, in the dissipation going on around. He was not in any way confined—that would have been impossible in the camp, where canvas served in the place of stone, brick, and wood—but he was kept under some kind of supervision by his two attendants. However, there seemed to be a perfect understanding between the three. The bond was not so indissoluble as to be in the least galling.

Towards the close of the afternoon Judd's Flat was in a perfect state of uproar. A great fight was taking place on the outskirts of the camp, and scores of half-drunken miners were hurrying to witness the exhilarating spectacle. Alas for the lapse of judicial dignity! One of the combatants was none other than Candiotte, the volunteer abettor of law and justice. The Greek was in a state of frantic intoxication. He and his opponent were surrounded by a ring of grinning miners, and behind him stood Hoppy Dave, in the character of second and backer.

"I'm Candiotte, the budiful Greek," yelled that worthy, his long, coal-black hair and beard streaming wildly about him. "When I was in Parry they called me the budiful Greek; I'm glorious as Apollo, and fight and tear like a wild cat. I'm

Candiotte, with the teeth of the lion and the grip of the vulture. I'm the blood-thirsty Greek!" and an appalling volley of oaths finished the tirade.

The fight was short and decisive. The Greek was too drunk to last long, and a few tremendous blows from his opponent stretched him on the ground.

"That's me!" yelled the victorious pugilist, in a burst of drunken triumph. "When Greek meets Greek then comes the tug of war; but when Greek meets Jock, the wild Hielandmon, he's up a wattle."

Subsequently some little excitement arose again, in consequence of the proceedings of the prisoner and his guards. A temporary relapse of the mutual understanding existing between the three must have arisen from some cause or another, for, some time afterwards, the prisoner was seen wildly pursuing one of the special constables—Alligator Joe—with an immense stone in his hand, whilst the object of his pursuit was seen flying in advance in a paroxysm of drunken fright. But evidently, later on, Hoppy Dave forgot his resolve to "do for" his escort, for the three were seen in the El Dorado saloon, getting uproariously drunk in mutual good fellowship.

Next day further development ensued, and ended all immediate connection between the murderer and Judd's Flat. It was through the good offices of a carrier returning to Port Douglas for a load of supplies, that the camp was relieved of the burdensome presence of Hoppy Dave.

Early on the morning following the trial, the police magistrate interviewed the carrier in question, and proposed to him that he should take charge of the prisoner and convey him to Port Douglas. But some little difficulty ensued as to the particulars and remuneration for the job.

"It's this way," said the cautious carrier, "I've got twenty pack-horses to keep, and I can't work 'em without getting well paid for it. I gets a hundred pound a ton for goods coming up from the Port, and they're what you may call dead loading. You puts them on a pack, and there they is. But this 'ere carting of live stock 'taint so much in my line. You can't sling him across a pack-saddle and strap him down. You've got to feed him, to say nothin' of his contamernating a pusson, or perhaps murdering him."

"There would be no fear of that," returned the police magistrate. "I shall send

him down in charge of one of the special constables. All you would have to do would be to give them horses and food during the journey, and keep them company. If you like to take the job, say so."

"Well, I'm allus willing to turn a honest penny. There'd be two of them. Well, they'd weigh both of 'em together, I expect, about three hundred and fifty to four hundred pounds. Give me a bit of a show, and say a quarter of a ton. Well, I gits a hundred pound a ton for dead loadin'—say twice as much for live loadin', including tucker. I'll do ye the job for fifty pounds."

It is, however, hardly a matter of interest to descend to minute details; it is sufficient to state that some arrangement of the kind was finally agreed upon. But an almost insuperable objection to the arrangement cropped up in the fact of both the special constables flatly refusing to leave the camp. The magistrate stormed, threatened, and appealed in vain; both Candiotte and Alligator Joe evidently thought they had sacrificed themselves sufficiently on the altar of judicial folly—a state of feeling shared in unanimously by the whole of Judd's Flat. But at the last moment a saving arrangement was entered into, by which the carrier and his mate were sworn in by the magistrate as specials, Candiotte and Alligator Joe being formally deposed. The new guards of honour received minute instructions from the magistrate as to the disposal of their prisoner on arrival at Port Douglas, together with warnings as regarded his safe convoy. And so, everything being finally arranged, the cavalcade set out on its two hundred miles' journey amidst the plaudits and vociferations of assembled Judd's Flat; and the camp was relieved of the sinister presence of Hoppy Dave, the murderer.

The sequel to this episode is well known throughout the north of Queensland, although the details are not, to any extent, a matter of history. Of what passed on that long journey little or nothing is known; but it is not difficult to form a probable notion of what took place. The long day's ride through the solitude of the bush; the enforced companionship and immediate familiarity of camp-life; the song, the jest, the anecdote, and the unconventional free-and-easy association round the camp-fire; the mutual stand against the difficulties, and even dangers, of the road; all must of necessity have engendered a feeling of good-fellowship between the three. Hoppy Dave, too, had an

acknowledged reputation for power of oily persuasion, and what was known technically throughout Judd's Flat as "gammon;" and the three interested parties alone knew what powers of eloquence and inducement, what promises and affirmations, he may have indulged in. However, be the particulars of the journey down to the coast settlement as mysterious as they may, the sequel was none the less patent.

It is known that the three travellers from Judd's Flat arrived safely at Port Douglas; that no word was said by the carriers in charge of any crime having been committed; that no hint was dropped of their companion being a prisoner; but that they all three adjourned, immediately on arrival, to the first public-house, and got rapidly drunk together in the most perfect harmony. This being so usual an occurrence in the township, attracted little or no attention; nor did the subsequent fact of the orgie being carried on for several days; nor did the disappearance soon after of one of the participants in the debauch excite the slightest attention at the time, for the town was totally in ignorance of the crime that had been perpetrated at Judd's Flat.

But such, in actual fact, were the proceedings of the trio from the mining camp. Hoppy Dave—in a spirit of incomprehensible compassion, or disregard on the part of his guard—was set at liberty, and, disappearing from the colony for ever, was absorbed in the whirlpool of southern civilisation.

And so ended the farce of the trial at Judd's Flat.

JANE COSSENTINE.

A STORY IN THREE CHAPTERS.

CHAPTER II.

It was the middle of October. The days were clear, and bright, and cold, with sunshine out of doors and fires within. Jane sat by the fire one evening, just at the hour when twilight merges into dusk, and knitted away monotonously and mechanically, and looked into the fire, and mused.

Presently the door of the sitting-room opened, and Dora looked in.

The sight of the firelight or of Jane sitting there, seemed to please her, and she came in, taking off her hat and cloak as she came, and depositing them tenderly on one of the stiff-backed chairs that stood ranged against the parlour walls. Then

she came and knelt down near Jane, within the ruddy glow of the firelight, and held up, in a teasing way, a little bunch of hips and haws and crimson leaves to Jane's view.

In the firelight, Jane's face had as bright and warm a colouring as Dora's, and the sisters looked wonderfully alike—much more alike than they would have seemed in a less deceptive light. They had the same delicately-cut, regular features, and hair of the same colour, gathered back in much the same fashion into a loose knot behind; but Dora's had a more decided ripple in it than Jane's, and little stray tendrils had a way of escaping about her brow. They were of the same slender build, and they were dressed alike, in dark-blue, closely-fitting dresses, with white collars and cuffs. The difference between the girls lay in manner and expression. There the points of contrast were marked enough.

Jane glanced up for a moment, without pausing in her knitting.

"Very pretty," she said, unenthusiastically.

"You are very pretty," said Dora, addressing her gay little nosegay. "And you have a story connected with you, which makes you prettier still. You and I and somebody know it—nobody else."

She looked up furtively at Jane, to see if she was curious. But Jane showed no interest; her whole attention was concentrated on the stocking she was knitting.

"They grew ever so much higher than I could reach," said Dora. "Don't you wonder how I got them?"

"Some one picked them for you, I suppose," said Jane, in a matter-of-fact tone.

"Yes, somebody. Such a wonderful somebody! A much grander somebody than anyone who ever got hips and haws for you, Jane."

Jane made no reply, and Dora was silent for some minutes. She seated herself on the rug, and began to select some of the brightest of the leaves, and to fasten them in the brooch at her throat. When she had done that to her satisfaction, she began to talk again.

"Mr. Cholmondeley has come home again, Jane; have you heard?" she said.

"Yes, I did hear it. I wonder myself that his father consents to receive him."

"What nonsense! Why should he not receive him? What did he do, Jane? I never heard exactly the truth of it. I was at school, and mother wouldn't tell me."

"It is not a story that one cares to talk about," said Jane, severely. "He behaved

very badly—abominably! He was forced to go away, people were so indignant with him. Poor little Sophy Williams was sent away too, and her father and mother have never held up their heads since. They were so respected, too; such good, virtuous, honest people, and so proud of that girl."

"Yes," said Dora, "I thought that was it; but why did people throw all the blame on him? Sophy was always a nasty little thing, vain and affected, and above her station. So were all the Williamses. I dare say they encouraged him. Perhaps they thought he was going to marry her;—he, a gentleman, and she, a small farmer's daughter! and not even pretty; quite a common girl too, with such a country way of talking."

Jane did not argue the point; it was not worth while. Dora was wrong; but other people's opinions, whether true or false, were of no consequence to Jane; and, if her sister chose, for contradiction's sake, to defend the Squire's son, she might do it.

"I wonder," said Dora presently, "why wickedness makes people so interesting and gentlemanly. It does. Now look at Mark: he is the very best, most estimable, respectable person in the world, but he's very stupid. He is heavy and dull, just like a beetle; and I don't think Mark looks much like a gentleman either. He wears his hair so long and thick, and I don't like the coats and hats he gets."

Jane had stopped knitting during this rambling speech, and was looking sharply and steadily at her sister.

"Dora," she said, "who gave you those berries you were making such a mystery about?"

"Oh, you don't feel any interest in that," said Dora, with a little pout.

Jane put her hand on Dora's shoulder and spoke in a tone of stern authority—a tone that Dora was a little afraid of, and always obeyed.

"Who gave them to you?" she repeated.

"Suppose I tell you? You'll be cross."

"That depends."

"And I can't help it if you are. I didn't ask him to pick them for me. And I couldn't throw them in his face when he had done it."

"Do speak clearly, Dora. Don't beat about the bush."

"Why should I beat about the bush? I was close to Burleigh Wood, and I was just reaching up for these, and Mr. Cholmondeley came up behind me and said ever so politely: 'Allow me to get them for

you;' and then he picked them and gave them to me, and he made a very pretty compliment too, which I shan't tell you. I don't see why people say things about him. He is very nice, as far as I can see; and he is handsomer than anyone I know. I like a moustache that tapers off fine at the tips and then turns up. And he thought me pretty, too, I know. I knew it by the way he looked at me. He walked all the way through the wood with me. You needn't glare like that. I didn't ask him to come—but I couldn't tell him I didn't want him."

"You could have done something," said Jane severely. "You should have shown him you did not want him."

"You would have, I dare say. You enjoy being unpleasant to people; I don't."

"Never mind what I enjoy," said Jane; "but listen to me. It is as much as your reputation is worth, to be seen speaking and walking with Mr. Cholmondeley. He knew that, if you did not, and he had no business to force his company upon you. Now you know, too. He is a gentleman, and in quite a different position from us—"

"I don't see that the position is so very different. Father is not a common farmer."

"The position is different," asserted Jane. "Even if nothing were known against Mr. Cholmondeley, you could not be seen speaking to him out of doors without people talking about you. As it is, you must not let him speak to you. He would never have dared to speak to a girl of his own class unless he had known her already—can't you see that, Dora?"

"Those girls are so ugly—most of them," said Dora, self-complacently. "I don't suppose he would care so much about getting them hips and haws, and things."

Jane ignored this vain little speech.

"Promise me," she said, "that if he attempts to stop you again, you will have nothing to say to him; you will not let him speak to you. Promise me, Dora, or I shall tell father."

"Very well; I promise," said Dora, hastily; and at that moment the conversation was interrupted by the entrance of their mother, so Dora made good her escape.

Jane had spoken more seriously than she had felt, as one does sometimes in endeavouring to impress children and those whose intellect one deems inferior. She did not think it probable that Mr. Cholmondeley would attempt to pursue his acquaintance with Dora; and if he did so, Dora would surely have sufficient com-

mon sense to repel any such attempt; but she had deemed it well to frighten her, and so to stimulate the prudence and common sense for which she gave her credit. Then she thought no more about the matter.

A fortnight passed before she had again any cause for anxiety. Going suddenly into her sister's room, one night, she surprised Dora standing close to the table, with the candle drawn very near her, and her left hand held out to the light. The light fell on a ring she wore, and the ring sparkled and shone as Mark's turquoise and pearl ornament could never have done. Jane was not always very observant, however; and she might have noticed nothing, had not Dora started guiltily and made a quick suspicious movement to hide her hand, placing the other over it.

"You have a new ring," said Jane. "Is that another present from Mark?"

"No. It's nothing—quite a common old thing."

"It was glittering almost like a diamond. Where did you get it?" said Jane.

"Oh, I bought it ever so long ago—at school. It's glass—crystal—what do you call it? It didn't cost much. What do you want? A hair-pin? Oh, yes, I can give you one—have another—take two or three, Jane. Isn't it cold! To-morrow's Sunday. How does your dress fit now you've altered it? Don't keep the door open, it makes the candle flare. Good night."

Jane was dismissed. She went away with a vague feeling of uneasiness weighing upon her; and she went to bed and dreamed that Dora was married to their old drawing master at school, and wore a wedding-ring with a diamond in it; and that Mark came back to find Dora; and his face had great lines of sorrow on it, and he looked at her, Jane, with a look of such hopeless misery and reproach, that she could not bear it, and turned away sobbing from him. She awoke crying bitterly, for Mark and her own helplessness to help him.

That little incident served to make Jane more alert, more ready to worry and suspect. A day or two later, one hopelessly wet afternoon, Dora came downstairs equipped for walking, and explained briefly to Jane, who was at the foot of the stairs, that she was going out for a little while.

"But it's raining, Dora," Jane expostulated. "Why do you want to go out in such weather as this?"

"Well, I do," said Dora. "I must go out. I have a headache. I always went

out every day at school. I like it." And Dora was gone before Jane could say another word.

Jane did not know what she suspected or why she was anxious; but a vague feeling of uneasiness was weighing upon her spirits, and when an hour had passed and Dora had not returned, she determined to go and meet her. She dressed quickly and went out, but her walk was fruitless; she did not meet Dora, and, at last, telling herself that Dora must have returned before this, she bent her steps homewards again.

A neighbour's wife was leaving the house as she came into the yard, and the woman, whom she knew well, darted a keen, unfriendly glance at her, and gave a short little nod and hurried on without speaking.

Jane scarcely noticed the unfriendliness; she had caught sight, at that moment, of Dora sitting sewing before the window of an upstairs room, and was only conscious of a feeling of relief.

As she entered the passage, her mother called out shrilly to her from the parlour. Jane took off her wet cloak, and hung it up and went in.

"Why, wherever have you been to, Jane?" said Mrs. Cossentine, in a tone of fussy expostulation. "What in the world made you go out in such weather as this!—bringing muck into the house, and getting your death of cold. And here's Susan been here with a cock an' bull story about you or Dora—one or the other of you—walking about with the young Squire, Mr. Cholmondeley, up to Hall. I told her she could mind her own girls, and I'd mind mine. She said she'd seen you with her own eyes. Fools see a fine sight more than anyone else in the world."

"What did she mean?" said Jane, sharply. "Was it me she had seen? I don't understand."

"You or Dora. She couldn't even tell which of you. She'll mind her own business for the future, I hope."

"But where?" said Jane, ignoring the latter part of this remark.

"How do I know where? I couldn't make head or tail of her story—and didn't want to. Down Burleigh Wood way, so she said. A fine day to go walking in Burleigh Wood, said I. She caught sight of the young Squire, and a girl 'long with him with a blue cloak. She only saw the back of the girl. Then she must spread this gossip, and gossip's seener spread than contradicted. You haven't been down near Burleigh, have you?"

"No," said Jane, "I went the other way."

"And where's Dora?"

"Dora is not out," said Jane, shortly; "she is upstairs sewing."

She went out of the sitting-room, closing the door after her, and leaving her mother grumbling, and went slowly upstairs to the room where she had seen Dora at work. The story she had just heard was full of meaning for her; its meaning had flashed upon her as soon as her mother had begun to speak; it seemed almost as though it were a confirmation of some suspicion which had been in her mind before.

She went upstairs very slowly, thinking of what she should say, of what arguments would tell most with Dora, thinking with great bitterness of soul, and with a sort of stern resentment against her sister. She had no love for Dora: she felt no pity for her. There was no tenderness on her face, only inexorable severity, when she entered the room where Dora sat, and stood, accusingly, before her.

"Dora," she said, speaking very quietly, with forced calmness, "you have been meeting Mr. Cholmondeley this afternoon. Do not deny it. I know. Put down your sewing and listen to me, and try, for once, to tell me the truth. You have met him to-day; how often before have you met him?"

Dora's face grew almost as pale as Jane's. She let her sewing fall, and looked up with frightened eyes at her sister.

"Does father know?" she said breathlessly.

"Never mind who knows," said Jane. "Answer my question, Dora. How often have you met him before this afternoon?"

Dora did not answer. She leant her head against the wall and began to cry. Jane waited for a minute. Then, as the tears still flowed on, she lost patience.

"Crying will not mend matters," she said. "How often have you walked in Burleigh Wood with Mr. Cholmondeley?"

"I don't know," sobbed Dora.

"Often?"

"No; not often."

"Did you go there on purpose to meet him?"

Dora wept profusely.

"I don't see any harm in speaking to him," she sobbed, with a sort of forced resentment.

Jane ignored this, and repeated her question: "Did you go there purposely to meet him, Dora?" she said slowly and sternly.

"Yes, I did. There wasn't any harm in that."

"He asked you to meet him?"

"Yes."

"What did he talk to you about?"

"About all kinds of things. I'm not going to tell you what."

"He made love to you, I suppose?"

No answer.

"Dora?"

"Yes—he was nice to me, if you call that making love."

"And he gave you the ring which you hid from me?"

Dora was silent, and Jane interpreted the silence as acquiescence.

"What else has he given you?" she continued.

Dora dried her eyes, and looked up at Jane, trying to speak in an aggrieved tone. "I don't see that I am forced to tell you everything," she said. "It can't matter to you."

"No," said Jane pitilessly, "it does not matter in the least to me; but it matters very greatly to you; and it matters to Mark. I am not doing this for your sake or for my sake, but for his. He loves you, Dora. Do you think it will be pleasant for him to find scandal busy with the name of the girl he loves? Have you no thought for him at all?"

"Mark would never know. How should he know? There is no harm in being pleasant to a person when you see him. Besides, I don't like Ernest—Mr. Cholmondeley, I mean—better than Mark. I did like him better at first, but I don't now. He frightens me; and he makes me come out when I don't want to."

"Makes you?"

"Yes. He does make me, though he only asks me to."

There was a pause, then Jane went back to her old question. "What else has he given you, Dora?"

"He gave me a chain one day and a brooch, a very little one."

"Where are they? Get them."

"Why?"

"Get them, Dora. I am going to send them back to him."

Dora began to weep again more bitterly than ever.

"Jane, you mustn't; he will be angry; you don't know him! He would only make me take them all back again."

"His anger will make little difference," said Jane. "You need not go out alone again, and then he can never dare to speak to you."

"But I must go. I have promised. I said I would meet him to-morrow."

"You can break the promise, then."

"I can't, Jane. It is easy for you to talk—you don't know him. He will come here or write. He threatened to one day. He would do anything; he is not afraid of anyone. I must go to-morrow. I will take the things with me, if you like. I will give them back to him. I'll say that you have made me. I'll tell him that you have found it all out, and that I can't come again. But I must go this once."

"Dora," said Jane, leaning forward towards her sister, and speaking very slowly and decidedly, "you cannot go. You were seen to-day, and you must not run the risk of being seen again. Luckily Susan was not sure which of us it was; but she knew it was one of us. I told mother that you were indoors. If people gossip, they can gossip about me. I am not engaged to Mark, so it does not matter. You cannot meet him again. I will send back the things and write to him and explain—"

"Write!" cried Dora, more worldly-wise than Jane in some things. "And if he showed the letter, everyone would know."

"Then I will take the things," said Jane. "I will go and meet him to-morrow, instead of you. I will tell him that you have met him without our knowledge, because you were too young and foolish to know better. And I will appeal to his good feeling not to persecute you again. Now get the things for me."

Dora did as she was bid. Jane made the presents her sister had received into a little parcel, and put it by, ready for the morrow. Dora made no further protest. Her spirits, as Jane noticed bitterly, were gayer that evening than they had been for a long while. Dora was like a child: if the tears flowed one hour, the smiles were all the brighter the next. She had grown to fear Mr. Cholmondeley too, and was more relieved than Jane knew at the prospect of his dismissal.

It was late in the afternoon when Jane set out, next day, on her unwelcome errand. She reached the wood before the time that Dora had named, and she had to wait. The trysting-place was just at the outskirts of the wood, at a stile which led from the wood into a meadow. Mr. Cholmondeley would not come through the meadow, Dora had said, but through the wood itself. Jane stood by the stile and waited.

Presently footsteps, coming along the meadow-path, fell upon her ear, and she turned round hastily to see who the comer

might be. A man and a woman were coming through the meadow, and the woman was the neighbour, Susan Baker, who had passed this way yesterday when Dora had been in the wood. The meadow-path ran along by the hedge, and the hedge was in a straight line with the stile. Susan and her companion had nearly reached the stile; but they were looking on the ground and had not seen Jane yet. She drew back a little, and was just about to retreat.

At that moment, Mr. Cholmondeley coming through the wood, espied the slim little figure, in the long blue cloak, waiting just before him, and took Jane for Dora, as it was easy in the dim light for anyone to do. He came quickly forward, and had his arm round Jane's waist before she knew that he was near.

"I have kept you waiting, pretty one," he said, and he bent and kissed her before she could draw herself away.

At that moment the two villagers, coming through the meadow, reached the stile. They had seen the meeting and heard the words. They also saw Jane start aside, and Mr. Cholmondeley look foolish and start aside likewise, murmuring some incoherent apology. But such confusion was not surprising; to the good country folks who witnessed it the confusion was as damnatory as the tender words and caress that preceded it. Susan got over the stile, looking hard at Jane the while; the man followed her, gazing steadily at the branches overhead, doing his best, in a clumsy way, to appear unconscious of Jane's presence.

They went on their way through the wood, and Jane stood looking after them until they were out of sight. In those few moments she suffered the bitterest martyrdom that a woman can ever suffer. She realised the position—she realised her disgrace, and accepted it. Mr. Cholmondeley was powerless to hurt Mark now; she had saved Dora's good name—saved it in the most effectual way—she had bought it with her own. That, and all the shame and bitterness which must follow, flashed in a few brief moments through her mind. Moments of intense misery are moments of insight too; nothing that happened through the next few months came as a surprise to Jane—she had realised the worst that the future could hold.

She watched the neighbours out of sight. Then she turned to Mr. Cholmondeley, and explained her errand.

"THE STORY OF OUR LIVES FROM YEAR TO YEAR"

ALL THE YEAR ROUND

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A DATELESS BARGAIN.

By C. L. PIRKIS,

Author of "Lady Lovelace," etc.

CHAPTER XLIV.

"UNCLE ARCHIE, rough weather is setting in, I can't leave Mab alone in the wind and the hail," wrote Joyce, in response to the old gentleman's entreaties that she would at once come to him in Gloucestershire and make her home there, or anywhere else in the world she might choose so long as it was in company with him and Aunt Bell.

Uncle Archie rubbed his eyes over the letter. Was this Joyce, the common-place, the clear-headed writing? Had the mantle of the dead sister fallen upon her? he asked himself, for though the bold, free hand was Joyce's, the diction was none of hers; it was Mab's.

Off and on the old gentleman fussed a good deal that day—declared that his shoes were beginning to pinch him again; a statement which set Aunt Bell's heart fluttering with the possibility that the truce between him and his old enemy the gout had come to an end.

She grew anxious and sympathetic immediately. "It was that curry last night, I felt sure they had put cocoanut into it—I mean," she corrected herself, "it's all that new bootmaker—I said from the first those soles were too narrow."

Uncle Archie cut both sympathy and anxiety short, by ordering instant preparations for a journey to the North.

"If it's on crutches I must go to her, since she will not come to me," he said with decision.

And Aunt Bell, knowing better than to attempt a remonstrance, set about the

Just for once in her forty-five years, Mrs. Bullen sang a song to the same tune as Uncle Archie.

"You can't live on here for ever, Joyce," she reasoned, "and if you want to be quiet and not see a soul, you need only go down into Gloucestershire and stay with Uncle Archie. You can be just as wretched there as here, the only difference will be that you'll have a few more comforts about you."

And then she launched into a tirade against the little Scotch watering-place, putting foremost among its shortcomings its lack of a dressmaker, who could lay down the law for them concerning the depth and the cut of their crape garments.

At this point the old General made his infrequent voice heard.

"Let her alone—for the present, at any rate," he said pityingly; "don't you see she's broken-hearted?"

So they let Joyce alone. With this result; every "darkest hour before the dawn,"—the last hour of Mab's life—found her crossing the heath which sloped down to the churchyard in the hollow; every day that broke, no matter whether sullen and stormy, or golden and gay, saw her hiding the ugliness of the newly-made mound, which marked Mab's resting-place, with masses of dewy purple heather, late marguerites, and flowering grasses; all the autumn glories left to the heath.

Then, this sweet, solemn task ended, she would sit in the long grass with one arm thrown across the mound, watching the night clouds beaten off the tops of the hills, the night blue—which held their base for some ten minutes after—little by little torn into shreds and swept into nothingness by the red flames of the dawn that came surging up from behind the cliffs—itsself like some great glorified sea.

and silent, watching out the changes of the fleeting panorama of the morning, she had no eye for its glories, no ear for that wild rush and crescendo of bird notes which filled the dark air, and rose high and higher with the day. Only one thought held her heart, as she sat there in the mossy hollow, with unseeing eyes staring into the dimness or the radiance of the dawn. "My darling, would to Heaven you and I could change places. It would be better for us both!"

For at last, after many sore struggles for its life, hope was dead within her. It had gone into the grave with Mab. If Joyce had tried she could not have made her heart thrill to any one of the chance clues, improbable or possible surmises, which the day's post might bring. With limp fingers she would hold her packet of letters, with limp fingers she would lay them by. Despair held the day now. Frank's fate, whatever it was, must be a thing of the past, which perhaps only the light of Eternity would reveal to her. So the close of each day saw her laying her head on her pillow with the moan which sorrow and suffering have made common to humanity, "How long, how long?" and each day's beginning found her sitting among the graves with the bitter cry on her lips, "Would to Heaven you and I could change places, my darling."

CHAPTER XLV.

SOMETIMES Joyce would lose count of time as she sat thus beside Mab's grave, and the sun would be high in the heavens before she would arouse herself to think of going back to the house. Mab's grave was in the loneliest part of the lonely churchyard. No village life ever strayed through that churchyard's mossy paths. It was an island of silence in what was not a very stirring sea at its best. Its grey stone wall was completely hidden from view by some stunted yews and an undergrowth of wild rose bushes. Through a break in this tangled screen, Joyce could catch a glimpse of the wide heath. The sea and the beach lay out of sight a couple of hundred feet or so below.

Once, as she sat thus—her face turned towards the cliffs, her arm thrown across the heather-heaped mound, her hat beside her in the long grass—she saw, yet without seeing, a small, dark figure on the edge of the cliffs, making a silhouette against the blue sky. Anon it vanished. She was too much absorbed in her own thoughts to

notice by which path it had disappeared; or how, leaving the cliffs' edge abruptly, it had followed the narrow, sloping path which led straight to the churchyard.

Ten minutes after a shadow fell upon the grass at her feet, and a voice sounded in her ear, saying "Miss Joyce! Miss Joyce!"

She looked up to see Kathleen O'Shea—in deep black like herself—standing a yard or so on the other side of Mab's grave.

The voice was respectful, grave to solemnity. Joyce, however, was not inclined to give it a welcome. When Kathleen might have been of service to her she had held aloof. There was nothing at the present moment to render her presence anything but an intrusion.

"Yes, I am here," she answered coldly, not rising, but merely turning her head towards the girl; "do you wish to speak to me? Have you come over from Lough Lea to see me?"

For an instant the two pale faces looked at each other.

"I have not come straight from Lough Lea, Miss Joyce," answered Kathleen; "I have been to Overbury to attend Ned's funeral. From Overbury I went to Greenock two or three days ago—" here Joyce looked up at her inquiringly. Kathleen went on: "I came over to Tretwick by coach from Newton Stewart the first thing this morning. They told me at your house where I should find you."

"Poor Ned! Poor Ned!" said Joyce; and there came a softer note in her voice as she said it, wondering much over the mystery which lay behind the young Irishman's fate, and whether, in this life, it would ever be given to her to know it.

"I had a commission entrusted to me by Ned," Kathleen went on, "and I have come to you to-day to fulfil it—it was to give you this, Miss Joyce." Here she drew out of the pocket of her travelling cloak the old-fashioned silver watch.

Joyce, however, did not offer to take it.

Kathleen looked wistfully at her for a moment, but there came no gleam of intelligence into Joyce's eye. Evidently Ned's meaning in his last legacy was a blank to her.

"I had some trouble to get it, Miss Joyce," she began falteringly. Then she broke off abruptly, and as though moved by a sudden impulse, laid the watch beside Joyce among the heaped-up flowers on the grave.

"He must have meant it for Mab," said Joyce sadly, thinking how fitly it lay there

amid the heather, the dead Irishman's tribute of devotion to his dead benefactress. "Poor Ned! If only he had come to me that night instead of lying in wait—" she broke off hastily. It occurred to her that most probably Kathleen knew nothing of Ned's hurried visit to Tretwick, and the ugly suspicions which connected him with Buckingham's death.

But Kathleen flashed into a sudden fire for which Joyce was unprepared.

"Miss Joyce," she cried, "Ned did well to lie in wait for that bad, black-hearted man, and speak his mind to him. He did better when he fought him, as they say he did, and thrust him backward over the cliff. He would have done better still if he had tossed his body out into the rough sea while he was about it, instead of letting it be brought in here for Christian burial."

Joyce looked up astonished. She put her astonishment into questions.

"Why did you—why did Ned ever have anything to do with the man, then, if you thought thus of him? Why did you not stay quietly with us in England, instead of rushing off in that foolish fashion to marry a man who—"

Once more she broke off hastily. She had no right, she felt, to utter to this young wife the suspicions which filled her own mind as to Bryan O'Shea's complicity in Fenian conspiracies with Captain Buckingham.

A curious expression passed over Kathleen's face. She suddenly came round the grave and stood beside Joyce, laying her hand on her arm.

"Miss Joyce," she whispered scarcely above her breath, "do you want to know why I married Bryan O'Shea? Shall I tell you the whole truth, now, from beginning to end?"

Then without waiting for Joyce's reply, she went on hurriedly in the same low tone: "It was because my heart was breaking—yes, breaking for news of Mr. Ledyard—that I did it. I said to myself one of those four men know what has become of him—Ned, Captain Buckingham, Bryan, or Maurice O'Shea. Ned I had tried to move, and could not. Captain Buckingham, I knew, was cruel and hard as death itself. Maurice was such a liar that I could not believe him on his oath. But Bryan—even if he would not tell me what I wanted to know for the asking—I knew I could get secrets out of if I married him and gave him plenty of whisky. There was nothing

else in life for me to do. I meant always to marry him on your wedding-day."

A great rush of jealous pride swept over Joyce.

"You—you tell me this," she cried, drawing back a step and shaking Kathleen's touch from her arm.

But the next moment love had trampled her jealousy under foot. She caught Kathleen's hands in hers, almost crushing them in her vehemence.

"Oh, Kathleen!" she cried passionately, her words coming all but incoherently, "you loved him; I felt it—I knew it. For the love of Heaven tell me what you have found out! Don't keep me waiting, while you spin out excuses for what you did. Out of mercy tell me all you know—in one word, if it be possible."

Kathleen's head drooped.

"Alas, Miss Joyce!" she said brokenly, "not in one word nor yet in one hundred, can I tell you what your heart is aching to know. I've learnt nothing—no, not one single syllable about Mr. Ledyard; though I've found out some other things I want you to know, and I've come here to-day on purpose to tell them to you."

Joyce let go the girl's hands, and sank once more on the ground beside Mab's grave, bowing her head and hiding her face.

Kathleen knelt on the grass beside her.

"Miss Joyce," she said, in a voice that seemed to grow suddenly stern and harsh, "there are other broken hearts in the world beside yours. Think of my old father and mother! How they worshipped Ned, and how his miserable hunted life and dog's death must haunt them to their dying day! And think of me!" Here there came a ring of passion, or it might have been of self-scorn, into the hard voice, "tied for life to a man whom I hate, and whose hand I know is red with my brother's blood!"

Joyce drew her hands quickly from her face.

"Is that true? Did Bryan O'Shea shoot Ned?" she asked in a tone of horror.

"Ay, Miss Joyce, it's true enough. And what's more, I knew beforehand he'd have it to do, and power I had none to stop him."

"Oh, Kathleen, Kathleen! what do you mean? You knew—yet had no power to prevent! Why, I would have moved heaven and earth to save a brother's life."

"Would you, Miss Joyce? Not if you knew what I know, and had seen what I've

seen since I've been Bryan O'Shea's wife. I might have prevented Bryan shooting Ned, perhaps; but only one way, by taking Bryan's revolver and shooting him through the heart. Then I should have been handed over to the police to be dealt with. But, all the same, Ned would have been shot, and the man who shot him would not have been handed over to the police."

For a moment Joyce's face flushed with indignation.

"It is monstrous—justice ought to be done. It is my duty, your duty, to denounce this man as a murderer," she cried vehemently.

"If we did, Miss Joyce, there's not a soul could be brought to prove our words, and a good score at least who would swear he was a hundred miles away when the deed was done. But all the same, he'll suffer for it." Here there came a sudden gleam in the girl's eyes. "He's too sure a shot not to have work of this sort given him again to do, and one day he'll get his death by it. But not yet—no, and I don't want it to be yet."

"You want to try and forgive him first?" questioned Joyce, a little doubtfully.

Kathleen laughed a bitter laugh.

"I try to forgive him! There's little enough of forgiveness he'll get out of me, Miss Joyce. No; he shall suffer, and just exactly as he made me suffer. The 'Red Right-hand of the League,' as they call it, has 'removed' my brother; the Red Right-hand of the League shall 'remove' his."

"Kathleen!"

Once more the two pale faces looked at each other. But the face of one was that of a strong soul compelled to the weakness of an inert submission; the face of the other, that of a weak soul impelled to the transient strength of a purpose of revenge.

"Ah! and he loves that brother, Miss Joyce, just as I loved mine. Weak, tipsy, and stupid though Maurice O'Shea is, Bryan loves him, and——" she broke off abruptly. For another moment there fell a pause. When Kathleen resumed it was in a more even tone. "I want to tell you this morning, Miss Joyce, all about this League. When you've heard it, you can make up your mind who you'll tell it to."

Joyce's heart began to beat wildly. After all, the girl had something to tell! True, it might be something to lead them down a blind alley straight to a blank wall again; or, possibly, might take them by a circuitous road to a hidden grave; but, in any case, it must be told, and must be listened to.

"Tell me everything you know, from beginning to end—everything," she implored.

But Kathleen had a condition to impose.

"Before I tell you one word, Miss Joyce, you must give me your solemn, sacred promise, that my name shall not be mentioned to the police as an informer—no, nor to living soul!" she said with decision.

Joyce drew a long breath. A promise might prove an embarrassment. Yet she dared not throw difficulties in the way of the girl's confidences.

"Tell me how you got this knowledge; how you found out what you have to tell," she asked by way of gaining time for herself.

"How I found out? Didn't I marry Bryan O'Shea on purpose to find out?" Kathleen answered excitedly. "He was fool enough to think I married him because I loved him, but he found out his mistake before the wedding-day was over. Then his love turned to hate quick enough, and——" she stopped for a moment, then resumed. "Well, no matter. He thought he had frightened and mastered me. He did not know how I used to hide and creep about the house, and listen when he and Maurice were sitting up late and talking over their work, thinking I was fast asleep upstairs. I never let a chance slip, not one, Miss Joyce. When Bryan used to take too much whisky, he would let fall hints which I took good care not to remind him of the next morning, but which were easy enough to fit on to something else I had heard before."

Here Joyce interrupted her impatiently.

"Tell me at once all you have to tell," she said.

"But I want your promise—your solemn promise, Miss Joyce, that my name shall not be mentioned to living soul," said Kathleen, doggedly. "Remember, if my name gets whispered about, I am doomed."

Joyce thought again.

"You must let me tell Uncle Archie, or how can I make use of what you tell me? I will make him give me his word of honour that your name shall not pass his lips. Will that do?"

For a moment Kathleen remained silent. Joyce's impatience grew upon her.

"Come, Kathleen, do not keep me in suspense; you ought to know you can trust my word, Uncle Archie's word——"

Kathleen looked at her steadily.

"Yes, I know I can trust you, Miss Joyce, and Mr. Shenstone too, but no one else."

"There will be no one else to trust. I give you my solemn promise that your name shall not be mentioned by either of us to living soul. Now begin at the very beginning—tell me all about this League—all about your troubles and Ned's, which, I suppose, began with these miserable plots and conspiracies."

Kathleen draw a long breath.

"Mine began about three years ago, Miss Joyce, when I went to stay with father's people at Lough Lea, and I first met Bryan O'Shea. He was always fierce, and wild, and passionate, and half frightened me into promising to marry him. I was glad enough to get back home again, and would have forgotten all about my promise, only Ned wouldn't let me. Ned, Bryan, and Maurice had all joined one of these dreadful societies at the same time. Bryan was cruel and reckless, and did all that was wanted of him ruthlessly. He could turn the women and children out of their warm beds into the cold fields in the dead of night, and beat the old men nearly to death, particularly if he owed them a grudge for anything that had happened years ago."

Joyce shuddered. "Go on," she said again.

"Ned was altogether as tender-hearted. He used to cry off a lot of things that the O'Sheas volunteered for. Bryan and Maurice went up in high favour with the heads of their society; Ned went down. He and Bryan were soon in what they call different grades, and Bryan made things very hard for Ned, because he took it into his head that he was preventing me keeping my promise to marry him. At times, I think, Ned was half desperate, and scarcely knew what he was doing or saying."

"Poor Ned! Poor Ned!"

"It was poor Ned when Captain Buckingham came on the scene, Miss Joyce. He met him one day coming out of your house in Eaton Square, and thought he would be useful on dark nights for messages and that sort of thing, because he had no brogue whatever, and so couldn't be identified as an Irishman in the dark. Captain Buckingham was just then forming a branch association for some special work that was going on. It was to consist of himself and three other members. He and Maurice and Bryan were enrolled the first three; Ned joined as a fourth.

"This branch society was pledged to do the hardest and the roughest of the society's work. Captain Buckingham they

called Joshua, because he had removed the hands from his watch, vowing that for him time stood still till vengeance was executed upon the oppressors of Ireland. The members had a sign and a counter-sign. The sign was the question, 'What time is it, friend?' as they laid their hands upon their watches, the counter-sign was the answer, 'Time stands still,' as they drew their watches out and showed that they had not been wound up. They used to meet once a week in Brewer's Court, till——"

Here she broke off.

"I know," ejaculated Joyce. "Go on, tell me everything."

She was listening breathlessly now to every word that fell from the girl's lips.

Kathleen resumed her story at another point.

"When they found that they had drawn the eyes of the police on them in London, they thought it better to remove what they called the centre for correspondence to a quiet part of Ireland. So Miss Buckingham arranged a centre for them in County Down—Miss Joyce, that woman is every whit as bad and heartless as her brother was!"

"Ah!"

"She's worse in one way, for she never runs the slightest risk herself in any shape or form, though she throws plenty of danger in the way of others. No, she has her comfortable home at the Abbey House, and she goes to her balls and her dinners dressed in her silks and her satins. But wherever her shadow falls there follows misery for some poor soul. Say she dines twenty miles from Lough Lea one night; next day there come a troop of boys ploughing up a decent farmer's land, and the farmer himself is found in a ditch nearly beaten to death. Or she dances at a ball at some far-away place, where everything is quiet and happy; within twenty-four hours there comes a Moonlighter's raid for arms, someone is shot dead, or the house and ricks are fired, and the poor people are left starving."

The girl's own vehemence compelled her to pause a moment.

Joyce said nothing. There was that in Kathleen's manner which puzzled her and made speech a difficulty.

Kathleen went on again, rapidly as before.

"And as for deceit and lies, ah, I've matched her at that just for once in a way! She thinks she's sending off to New York her brother's watch and Ned's watch. It's one of the articles of the League that, if a

man dies in the work, his watch is to be handed to the Council, who will pass it on to a man willing to be sworn in to take up the dead man's work. Well, she's welcome to her brother's watch; it's little enough good it'll do to any man who gets it. But as for Ned's——"

Again the girl broke off, then turning suddenly to Joyce, asked in a quieter tone:

"And you'll tell all this to the police, Miss Joyce?"

"Undoubtedly, word for word."

"Ah, they'll never form a timeless league again, as they used to call it—in England, at any rate. The Captain's dead——"

"Where is Maurice O'Shea?" interrupted Joyce.

"Don't know, Miss Joyce. The League will find him out safe enough."

"The League! The police, you mean."

Kathleen laughed. "Ah, there are some who do their work better than the police; but they'll be out in their reckoning for once in a way."

Joyce was troubled; bewildered also; some hidden meaning seemed to lie behind Kathleen's words; she felt herself at a loss.

"Where is Bryan?" she asked, wondering whether the girl's answer would let in a ray of light.

"I don't know, Miss Joyce. I daresay I shall soon enough when he sends for me to join him somewhere in America—New York, perhaps," answered Kathleen in a bitter, careless tone.

"Sends for you! Could you live under the same roof with that man? Surely you would not go?"

Kathleen's face grew set and rigid.

"Yes, I should go," she answered slowly. "I wouldn't have blood spilt on mother's doorstep. I shouldn't dare refuse to go if they sent for me; but New York would never see me. There are some who start for it, but never land."

The last words were said in a tone so low, that they could not have reached Joyce's ear had they not been spoken with an emphasis which doubled their meaning.

They roused in Joyce that protective, defending instinct, always so strong in strong natures, but which, with her, had known no outlet since Mab had been laid in her grave. She made one step towards Kathleen, put her arm round her shoulders, drawing the girl close to her.

"Kathleen," she said kindly, "you shall not go if they send for you a

thousand times over. You shall stay here with me; I will take care of you. I blame myself for not having looked after you better. I might have kept some of this dreadful misery from you."

"No; not you, Miss Joyce!"

"I could, if I had not been so selfishly wrapped up in my own happiness that I had eyes for nothing that went on around me."

Kathleen suddenly freed herself from Joyce's arm.

"Miss Joyce!" she said, excitedly, "I didn't deserve looking after in those days, and I don't deserve it now. Do you know I used to hate you when you were so happy?—yes, hate you, and all because you were a lady, and young and beautiful, and—and Mr. Ledyard loved you."

"I know, I know; say no more about it," said Joyce hurriedly, feeling that this was the point at which her indulgence for Kathleen failed her.

But Kathleen was bent on saying more. She went on, speaking even more quickly and excitedly than before, as though fearful lest her courage might give way.

"I think I could have killed you if I had had the chance sometimes when you used to come into the room, looking so bright and happy after you had been walking or talking with Mr. Ledyard. Once I tried to kill myself——"

"Kathleen!"

"I did, Miss Joyce; but my courage failed me—a little—little more courage and it would have been done. Then, when I found I could not do that, I made up my mind that I would marry Bryan O'Shea, and get away from you and the sight of your happiness."

Joyce remained silent, steadily looking at the girl. Her memory was busy piecing together by-gone fragments of circumstances which, at the time, had seemed without meaning.

Kathleen misinterpreted her silence. She waited a moment, then went close to Joyce, speaking in slow, quiet tones:

"Miss Joyce, there's one thing I should like to say to you before I go. You must not think Mr. Ledyard knew anything of all this, or that he ever said a word to me that any gentleman might not have said to any poor girl."

The nearest approach to a smile of which Joyce was capable in those sad days, parted her lips, but still she said nothing.

"It all began as it ended, with my own folly," Kathleen went on, as though she

were bent on making a full confession and leaving no dregs of suspicion in Joyce's mind. "I was going home from the village one day—Overbury, I mean—in the winter twilight, and a rough farmer's lad overtook me, and would persist in following and annoying me. Mr. Ledyard happened to be coming from the house and met us. He soon sent the man off, scolded me for being out so late, turned back, and saw me safe home. It was after that I used to say to myself: 'If I had only been a lady he might have married me'; and then it was I took to hating you. Oh! don't you see, Miss Joyce? Pray, pray believe me!" Here she clasped her hands together imploringly. "It was only my own vanity and foolishness, nothing else."

Joyce's ghost of a smile vanished. She looked Kathleen full in the face with clear, solemn eyes.

"Why take the trouble to tell me all this?" she asked quietly. "Do you think if you told me a story exactly the reverse I should believe one syllable of it? Don't you see—don't you understand that nothing anyone could say would ever shake my faith in his truth and honour?"

She seemed to be addressing Kathleen. In reality she felt as though she were saying the words to Frank himself.

While they had been talking the early brightness of the morning had waned; a fresh breeze had risen, black masses of clouds came rolling up from the sea.

Kathleen had gown weather-wise during her brief sojourn on the Irish coast; she picked up Joyce's hat from the ground and handed it to her. "There's a storm coming, Miss Joyce," she said; "you ought to make haste home."

But Joyce did not stir. Mechanically she put on the hat, saying never a word. Her brains ached with the load of thought which Kathleen had put into them. Little by little the facts of that terrible twentieth of December began to piece themselves into the story of plot and crime she had been just listening to. Not a doubt rested in her mind now as to Frank's fate. Following Mab's footsteps, he had gone into the conspirators' meeting-place, and had there met his death. How they had done their work without leaving trace of it behind, was the only mystery to be solved now.

She covered her eyes with her hands, shuddering. She scarcely heard Kathleen's words of farewell as the girl turned towards the churchyard gate.

"Good-bye, Miss Joyce; I must go at once, I have to catch the coach at the other end of the heath. Thank you for listening to me so patiently this morning."

In another instant she was gone, making her way with swift steps across the heath, a small, dark blot between the gloomy stretch of dull purple, and the iron-grey of the lowering sky.

Joyce looked after her between the parted boughs of the scant-leaved trees, trying to gather her wits together. She wished she had not let the girl go so hurriedly; there were questions she would have liked to ask her.

She essayed to call the girl back. "Kathleen!" she cried, leaning over the low stone wall, and beckoning to her with her hand.

But the small, dark figure did not turn its head. The rough, salt breeze threw her voice back at her as it swept down the churchyard path, whirling and hurrying the dry, dead leaves before it.

There fell two large drops of rain on her hand. A white sun for a brief moment cleft the inky mountains of clouds, throwing one long, slanting shaft of light athwart the churchyard. It straggled in and out among the tombs, emphasised the newness of the big stone which marked Buckingham's last resting-place, and found out the tarnished silver of the dead Irishman's watch as it lay among the heather on Mab's grave.

It caught Joyce's eye.

"Poor Ned!" she thought. "He must have meant it for Mab. I will take it home and wear it for both their sakes."

She took it up reverently from the grave. It was a large, heavy thing, and owned to a solid outside case of silver. This showed on one side an ugly, russet-brown stain, which marked the sure course that Bryan's bullet had taken.

And as she stood there looking down on it, with eyes that had long since lost the trick of tears, a sudden thought came to her. What if, by means of this watch, Donovan had meant to send a message to her, which he had not dared to put into words while he lived his uncertain life, with Death for ever dogging his heels?

With trembling fingers she pressed the spring of the outer case. No; there was nothing there save the marks of daily wear and tear. Then she opened the inner lid which covered the mechanism.

The wind swept past with a mighty rush; the rain came down in a great, drenching shower; but Joyce stood still,

heeding neither wind nor rain, for a brief sentence, which fixed her eye, written in blue pencil within the inner lid.

It ran thus :

"Latitude N. 62.32.
Longitude W. 7.10."

TOM'S OUTING.

A STORY IN THREE CHAPTERS.

CHAPTER I.

"It is a very forlorn sort of a world," said little Tom to himself, as he sat on the deserted beach of a fashionable watering-place, disconsolately watching an out-going tide.

A superficial glance would not have confirmed Tom's judgement, for the world was making a most gallant show just then, with the sun high in the heavens, and the sea a tremulous field of azure and silver. Perhaps Tom made deductions from feelings rather than facts, as so many of us do. Certainly he looked forlorn enough himself, with a wisp of his dark hair protruding assertively from his torn straw hat, and the few marine objects he had thought worth collecting escaping from his soiled and tumbled pinafore.

At that moment it would have been difficult to guess that he was anybody's petted darling, or that the anxious interest of at least four persons centred in his small and dirty personality.

Until the last month of his brief life Tom had been an only child, and an only child with half the globe between him and his parents too; but, for all that, he had been a very happy and very well-cared-for little fellow. He lived with an uncle and aunt in a big house in a Manchester suburb, where he had a large, airy nursery and as many delightful things contained therein as the heart of a little boy could desire. And then everyone was very good to him: the servants were all his intimate personal friends; Uncle Teddy did exactly as Tom wished always; while, as regarded Aunt Maria, there certainly never had been anyone in the wide world like her.

Young as Tom was, he had already discovered that people may be virtuous without being charming. There was Ellen, his nurse, who really had a great genius for story-telling; but Ellen's knuckles were dreadfully hard, and when she dressed or undressed him, her hands were always cold in the winter and hot in summer, when he would have liked them just the opposite.

Now Aunt Maria's hands—oh, they were always right, and everything else about her.

There was one mystery that exercised Tom's imagination a good deal, namely, why Aunt Maria, who loved children, and was so good to him, had not any little boys and girls of her own.

Tom remembered consulting her on the point once, when she had come up in her soft, shining dinner dress, to wish him good night. Aunt Maria had not answered him for a moment; first her cheeks grew very pink, like the geraniums in the window, and the diamond star at her throat gave a quiver or two, and then she said:

"I could not love any baby better than little Tom."

"But father and mother will come for me one day, and then what will you do?" Tom asked, not knowing he was cruel.

"Perhaps they will not take you from me," she said; and then she told Tom the great piece of news, how there was another tiny, tiny baby out in India, and that, perhaps, father and mother would come home that very year, and bring the little brother with them.

At this astounding intelligence Tom said: "Oh-h-h!" his great eyes shining, and then he slid out of Aunt Maria's arms, and raced round and round the room in sheer gladness of heart, his little bare feet twinkling in the fire-light as he ran.

It was after this that Aunt Maria thought that it might be wise to send away Ellen, and get a young lady to look after Tom.

"She will teach you nice manners, and I hope you will do exactly as she tells you, so as to be a perfect little gentleman when father returns."

Tom felt that he would like to be a perfect gentleman before that delightful event, and so, with some tears, he resigned himself to part from Ellen, and to accept Miss Kenwick in her place.

Tom thought Miss Kenwick lovely when he saw her, and he put his finger into his mouth in an access of admiration.

"Take your finger out of your mouth, and say 'How do you do?' prettily," Miss Kenwick said.

Tom sighed, partly because he felt that his education had begun, and partly because Miss Kenwick's voice disappointed him. The tones were clear and thin, and Tom, who thought Aunt Maria's rather husky voice the perfection of articulation, was disappointed.

Until Miss Kenwick's advent Aunt Maria had thought Tom a very well-mannered baby, because he was loving, and obedient, and naturally polite; but Miss Kenwick saw so much amiss, and spoke so disparagingly of the instructions of the departed Ellen, that Aunt Maria grew dreadfully ashamed.

"But he is such a little fellow," she pleaded deprecatingly—"not yet four years old."

"Lady Pratt always said that a child should be taught deportment from his very cradle," Miss Kenwick answered severely; and Aunt Maria collapsed.

Lady Pratt was Miss Kenwick's former employer; and, though her title was but that of the wife of a civic knight, it sounded just as magnificent as if she had been a Countess, and acted powerfully for the suppression of Aunt Maria.

Miss Kenwick made Aunt Maria dreadfully uncomfortable. There are people who, without being consciously offensive, deprive your home in some subtle way of its perfect peace, when once they have come beneath its roof. But Aunt Maria did not hold Miss Kenwick responsible for this; since she had given Lady Pratt entire satisfaction for three years, it must be her own fault that she could not like her.

Aunt Maria was a soft, loving, motherly woman, who never fussed or scolded, never suppressed others, never obtruded herself. Lovers agreed to meet at Aunt Maria's house; friends who had fallen apart made their mutual complaints to her; and servants, who had neither a situation nor much of a character to fall back upon, often threw themselves on her mercy to get a fresh start. Unfortunately, it cannot be said that she was invariably well served or gratefully regarded in return; but she was one of those happily constituted people who do good-natured things to please themselves, and leave thanks quite out of their reckoning.

But, though Aunt Maria knew she was popular, she knew also that where a competition in beauty or elegance arose, she would be nowhere.

Now Bessie out in India was beautiful. Aunt Maria was the least envious woman in the world, but as often as she thought of Bessie, she sighed. Bessie, with her tall, slim figure; her soft, dark eyes; her ivory skin. Oh yes! Bessie was beautiful, and so she had married Aunt Maria's only brother, and taken him away from the sister who thought there was no one like him in all the world—not even her own

husband, who was so good, and whom she loved with her whole heart.

Aunt Maria was a little afraid of the beautiful Bessie, who was so well connected, and so accomplished, and, therefore, when Miss Kenwick said, "Tom has not been nicely trained, and his mother is sure to think so," Aunt Maria quailed. If Miss Kenwick, who had lived with Lady Pratt and the rest of the aristocracy, thought Tom vulgar, then of course he was vulgar, and what would his mother say when she saw him?

Aunt Maria went up to the nursery with a sinking heart—the big, airy nursery, that had Indian photographs on the walls, and Indian toys strewn the floor; and there was the grey parrot, screaming at Tom, and Tom, astride his rocking-horse, brandishing his tin sword, and shouting at the horse and the parrot equally.

Aunt Maria saw how beautiful the child was, with a red glow in his dusky cheeks, and his thick, dark curls tossed back from his forehead; but she felt at the same time that he was dreadfully noisy, and so, perhaps, if noise be vulgar, Miss Kenwick was right.

For her own part she could not feel as if the child's faults were faults, and, therefore, she could not pretend to sit in judgment. She took him off the rocking-horse and kissed him, and when he got astride her knee and continued his equestrianism, she could only sigh and smile together. Perhaps it was fortunate after all that she had no children of her own, or she might have spoiled them, as Miss Kenwick said she was spoiling little Tom.

Aunt Maria could deny herself; she was a brave woman where it was necessary; and so, when Miss Kenwick said that Tom was not improving because he knew he had always his aunt to appeal to, Aunt Maria made up her mind.

"If you think he would do better under your sole care, I shall send you both to the sea-side for three months," she said. "I am very anxious that his mother should be pleased with him when she sees him."

Miss Kenwick demurred a little. There are people whose instinct is always to say "no" to any proposal; and others who, in minor matters, can never see any reason why they should not say "yes." The latter may be inferior disciplinarians, but certainly they make the more comfortable and successful wives and mothers.

Miss Kenwick believed that a too ready assent would be sure to invalidate her

authority, and so she always said "no" at first, and thought herself very gracious if she reconsidered her decision.

Miss Kenwick declined the responsibility of Tom in the first instance, but admitted later that sea-air would be likely to do him good.

Aunt Maria was quite low-spirited that evening. She had Tom down for dessert, and cried a good deal over him furtively.

"Only that I believe it is for his good, I could not bear to let him go," she said.

"His good! Pooh! Nonsense! The child is all right," Uncle Edward answered, laughing. But then, Uncle Edward was not afraid of Bessie, and thought his own wife as good and as nice as anyone.

"Miss Kenwick has been accustomed to nice children, and knows what is best for Tom, and I want him to please his mother."

"I think he is sure to please her."

"Miss Kenwick says, if she had him all to herself she could teach him to be a little gentleman."

"Miss Kenwick be hanged!" Uncle Edward said angrily. "An impertinent baggage!"

"An impertinent baggage," Tom echoed, emphatically and uncomprehendingly.

"Oh, Edward, you see!" poor Aunt Maria cried in terror; "if he said that before his mother, what would she think?" So it was decreed that Tom and the governess should take their departure coastwards forthwith.

Lykeham is a new-looking, beautifully clean town, with its best houses built in a long terrace facing the sea. In the eyes of Aunt Maria and Uncle Edward it had two advantages. First, they had stopped there once or twice themselves, and knew how clean and healthy it was; secondly, it was within a reasonable distance of the Manchester suburb; and though Aunt Maria had no fixed idea of pouncing down on Miss Kenwick, nor any suspicion that an occasional visit might be of service to Tom, still it was well to have them within reasonable distance. As to expense, that was a matter of no importance whatever where Tom was concerned, and accordingly, he and Miss Kenwick departed for Lykeham, and took up their quarters at the best hotel. Of course, Miss Kenwick meant to go into apartments ultimately, but in the first instance an hotel was convenient, and it was easy to direct her investigations thence.

For a day or two Tom thought every-

thing very satisfactory, for everyone took to him and praised him, and complimented Miss Kenwick so on his beauty that she seemed to think there was a little pride in owning him. Those were the days when he was dressed afresh for every meal, with the gayest of sashes and the costliest of garments, and when the ladies said, "Such a pet, and so foreign-looking," and he strutted about in all the pride of his Oriental antecedents.

But that was before Miss Kenwick met her cousin.

Tom remembered the day on which the cousin came, quite well. He had been down in the drawing-room, and the lady who had a room across the corridor from them had made Tom a present of a picture-book, and had been in the midst of an interesting narrative of a nephew, the age of Tom, who lived in London, when Miss Kenwick had come to take him away and dress him for going out.

She was carrying him down the landing, and he had one arm about her neck, while the other clasped his picture-book, when a gentleman, coming in the opposite direction, met them, and stood aside a little to let them pass. This gentleman wore clothes of a light colour, and he had a long, fair moustache, and little lines about his eyes; and when Miss Kenwick met his glance and blushed, and bowed slightly, he turned and stared after her, stroking his moustache in a bewildered way.

When they were out of doors they met the fair gentleman again; but Miss Kenwick pretended not to see him. Next day, Tom saw him talking to the governess, and after that, somehow, Miss Kenwick was always different from what she had been.

In the following week, Tom and she went to the apartments that had been taken in Sea View Terrace; and then quite a different order of things began.

The fair gentleman called once, but he did not stay long nor take much notice of Tom; and, after that, Miss Kenwick made herself pretty every day, and kept Tom walking up and down the length of the terrace till he was weary.

Sometimes they met the fair gentleman, and sometimes they did not; and when they met him, sometimes he stopped to speak, and sometimes he only bowed. When he stopped, Miss Kenwick was amiable for all the rest of the evening; and when he only bowed, Miss Kenwick was

cross, and sometimes slapped Tom, though he did not know why.

"What makes you always come out to meet the fair gentleman?" Tom asked once.

"I don't," Miss Kenwick answered, flushing; "and you are a rude boy."

"Why am I a rude boy?"

"To notice when I meet my cousin."

"Is he your cousin?"

"Of course he is."

"Is he not kind?"

"Why do you ask?"

"Because you did not speak to him the first day you saw him."

Miss Kenwick told Tom he was tiresome and naughty, and took him home; and after that she always committed him to the care of Miss Parkinson, and went abroad alone.

Miss Parkinson was not very young. Tom thought she was very old, and once complimented her on all she must have seen; and she wore voluminous draperies that rustled a good deal when she moved, and at the left side of her head she had a single long curl, which Tom thought very wonderful. She was a busy little woman, with as many duties in each day as could possibly be squeezed into it; but, for all that, she found time to pity little Tom.

"Poor forlorn child!" she used to say, when she found him shut into the back parlour, day after day, with the same wearisome box of bricks for his sole amusement, "if your people only knew!"

But they did not know, and it was not Miss Parkinson's business to tell them.

There were no children among Miss Parkinson's boarders at that time, except Tom himself; but, pitying him as she did, the good little woman made it her business to seek out a former client, who lived further up the street now, and to introduce Tom.

"He is as good and nice a little fellow as ever was," she said, looking down on the child, who was resplendent in all the finery she could find for him, "and he is all alone here with a governess, who is young and giddy; and so I thought, as Miss Fanny is an only child too, that perhaps you would let her come and play with him sometimes."

Mrs. Orpenshaw, a faded lady, who habitually wore easy-fitting garments, and lay on the sofa, signified her assent; and Miss Fanny—a precocious person of nine, who had been surveying Tom critically, and had discovered that his sash was an

inch broader than her very best, and that his pelisse had the loveliest buttons on it that she had ever seen—Miss Fanny graciously signified that she would call for Tom sometimes, and, as she kept her word, Tom's happy days returned.

CHAPTER II.

THERE never was such a companion as Fanny. Tom would have maintained that against all comers; and even when she transferred her favours and cut him dead, he was too young and too honest to go back on his judgement.

It was hard that she preferred the big, freckled boy to him; but making a bad choice did not detract from her personal fascinations, and, however unkind she had proved, her favour had brought him one advantage—liberty.

He had got into the habit of meeting her on the beach, and, as she always brought him home safely, Miss Parkinson relaxed her surveillance, so that he could take his hat unchallenged and go out alone.

At first, after Fanny's estrangement, he had found it good enough fun to sit and watch how the fickle fair one comported herself with his rival; but when the games they played were full of laughter, he found their nearness tantalising. To see nice things and never to share them, to hear mirth without ever making it, would test the resolution of a more advanced philosopher than baby Tom. For his part he was learning to think that the world was not such a very nice place as he had fancied.

He would have liked to play with other children, if only to show Fanny that he did not miss her so very much; but he was such a baby, and so forsaken-looking, that no one encouraged his advances.

So he lay on the beach, thinking about nothing in particular, and there was a pain at his heart. On an impulse, he had taken off his shoes and stockings, thinking to paddle in the surf, but his attention had been diverted, and, before he thought of the matter again, the sea had receded so far, that Tom determined not to follow it. He tried to think of India; but he could not remember what to think about it; and then of Aunt Maria. Ah, it was easy enough to think of her. Tom felt he had so much to say to her that he was sure he could write her a letter. He would get a sheet of paper and a pen

from Miss Parkinson, and he would say, "I love you, I love you," so often to himself, as he wrote, that his meaning would be sure to spread itself all over the paper. And then Miss Parkinson would address the letter for him, and see that it went all right. Miss Parkinson was very kind.

Armed with this resolution he rose to go home, seeking his belongings first of all, but, do as he would, he could only find one shoe and one stocking. The others had disappeared, swallowed up by the sand, perhaps; lost at any rate.

Tom was a very just little fellow, and what remained to him he resolved to divide fairly, so he put a stocking on one foot and a shoe on the other, and started homeward valiantly. But the way seemed unusually long, and the shoeless foot came in contact with many painful things, and the world seemed a more comfortless place than ever.

It was not any particular love for Miss Kenwick, but just relief at sight of any face he knew, that made him rush towards the governess, and throw his arms round her, and hide his hot little face in her crisp skirts.

Miss Kenwick was charmingly dressed, and was looking very happy and very sweet, for she had just caught sight of the fair gentleman in the distance; and he seemed coming towards her, when lo! all her pleasant fancies were banished and herself rendered ridiculous by the advent of a dilapidated and dirty child, who took possession of her.

Miss Kenwick was wroth, but had to make the best of her trying circumstances by turning homeward, and telling Tom to follow her slowly.

"How came you in such a plight?" she asked, shaking her pupil, when he and she were within doors. "I thought you always went with Fanny Orpenshaw, and she is a nice little girl, and would never lead you into such a state."

"Fanny does not play with me now."

"And no wonder, you dirty boy."

"I wasn't dirty when I played with her — 'tisn't that."

"Then what is it?"

"Fanny says my papa is not a gentleman."

"What does she know about your papa, I should like to know?"

"I told her papa was a civil servant out in India, and then she would not play with me. She said her mamma would not allow her to know a servant's child."

"Just as if she could know what the

Civil Service is, and her father an upholsterer!" Miss Kenwick said, turning up her nose at the whole family of Orpenshaw.

"She said he was less of a gentleman for being civil; if he had been a rude servant it would have shown he did not like it."

"Impertinent little goose!"

"Impertinent baggage," Tom amended saptly.

"That is a naughty word; where did you hear it?"

"From Uncle Teddy. Uncle Teddy said you were an impertinent baggage."

"He did!" Miss Kenwick was deeply wounded. She had been growing valorous in Tom's behalf, had been putting herself on the side of her pupil's family and against all slanderers, and this was her reward! She grew crimson, and tears of mortification sprang into her eyes.

"I suppose we cannot expect better when we are dependent and defenceless," she said, more to herself than to Tom. "But it is rudeness like that that makes one so grateful for courtesy."

She did not go out that evening, but she did not play with Tom or notice him, only sat gazing despondently from the window, and that was not much more cheerful than solitude.

Miss Kenwick had fallen in love, deeply and hopelessly, and certainly without much undue encouragement. On the occasion when she told Tom that the fair gentleman was her cousin it is to be feared that she was not absolutely veracious, for he was no less a person than the Honourable Bertie Hunter, son of the late Lord Glenlyon, and brother of a live Earl. It had been the Honourable Bertie's whim once to be on visiting terms at the house of Sir Giles Pratt, and there he had seen Miss Kenwick, and had been civil to her, as it was his way to be to every woman under the sun.

The Honourable Bertie was very handsome, and very good-natured, and honest and upright according to his lights; indeed, neither friends nor foes, had he possessed the latter, could have found a fault in him, save that one of which he was himself so overwhelmingly conscious — his impecuniosity.

And the worst of it was that his facilities for curing himself of the latter disease were so very limited. He was not in trade, and so could not make any grand coup; he had no capital wherewith to speculate, and make or lose a fortune on the Stock Exchange.

The Honourable Bertie had but a solitary chance of bettering his condition, namely, matrimony. That he would throw away that chance was a possibility which had never suggested itself to him; but as a fixed resolution regarding the disposal of his person does not deprive a man of soft blue eyes, a charming manner, and a general desire to make himself agreeable, it had happened half-a-dozen times already that the Honourable Bertie had wrought havoc in the female breast which he neither desired nor intended.

The Honourable Bertie's affections were not at this time actually disposed of, but to a certain extent they were out of his own keeping.

When an impecunious gentleman fixes his desires on a lady with a large income, onlookers are wont to surmise that her golden attraction is the most powerful one, but in Bertie Hunter's case this surmise would have been incorrect. Certainly, had Miss Bonanza been penniless it would have been impossible for him to have wooed her, however dear and desirable she seemed; but having a million dollars in her own right hampered him just as much on the other side. He honestly loved her, and, though the money in itself might not be a disadvantage, he realized very well how materially it narrowed his chances. He was not a fool, and he knew that Miss Bonanza being a great heiress would likely find a worthier suitor, though not one who would love her more—of that he was morally certain.

As yet he had not uttered the momentous question, but he had done everything short of that, and on the whole he was not unhopeful. Pending further developments he had come to Lykeham, to rest and recruit his energies. And this was the man whom Miss Kenwick was breaking her heart about, and squandering even her self-respect to fascinate.

The Honourable Bertie was not blind to Miss Kenwick's state of mind, but he was neither flattered nor amused by it. It was not his fault that he looked admiring where he felt no particular admiration, and sometimes he regarded his good looks as a misfortune. Certainly, if it invited the tenderness of every girl that he dined with at a table d'hôte, it was a thorough nuisance.

If Miss Kenwick had belonged to his own particular world he would have felt no compunction in snubbing her periodically, but in the case of a poor little gover-

ness the thing was impossible. So he had called on her when she asked him; was invariably courteous to her when she intercepted him in the street; and acquired, with a daily increasing sense of discomfort, the consciousness that she was rendering him ridiculous.

ABRAHAM LINCOLN.

THERE never has been a great crisis in the fate of any nation, where a Man has not arisen to deal with it. We shall search history in vain for anything more terrible and momentous than the long and bloody struggle between the Northern and the Southern States of America; and we shall also search in vain for more remarkable instances than this war afforded of the truth of our proposition. Within an incredibly short time, the necessities of the occasion created one of the most brilliant soldiers of our generation out of a tanner's clerk, and one of the most able statesmen who ever guided a nation out of trouble out of a Western rail-splitter.

It is just about a year since the Autobiography of General Grant gave the world a complete record of the military operations, and now two notable publications are giving us much light upon the life and political career of President Lincoln. The biography, by his two private secretaries, of which the opening chapters have appeared in the Century Magazine, promises to be exceedingly minute and careful, and possibly may be too much in detail to attract the rapid reader. But Mr. Allen Thorndike Rice, the editor of the North American Review, has collected and published a volume of reminiscences of "Old Abe," as he was popularly called, which is full of interest. These reminiscences are contributed by some thirty-three gentlemen of various rank and fame in the United States, men who knew and met Lincoln, and had something to relate of his personality, his career, or his government. And there is nothing more remarkable in this volume, than the unanimity with which nearly three dozen writers of most diverse minds and opinions agree in presenting Lincoln as a simple, "plain man of the people," it is true, but also as the embodiment of honour, of tender humanity, and of the highest patriotism. Our object in the present paper is to illustrate these traits in the character of a man who has been often maligned and misunderstood.

It is very common with English people to suppose that the Civil War in the United States was directly upon the question whether slavery should be retained or abolished. The abolition of slavery was a consequence of the war, but was not the literal consequence of it. This is how General Grant states the case in his "Memoirs :

"In the case of the war between the States, it would have been the exact truth if the South had said: 'We do not want to live with you Northern people any longer; we know our institution of slavery is obnoxious to you, and, as you are growing numerically stronger than we, it may at some time in the future be endangered. So long as you permitted us to control the Government, and, with the aid of a few friends at the North, to enact laws constituting your section a guard against the escape of our property, we were willing to live with you. You have been submissive to our rule heretofore; but it looks now as if you did not intend to continue so, and we will remain in the Union no longer.' Instead of this, the seceding States cried lustily: 'Let us alone; you have no constitutional power to interfere with us.' Newspapers and people at the North reiterated the cry. Individuals might ignore the constitution; but the nation itself must not only obey it, but must enforce the strictest construction of that instrument; the construction put upon it by the Southerners themselves. The fact is, the constitution did not apply to any such contingency as the one existing from 1861 to 1865. Its framers never dreamed of such a contingency occurring. If they had foreseen it, the probabilities are they would have sanctioned the right of a State or States to withdraw, rather than that there should be war between brothers."

And now, as to Abraham Lincoln, we find Mr. Rice recording of him that he was, as President, pre-eminently a democratic ruler, who profoundly believed in a Government of the people, by the people, and for the people; and who, however earnest his wish, as a man, to promote and enact justice between classes and races, "never went faster or further than to enforce the will of the people that elected him."

"He was," continues Mr. Rice, "elected to save the Union, not to destroy slavery; and he did not aid, directly or indirectly, the movement to abolish slavery until the voice of the people was heard demanding it in order that the Union might be saved.

He did not free the negro for the sake of the slave, but for the sake of the Union."

We think it necessary to introduce this explanation here, because it is very usual to class Lincoln with the avowed Abolitionists. Lincoln has the immortal distinction of having proclaimed the emancipation of the slaves in North America; but "he signed the proclamation of emancipation solely because it had become impossible to restore the Union with slavery."

But it would not be fair to leave this subject without repeating a story of 1831, told by John Hanks, who was Lincoln's companion upon a flat-boat on the Mississippi, on board of which both laboured for a time. They made a trip in the boat to New Orleans, and there, says Hanks, "we saw negroes chained, maltreated, whipped, and scourged. Lincoln saw it; said nothing much; was silent from feeling; was sad; looked bad; felt bad; was thoughtful and abstracted. I can say, knowing it, that it was on this trip that he formed his opinion about slavery. It run its iron in him then and there, May, 1831. I have heard him say so often and often."

Twenty years later Lincoln said: "The time will come when we must be all Democrats and Abolitionists. When that time comes, my mind is made up. The slavery question can't be compromised."

Five years later again (1855) he said: "As a nation we began by declaring that all men are created equal; but we are degenerating, for now we practically read it—all men are created equal, except negroes."

Later again he said: "I hate slavery because of its monstrous injustice;" and so we might go on tracing the growing strength of his convictions, until the period arrived at which military and political necessity converged with justice and humanity, and, in September, 1862, he issued the first famous Proclamation of Emancipation.

"I can remember," Lincoln once told Mr. Leonard Swett, "our life in Kentucky. The cabin, the stunted living, the sale of our possessions, and the journey with my father and mother to Southern Indiana." He was six years old then; but better fortune did not follow these early pioneers in a then new country. Soon after arriving in Indiana the mother died. Then, "it was pretty pinching times at first, getting the cabin built and the clearing for the crops; but presently we got reasonably comfortable, and my father married again."

The stepmother seems to have been an excellent woman, and Messrs. Nicolay and

Hay, in their biography, record a good deal that is interesting about this period of Lincoln's life. He had only been six months at school when his father was "cleaned out," through having to pay a bill which he had endorsed for a friend. Abe had to "go and hire himself out," that the produce of his labour might help the family funds. He was never at school again, and what further education he gained was in reading "all the books he ever heard of in the country for a circuit of fifty miles."

When he was nineteen the family migrated to Illinois, and shortly afterwards Abraham left home with all his worldly possessions tied up in a handkerchief slung over his shoulder. And thus, as he has himself related, with his father's and his stepmother's blessing, he started "upon the wonderful journey of life."

Tramping over the prairies along an old Indian trail, he reached Macon County, where he found some cousins called Hanks, with whom he engaged in "splitting rails" at so much per hundred. Then he drifted into a fresh neighbourhood, and took employment under a farmer. While working in Sangamon County he was struck with the difficulty the farmers had in getting their produce to market, and he conceived the idea of building a flat boat upon the Sangamon river, running it down thence into the Illinois, thence into the Mississippi, and so to New Orleans. He also devised a method of surmounting a dam, which formed an obstacle in this long waterway. He felled the timber, built the boat, loaded it, and went in charge of it as "Captain," with a crew of two men, one of them being Hanks. Two or three years Lincoln worked in this boat, and then he became "clerk" in a store in the town of New Salem, in Sangamon County, in which was sold "a very few goods of various kinds."

He shortly became a partner in this concern, but soon left again, in consequence of a dispute about whisky. The old proprietor wanted to keep a cask to "invite custom," but Lincoln wouldn't have it. "He told me," writes Mr. Leonard Swett, "not more than a year before he was elected President, that he had never tasted liquor in his life."

"What," I said, "do you mean to say you never tasted it?"

"Yes, I never tasted it."

The result was that Lincoln dissolved the partnership, the partner taking all the goods and agreeing to pay all the debts.

But instead of paying the debts he took to drink, and when Lincoln came back to the place, after serving as Captain of a company of volunteers in an expedition against the Indians, he found that he was liable for some eleven hundred dollars.

"I cannot forget," says Mr. Swett, "his face of seriousness as he turned to me and said: 'That debt was the greatest obstacle I have ever met in life. I had no way of speculating, and could not earn money except by labour; and to earn by labour eleven hundred dollars, besides my living, seemed the work of a lifetime. There was, however, but one way. I went to the creditors, and told them if they would let me alone, I would give them all I could earn over my living as fast as I could earn it.' " And by hard work and economy he paid it off in the course of a few years.

Fate was kind to him, for about this time he got employment in the county surveyor's office, and four years later was elected member of the State legislature. This meant at that time four dollars a day of allowance, "and four dollars a day," said Lincoln, "was more than I had ever earned in my life before."

This was the beginning of his political career, for in the Illinois legislature his natural gift for public speaking developed itself, and what we may call his education in public affairs rapidly advanced. Of other education Mr. Swett says, "Life was to him a school, and he was always studying and mastering every subject which came before him. He knew how to dig out any question from its very roots, and when his own children began to go to school, he studied with them, and acquired in mature life the elements of an education. I have seen him myself upon the circuit, with 'a geometry' or 'an astronomy,' or some book of that kind, working out propositions in moments of leisure, or acquiring the information that is generally acquired in boyhood."

After serving his term in the State legislature, Lincoln went to Springfield and began to study law. He rose in this new profession, we are told, with great rapidity, and soon became a leader in it. He also became a leader of the Whig, afterwards the Republican, party, and he distinguished himself in a great public debate on the slavery question, with Stephen A. Douglas, a great Democrat leader and prominent politician. It was while practising as a lawyer at Springfield that Abraham Lincoln was elected President of the United States. by Google

But of his early days, Mr. Swett insists that Lincoln told the story as of a happy childhood. "There was nothing sad nor pinched, and nothing of want, and no allusions to want in any part of it. His own description of his youth was that of a joyous, happy boyhood. It was told with mirth and glee, and illustrated by pointed anecdote, often interrupted by his jocund laugh, which echoed over the prairies. His biographers have given to his early life the spirit of suffering and want, and as one reads them he feels like tossing him pennies for his relief. Mr. Lincoln gave no such description, nor is such description true. His was just such a life as has always existed and now exists in the frontier States, and such boys are not suffering, but are like Whittier's 'barefoot boy with cheeks of tan.'"

Maybe so, but judging from the pictures of his early homes, and the details recorded by others, one cannot but feel that it was a hard life all the same.

At any rate he was, by birth, education, experience, and sympathy, one of "the plain people," and he never lost the faculty of reading the mind of "the plain people." To this he owed his local popularity, as well as his greater influence at the White House. And Mr. T. J. Coffey (another of the contributors to the volume of "Reminiscences") is probably right in questioning whether his career as President and Emancipator, or even his tragic death, would have excited and kept alive the affectionate and ever-increasing interest in his character, if that character had been less marked with quaint, original, and homely traits that appealed to the common heart of "the plain people." As has been often said of him, "his heart lay close to the great popular heart, and felt its beatings."

Strangely unlovely, too, he was in personal appearance. Over six feet four inches in height, his limbs seemed hooked on to his gaunt frame anyhow, while enormous feet formed the extremities of long, thin legs. Mr. Washburne describes him as he first saw him in Springfield in 1847: "Tall, angular and awkward, he had on a short-waisted, thin swallow-tail coat; a short vest of same material; thin pantaloons, scarcely coming down to his ankles; a straw hat; and a pair of brogans, with 'oolen socks.'"

Mr. Poore thus describes him at the White House: "In the morning and after voice one used to wear a long-skirted, it in order ing-gown, belted around the

waist, and slippers. His favourite attitude when listening—and he was a good listener—was to lean forward and clasp his left knee with both hands, as if fondling it, and his face would then wear a sad, wearied look. But when the time came for him to give an opinion on what he had heard, or to tell a story, which something said reminded him of, his face would lighten up with its homely, rugged smile, and he would run his fingers through his bristly, black hair, which would stand up in every direction, like that of an electric-experiment doll." He was, in fact, as is set down with almost one consent, a very ugly man, with coarse features, a dull and heavy face in repose, and a general uncomely appearance. But when enlivened in conversation his aspect altered, and as Vice-President Colfax says: "when sympathy and mercy lightened up those rugged features, many a wife and mother, pleading for his intervention, had indeed reason to think him handsome."

He seems to have been eminently humane and tender-hearted, and exercised his prerogative of pardon while President so freely and frequently as greatly to annoy his Generals, and even to jeopardise the discipline of the army. But the cause did not lose by his humanity.

General Frederick Douglas, a "coloured" man, gives an interesting account of his first visit—indeed, the first visit of any "coloured man"—to the White House: "When I entered he was seated in a low chair, surrounded by a multitude of books and papers, his feet and legs were extended in front of his chair. On my approach he slowly drew his feet in from the different parts of the room into which they had strayed, and he began to rise, and continued to rise until he looked down on me, and extended his hand and gave me a welcome. He was the first great man that I talked with in the United States who in no single instance reminded me of the difference between himself and myself—of the difference of colour—and I thought that all the more remarkable because he came from a State where there were black slaves. I felt in his presence that I was in the presence of a great man, as great as the greatest, and yet that I could go and put my hand on him if I wanted to—to put my hand on his shoulder. Of course, I did not do it, but I felt that I could. I felt as though I was in the presence of a big brother, and that there was safety in his atmosphere."

This is interesting testimony from such a source, and along with it we may take the summation of argument in favour of liberation, which Lincoln once used to Mr. Cassius M. Clay: "Clay, I always thought that the man who made the corn should eat the corn."

Joshua Speed, a storekeeper in Springfield, Illinois, tells how one day "an awkward, green stranger of great stature and as much diffidence" came into his place, and priced some household articles. After making a selection and learning the sum total, the stranger turned sadly away, and said it was more money than he had. Speed, learning that he was coming to commence practice in Springfield, offered to give him credit; but Lincoln steadily refused to take credit, although he afterwards accepted an offer to share Speed's bed until his own circumstances improved. And for many years he continued to sleep with Speed, who thus, having had exceptional opportunities of seeing his character on all sides, has recorded that he had found him "humane, philanthropic, and eminently the most just man he ever knew, and that he well deserved of all men the name of 'Honest Abe.'"

Apropos of this time, a story is told of a case in which Lincoln was engaged in the court of the county. The weather was warm, and after the primitive manners of frontier courts, the opposing lawyer had taken off his coat and vest as he grew heated in the argument. The disrobing revealed the fact that the lawyer buttoned his shirt at the back—a practice, it seems, not then so common as it became in America. This lawyer had the best of the case in point of law, but Lincoln adroitly worked upon the prejudices of a primitive people against "pretensions" of a social kind. Answering, he said: "Gentlemen of the jury, having justice on my side, I don't think you will be at all influenced by the gentleman's pretended knowledge of the law, when you see that he doesn't even know which side of his shirt should be in front!" He gained both a laugh and the case.

It is pleasant in one sense, although rather opposed to British conceptions of the fitness of things, to learn that when he became President, Lincoln wrote to his old Springfield "chum," Speed, and offered him any office he liked to take. Speed declined, saying that his business was now better than any office the President could give; but Speed's brother was some time afterwards made Attorney-General.

The deep sadness of Lincoln's facial expression is repeatedly referred to by these various commentators. It struck everybody and seemed chronic, but yet many insist that it was no real index of the operation of his mind. That he felt the terrible burden of his responsibility as President during the war is abundantly evident, and had he not been a giant in physique as well as in brain, he must have sunk under it. But his sense of humour was large and constant, and his indulgence in anecdote seems to have been his unfailing relaxation. Senators and ministers were frequently shocked at his apparent levity, when he would break off in some serious discussion, at a grave crisis in the affairs of the nation, to tell a story. But these stories were his safety-valve, and it is now contended that had he not been able to relieve his brain in this way, he must have become insane. Every man must have an outlet of some sort; story-telling was Lincoln's.

Much has been said of Lincoln's stories and of his inimitable gift as a story-teller, but we must confess that the specimens given in the volume to which we have referred are somewhat disappointing. One cannot always see so much humour in them as his listeners seem to have discovered, but yet we are told that the merit of Lincoln's stories was less in the matter of them than in their appositeness, as illustrative in argument or reply. The story-telling habit seems to have been acquired in his Springfield days, when the lawyers going on "circuit," and putting up in primitive villages, had no books or other resources but the companionship of each other. There was then a constant succession of anecdotes in the evenings—not always of the most refined type we may be sure, and indeed we are told that most of Lincoln's best tales were too "racy" for publication. But we must remember that he was a "Western" man, and carried his Western manners with him to the end.

There is a very characteristic story of him in connection with the Battle of Fredericksburg. The news of it was taken by Governor Curtin, of Pennsylvania, to Lincoln, who listened to the graphic description of the scenes of what Governor Curtin said "was not a battle, it was a butchery."

Lincoln was heart-broken at the recital, and reached a state of nervous excitement bordering on insanity. The Governor was much affected at the President's sorrow, and, as he was leaving the room, said:

"Mr. President, I am deeply touched at your sorrow and at the distress I have caused. I have only answered your questions. No doubt my impressions have been coloured by the sufferings I have seen. I trust matters will look brighter when the official reports come in. I would give all I possess to know how to rescue you from this terrible war."

Lincoln's whole aspect suddenly changed, and he replied: "That reminds me, Governor, of a story of an old farmer in Illinois that I used to know. He took it into his head to go into hog-raising, and he had the finest breed money could buy. The prize hog was put in a pen, and the farmer's two boys, James and John, were told to be sure not to let him out. But James did let the brute out, and the hog went straight for the boys, and drove John up a tree. Then the hog went for the seat of James's trousers, and the only way the boy could save himself was by holding on to the hog's tail. The hog wouldn't give up his hunt nor the boy his hold. After they had made a good many circles around the tree the boy's courage began to give out, and he shouted to his brother: 'I say, John, come down quick and help me let this hog go!' Now, Governor, that is exactly my case. I wish someone would come and help me let this hog go!"

For Generals Grant and Sherman he had always the kindest feeling, and the reason was, as he told Sherman after the war: "You never found fault with me, from the days of Vicksburg down."

Everyone else seemed to have considered it his duty to criticise and even reprimand the President's policy, the while he was weighed down with the anxiety of his position. One day he said to General Schenk, placing his hands on the General's knee and speaking with great emotion: "You have little idea of the terrible weight of care and sense of responsibility of this office of mine. Schenk, if to be at the head of hell is as hard as what I have to undergo, I could find it in my heart to pity Satan himself!"

It was only his strong sense of humour that enabled him to secure reaction from the awful depression of his position.

Whenever he heard a "good story," Lincoln took a memorandum of it, and he has been even known to delay a few thousand visitors at a levee at the White House, while he called someone aside to tell over again a yarn, the point of which he had not quite caught at the first recital. Thus he

kept up an inexhaustible supply, and had an endless stock to utilise in illustration, into the telling of which he entered with thorough enjoyment.

"When he told a particularly good story," writes one, "and the time came to laugh, he would sometimes throw his left foot across his right knee, and, clenching his foot with both hands and bending forward, his whole frame seemed to be convulsed with the effort to give expression to his sensations."

It has been sometimes said that Lincoln was ruled by his Cabinet, but this is abundantly shown to be a mistake by the numerous writers in Mr. Rice's collection. When it was necessary to exert his will, he did it, and no one dared to oppose. But Mr. Stanton, who was Secretary for War, and a very able and patriotic man, was allowed very much to have his own way. One day a deputation of Western men waited on the President, and obtained from him an order for a certain exchange of soldiers. Going with this order to Secretary Stanton, the mouthpiece of the deputation, Mr. Lovejoy, was met with a flat refusal to execute it.

"But we have the President's order," said Lovejoy.

"Did Lincoln give you an order of that kind?"

"He did, sir."

"Then he's a fool," said the angry Secretary.

"Do you mean to say the President is a fool, sir?" asked the astonished Lovejoy.

"Yes, sir, if he gave you such an order as that."

Back went Lovejoy to the President, and told him all about it.

"Did Stanton say I was a fool?" asked Lincoln.

"He did, sir, and repeated it."

"If Stanton said I was a fool, then I must be one, for he is nearly always right and generally means what he says. I will step over and see him."

Just before the surrender of General Lee, Grant told Lincoln that the war must now soon come to an end, and wanted to know whether he should try to capture Jeff Davis, or allow him to escape from the country.

Lincoln in reply told him the story of an Irishman, who had "taken the pledge" of Father Mathew. This Irishman became terribly thirsty, and applied to a bartender for a lemonade, and while it was being prepared, whispered confidentially: "And couldn't ye put a little brandy in it all unbeknown to meself?"

The application was, that if Grant could let Jeff Davis escape "all unbeknown to meself," to let him go—Lincoln didn't want him.

He used to tell of his own experience in drilling his company for the Indian expedition above mentioned. One day, he said, he was marching twenty men in line across a field, and desired to pass through a gateway into the next enclosure. "I could not for the life of me remember the word of command for getting my company endwise so that it could get through the gate, so as we came near it I shouted: 'This company is dismissed for two minutes, when it will fall in again on the other side of the gate!' And he would add: "I sometimes think the gentlemen in the House who get into a tight place in debate, would like to dismiss the House until the next day, and then take a fair start."

Here is a story of how he disposed of a deputation of senators, who came to ask him one day to dismiss the whole Cabinet and reconstruct it, because General Cameron had retired from the War Office.

"Gentlemen, the request for a change of the whole Cabinet because I have made one change, reminds me of a story I once heard in Illinois, of a farmer who was much troubled with skunks. They annoyed the household at night, and his wife insisted that he should take measures to get rid of them. So one moonlight night he loaded his old shot-gun, and stationed himself in the yard to watch for the intruders. After some time the wife heard the gun go off, and in a few minutes the man re-entered the house. 'What luck had you?' said she. 'I hid myself behind the old wood-pile,' said he, 'with the shot-gun pointed toward the hen-coop, and before long there appeared, not one skunk, but seven. I took aim, blazed away, killed one, and he raised such a fearful smell, that I concluded it was best to let the other six go!'"

The senators laughed and retired, and nothing more was heard of Cabinet reconstruction.

Again, once three men badgered him fearfully for office, and, after coming time after time, came one day when he was very busily and anxiously engaged. They had grown insolent, and, in not very polite terms, now demanded a final reply to their applications. Lincoln, after listening quietly to their tirade, replied, with a twinkle in his eye: "You three

gentlemen remind me of a story I once heard of a poor little boy out West, who had lost his mother. His father wanted to give him a religious education, and placed him in the family of a clergyman. Every day the boy was required to commit to memory and recite one chapter of the Bible. Things proceeded smoothly until they reached the chapter which details the story of Shadrach, Meshech, and Abednego. The boy got on well until he was asked to repeat these three names, but he had forgotten them. His teacher told him he must learn them, and gave him another day to do so. Next day the boy again forgot them. 'Now,' said the teacher, 'you have again failed to remember those names, and you can go no further till you have learned them. I will give you another day on this lesson, and, if you don't repeat the names, I will punish you.' A third time the boy came and got to the stumbling-block, when the clergyman said: 'Now, tell me the names of the men in the fiery furnace.' 'Oh,' said the boy, 'here come those three bores again! I wish the devil had them!'" And thus were the three unfortunate "patriots" disposed of.

He was annoyed from the very beginning of his Presidentship with the persistent crowd of office-seekers, and he exclaimed once: "I seem like a man so busy letting rooms at one end of his house, that he has no time left to put out the fire that is blazing and destroying at the other end." And once, when he was ill with small-pox at the White House, he said to his attendants: "Tell all the office-seekers to come at once, for now I have something I can give to all of them."

Once, after signing a pardon for the son of a constituent who had been sentenced to be shot for desertion, he said: "Some of my Generals complain that I impair discipline by my frequent pardons and respites; but it rests me, after a hard day's work, that I can find some excuse for saving some poor fellow's life, and I shall go to bed happy to-night, as I think how joyous the signature of this name will make himself, his family, and his friends."

Endless are the stories of his clemency, and if in reading them we cannot always think his interference judicious, it was at least always magnanimous.

But here we must leave our reminiscences of Abraham Lincoln—surely, with all his roughness, his angularity, his quaintness, and his coarseness, the most remarkable figure on the canvas of American

history—perhaps it is not too much to say, one of the most remarkable figures in all history. He was not a hero, as the world accounts heroism, but he was a strong-brained, upright, far-seeing, shrewd, and eminently sympathetic man, who displayed at a great crisis an amazing tact, and a wonderful power such as no man had dreamed him capable of. One can best realise what Abraham Lincoln was and did, if we can speculate on the possibilities of what would have happened had a weaker, a less prudent, and a less honest man held the reins instead of him. With a sympathetic nature which earned for him the title of "Father Abraham," he had a perfect and ever present sense of justice, an unimpeachable integrity, and a stainless ambition. He was ugly, rough, and coarse in manner and person, but he was, as has been truly said, "a thoroughly genuine man; he was human in the best and highest sense of the word." To the average American of to-day, George Washington is little more, perhaps, than a "steel engraving," but Abraham Lincoln is a living and abiding personality.

JANE COSENTINE.

A STORY IN THREE CHAPTERS.

CHAPTER III.

THE days that followed were fully as bitter as Jane had foreseen. Susan, with solemn and sorrowful impressiveness, told the story wherever she went, and her veracity was above suspicion. She described her visit to Jane's mother, and the warning she had delivered, and the unfriendly spirit in which her friendly words had been received; she was eloquent in expressing her sorrow for Jane, and more eloquent in bemoaning Mrs. Cossetine's faith in Jane, and the sad awakening yet in store for her. She was loth, she said, to speak ill of any girl, and it went to her heart to think ill of a daughter of Anne Cossetine. And her sympathy for the offender, and the reluctance with which she told the story, seemed, somehow, to give a double significance to her words.

The story grew as it passed from mouth to mouth, and old friends looked askance at Jane, and their daughters ceased to come to the farm.

Jane, it was observed, had an air of guilt. Her lips were rigid, her face had no light or colour, her eyes avoided the

glances of those whom she met; it was as though she expected to be shunned, and, therefore, made no advances. She had an air of guilt, but not an air of humility and penitence. She held herself upright, stepped firmly, and looked coldly before her, as though she had hardened herself to the estrangement of friends, and was almost indifferent to the change.

By-and-by Jane's father was awakened to the gossip of the village. Some friendly neighbour, in honest fashion, gave him a piece of advice—advised him "to look after his maids a bit;" and told him, with a kindly softening of details, the story of the meetings in the wood.

"Maids be thoughtless," he said. "I told the wife I'd drop a word when I happened to come across 'ee; 'tis what I'd be glad o' anyone to do if 'twas one o' my own—Polly or Bessy, maybe. They'm heedless, an' they want pullin' up now an' then, that's about it; but folks is fond o' findin' somethin' to buzz about, an' the women, if they get together, 'll make a mountain out o' every molehill. I thought I'd drop a word, but I wouldn't be hard on the maid."

But the farmer was hard. He was a kindly, easy-going man, with a simple, clearly-defined standard of right conduct, and a predisposition to believe in the honesty and single-heartedness of everyone about him. It was not often that he was moved to severity, but his anger, when once it was roused, was righteous, and fell scathingly on the offender; it admitted no extenuating circumstances, it frowned down excuses, and nothing that the transgressor might do ever induced the farmer to forget or pardon the transgression. Jane had deceived him, and he did not spare her.

She admitted that she had met Mr. Cholmondeley; why she had met him she refused to explain. Her father's anger seemed to hang like a great shadow over the house; Dora went about silent and frightened; her mother wept and sighed, and sat listlessly over her work, and looked up anxiously when her husband came in, and watched him deprecatingly when he addressed Jane.

The days dragged slowly into weeks, and the weeks went wearily by, until Christmas and Mark appeared. And with Mark came the full bitterness of Jane's sacrifice. All through the long weeks that had preceded Mark's visit, she had wondered how she would bear to see him

again, and to see him change; to know that he too had heard the village news, to see him look at her with the questioning, mistrustful glance with which others were regarding her, and to be silent through it all. She had wondered how much he would regret his shaken faith. His faith in her had been so perfect—even when he had loved Dora best it was she, Jane, in whom he had most believed. Would he correct his old opinion, and regret his old friendship, and smile at himself for having thought her good, or would he scarcely find time to care much, only thinking of Dora, and rejoicing to find her true? But Mark surprised her. He was not immediately credulous; the story puzzled and troubled, but did not convince him, and his remnant of faith in her seemed worse than all things else to bear. It made her desire with passionate intensity to justify his faith, to keep it.

Wherever Jane went, she was conscious of Mark's eyes following her with a ruminating, puzzled glance. He attended when she spoke. He waited for some chance word that should offer a natural explanation of the garbled, foolish story that everyone was telling. When the days went on and no explanation came, it seemed to Jane that his glance grew graver and more searching—that his faith was wavering.

It was a day or two after Christmas, and Mark had met Jane returning alone from some errand to the village. In a somewhat purposeless way he turned and joined her. He talked a good deal as they walked on together, telling her briefly of business worries, asking her advice on small and personal matters, as he had been used to do in the days when Dora was still a child, and he and Jane were tried friends, and confided in one another. It struck Jane that he was not speaking as lightly as the slight worries warranted, that he spoke with deeper purpose.

"This reminds me of old times," he said, after a little spell of silence. "Do you remember those old times—when you were a girl and I was a lad?"

"Yes. They were very long ago," said Jane. She felt that her tone was ungracious. She could not speak of those past times, and smile, and be even-tempered.

"Not so very long ago," said Mark. "I often think of them."

"Do you?" said Jane quietly.

"And of what good friends we were. We were always good friends. I believe I

told you everything that happened to me."

Jane smiled faintly. She dimly understood in what direction Mark's speech was tending.

"I told you all my troubles—I remember that," said Mark.

Jane looked on before her at the end of the lane, and at the grey sky with its heavy, rain-laden clouds. Her lips smiled again slightly, but her eyes were dim with tears.

"You told me your worries too," said Mark, after a moment.

"Yes—when I had worries," said Jane. "Had I any? I suppose I had sometimes."

She quickened her steps a little, and her face suddenly flushed. She went on talking because she feared what Mark's next words would be. She scarcely knew what she said; she spoke fast and at random.

"Isn't it hard," she said, "to remember things that bothered one long ago? I can't remember anything. I don't think I had any troubles."

There was silence for a minute. The wind whistled plaintively through the bare hazel branches in the hedges along the lane; the clouds drifted heavily across the grey sky overhead; there was no warmth, no colour, no sunshine in the day; there was nothing to beguile Mark's thoughts to a happier theme.

"You have troubles nowadays, Jane?" he said, after a minute.

Jane looked at him quickly, and looked away again. She did not answer at once. Then she spoke suddenly.

"I can't tell you, Mark—I can't tell you," she said.

"I won't ask, then," said Mark in a colder tone.

"Life is full of trouble," said Jane, passionately and hopelessly. "I can't talk about it—I can't explain. Let us talk of something else."

After that morning, Mark made no more friendly advances. Every day, it seemed to Jane, something of warmth, something of friendliness, passed from his glance and tone. His coldness froze her. When she looked up suddenly and met his glance, he looked away. She felt that his faith in her was failing day by day, and day by day she distrusted more the strength of her own purpose; she began to be afraid of her own impulses. She began to wonder whether suddenly some moment, when Mark looked at her or spoke to her with this new look or tone of

unfriendliness, the temptation that beset her might not prove too strong—whether she might not suddenly break down; forget Mark's happiness, forget all, except the desire to stand well in his eyes; and, in some passionate, selfish, irresistible impulse, cast the truth at them all, and clear herself.

Dora was happily unconscious of Jane's temptation. She had almost forgotten, in the general disapprobation of Jane, that there was injustice in the disapprobation. She easily adapted her mind to the minds of those about her, and was naturally critical of her sister, whom others were regarding with disfavour. She was as light-hearted and gay-spirited as she had ever been; she was tyrannical and charmingly disdainful towards Mark; and she snubbed Jane's speeches pertly and with perfect ease.

Now and then, as the days went on, it struck Jane that Dora's charming pertness was less charming to Mark than of old. He was too obviously patient with her. He was thoughtful and preoccupied when she had done talking.

Jane and her mother were busy with flour and rolling-pin in the kitchen one morning, when Dora and Mark came in together.

Dora stood before the kitchen fire with one foot on the fender, and looked round lazily to see what work was going on.

"There's lemon-peel. You can bring me a bit of that lemon-peel, Mark," she ordered.

"The peel's for the pudding, Mark," said Mrs. Cossentine promptly. "Take an' put it out of her sight; Dora's as greedy as a child. Now you've come in, Dora, you can help Jane; there's the figs to stone, an' the currants are wantin' to be washed."

Dora was warming her hands before the fire, and admiring her pretty pink fingers, through which the bright light was shining. There was a pensive, musing look for a minute in her eyes. Next moment she let fall some fragment of her thoughts.

"If one was a lady there'd be no meals to see about," she said feelingly.

"There's the eggs to beat," continued her mother. "And Jane's hands is full"

"I'd like to be a lady," Dora said, with a little sigh.

"A fine lady?" said Mark, smiling at her.

"Oh no!" said Dora impatiently; "a shabby lady, of course—a lady in a turned gown, with cotton gloves, and ugly, old faded ribbons. How I hate looking shabby! and I always do—always. My feather's

out of curl, and my hat looks horrid. I daresay you think I like to look a fright. Perhaps you think a straight old feather and an old dyed gown look very pretty. How stupid you are, Mark!"

"Don't hearken to her, Mark," said Mrs. Cossentine.

"But she's about right," Mark admitted. "I'm stupid enough about clothes, I know."

"Oh yes, and about everything!" said Dora. "I believe you never care about your coats being hideous, and your boots having great stumping soles and ugly laces. I believe you like the thought of belonging to a nasty, common warehouse, and being dull always. One might as well be a beetle. Why weren't you a beetle? Fancy being a man, and always crawling on in the same way, and never knowing anything about Paris, and London, and the parks, and the carriages, and all the sights, and the shops, and the things to buy——"

Jane was moving about with more bustle than was necessary. Mrs. Cossentine wiped the flour from her hands, and stood upright.

"Why, wherever did you get such notions, Dora?" she said in amazement. "Who's been talkin' nonsense like that to you?"

The question, for some reason or other, had a strange and sudden effect on Dora. She started, and looked round quickly at Jane, and coloured. "I read it in a book," she said; "and there's nothing very funny—is there?—in not wanting to be dull. I always thought like that—I didn't want anyone to talk to me. Where's the figs, then? I can be stoning them."

An hour later Dora and Jane were left alone in the kitchen, and Jane seized the opportunity to say something she had long been intending to say. She pushed the citron, which she was slicing, away from her, and sat down at the table and looked across at Dora. Dora glanced up quickly and caught sight of Jane's face, and tried to silence the remonstrance that was coming.

"It's no good to be lecturing me, Jane. I don't care, and I shan't listen."

"You're behaving badly," said Jane quietly. "You're behaving very badly—that was all I was going to say."

"I don't care," repeated Dora.

There was a moment's pause. Then Jane looked again at her sister. She tried to speak gently, and her voice shook a little. "He's so good to you, Dora," she said; "so good to you, and so fond of you!"

"Oh, I know," said Dora. "Other people might be fond of me, too. Mark isn't the only one. And I'm tired of him. He's always about in the way, and I'm tired of always seeing him."

"Dora!"

"I am. I'm sick of it. He's so dull, and so good. I hate people to be so dreadfully good. Why does he have such a long holiday?"

"Were you ever in love with Mark, Dora?"

"In love with him? I don't know. He wanted me to be engaged to him, so I was."

"You are sorry about it now?"

"I don't know that I'm sorry. All girls, if they're nice-looking, are engaged. I was engaged before Sissy Maynard, and the girls at school used to call her the prettiest."

"You mean to be true to Mark, Dora? You are going to marry him?"

"Oh, yes, I suppose so—some time. Not yet. Mark will never look like a gentleman, and talk about things that are interesting. He would think ugly great silver ear-rings just as nice as gold ones with pearls in them."

Argument with Dora was unprofitable; Jane went back to her work with a feeling of helplessness. She was realising how little she had served Mark by her sacrifice; how small was his prospect of happiness if his happiness was in Dora's hands.

During the next few days Dora perplexed Jane more and more. She was impatient, without her old endeavour to be charming; she answered Mark sharply, and did not smile to soften the sharp speech; she had suddenly lost all desire to please. And Mark seemed less distressed than thoughtful at the change. His eyes rested gravely upon her; he had ceased to smile at her pert little sallies.

At last the crisis came. It was late in the afternoon, a few days after the New Year. Mrs. Cossentine and Jane sat sewing by the fire, waiting for the others to come in to tea. The farmer had ridden to the town to market; Dora had gone alone to the village; and Mark, nearly an hour ago, had started to fetch her. It was a quiet evening; the click of the latch, as someone let the gate swing back, broke the silence sharply. Jane put down her work and listened to the steps coming through the yard.

"Dora's come without Mark," she said.

"They've missed, then," said Mrs. Cossentine comfortably.

Dora came in flushed and out of breath. Her face was tear-stained; but she had brushed away the tears, and her blue eyes were angry rather than sorrowful. She threw herself down impatiently before the fire, and looked, in excited, half-frightened defiance, from her mother to Jane.

"You an' Mark missed, then?" said Mrs. Cossentine.

"What need had Mark to come after me?" said Dora angrily. "What does he want always following me about?"

"He thought 't would be a dark walk round by the wood from the Binny's."

"I didn't go to the Binny's," said Dora recklessly. "Why shouldn't I go where I choose? And I shall. You can say what you like—you, and Mark, and Jane. Mark can tell father—and he will tell him—I don't care—he can tell him now if he likes. Father isn't in yet, is he?"

"No, he isn't back," said Mrs. Cossentine. "You and Mark haven't been quarrelling, Dora?"

"It's Mark's fault," said Dora, incoherently. "I don't care—it's his fault. He knows now that other people can think me pretty—he isn't the only person who's fond of me. He shouldn't have come to fetch me—I didn't tell him to. He wouldn't have met us then."

Jane was bending forward.

"Who was with you?" she said sternly. "Speak clearly, Dora."

"I am speaking clearly," said Dora. "I don't care—you can know it all—Mark will tell everyone, if I don't. And there's no harm in it—I'm not ashamed. I couldn't help it if he fell in love with me—"

"Who is she meaning—who is she meaning, Jane?" said Mrs. Cossentine, tremulous and bewildered.

Dora looked straight before her into the fire, and spoke with a little defiant air of unconcern.

"It's Mr. Cholmondeley. Jane knows he was in love with me—he's been in love with me months and months. Everyone thought 'twas Jane. He wouldn't have looked at Jane; he didn't think her pretty a bit. I couldn't help it if he fell in love with me. I can't help it if Mark's in a rage. I was saying good-bye to him, and Mark saw me. I don't care. He's more in love with me than Mark is; he wants me to go to London, so he can marry me and make me a lady, and give me all the things he wants to. He'll tell Mark now. I'm very glad! Mark shouldn't have gone

after him. I suppose he thought, like everyone else, that 'twas Jane Mr. Cholmondeley was in love with! I suppose he thought Jane was the prettiest. He'll be surprised that anyone should think most of me! Oh, I shall go upstairs: there is Mark come back."

Dora left the room, and Mrs. Cossentine, weeping and trembling, but still bewildered, rose up hurriedly and followed her. Jane waited a moment, then followed too.

That evening was the recapitulation of an evening which was still painfully clear in Jane's memory. If their father's anger had fallen heavily on Jane, it fell with doubled force on Dora, who had allowed Jane to bear her fault. Dora was called downstairs; and came back sobbing, with all her defiance lost in childish fright. Her mother came up, and cried with her, and tried to comfort her. And late in the evening the farmer walked wrathfully across the fields to the Hall and saw the Squire, and spoke his mind freely and emphatically.

The next morning the news went about the village that young Mr. Cholmondeley had gone. He had gone suddenly, and rumour was busy surmising where and wherefore. The servants from the Hall gave the information they possessed, but gave it guardedly, to correct the impression that they had no more to give. The young Squire was engaged to a lady "up the country," and he'd gone to visit her. Perhaps the Squire himself had suggested it. Perhaps Farmer Cossentine had had something to do with the suggestion. Farmer Cossentine was careful over his daughters, and his girl, Dora (no, not Jane, but Dora, the pretty one—Mr. Cholmondeley had always an eye for prettiness)—Dora had been meeting Mr. Cholmondeley, and taking presents from him, and listening to his flattery and love-making, and the farmer didn't like it; and the Squire hadn't liked it. And Mr. Cholmondeley was gone.

Mark, too, was going away. The engagement was broken off, and he was going immediately. Jane had heard the news from others. She had avoided Mark himself; all through the evening that had followed his discovery she had kept apart from him; she had not dared look at him to see his misery.

It was late the next morning that she came into the sitting-room, where Mark

was standing, and found herself alone with him. He looked at her gently and gravely as she entered, and she suddenly forgot what she had come to seek, and stood still beside him at the window, looking out at the wintry sunshine. After a minute Mark spoke.

"I wish you had told me, Jane," he said.

Jane looked out before her at the chrysanthemums bending in the breeze, and tried to think of some answer to make; and was silent.

"You tried to shield her. It was good of you—generous—like you," he said.

"Don't praise me," said Jane quickly. "You don't know. I did as I wished. I was less good than you think."

There was silence for a minute, then Mark spoke again, gravely, not looking at Jane:

"I blame myself," he said. "Dora was a child. I had no right to bind her as I did. She hated the engagement; she was grateful to anyone who promised to release her from it. That was it—that was it, Jane."

"I don't think that was it," said Jane.

"The engagement was a mistake," said Mark, slowly. "We both discovered it."

Jane did not speak for a moment; then she looked up searchingly at him. "You, too?" she said.

Mark looked at her gravely. "I, too," he said.

There was another pause, then: "You are going away?" said Jane.

"Yes."

"When are you going, Mark?"

"Now; to-day."

"You will never come any more," said Jane. "We shall not see you again?"

"Yes; I shall come again," said Mark.

They stood for a minute, side by side, in silence. The chrysanthemums beneath the window bent and rose as the breeze touched them; the sky above was a soft, tender grey; the wintry sunshine came in through the square panes and touched Jane's hair and dress, and fell along the floor. Mark looked at the sky and the chrysanthemums, and back again at Jane, and there his glance rested. He was suddenly conscious of his own thoughts—conscious of why he had found his engagement a mistake, and of why he would come back again.

THE STORY OF OUR LIVES FROM YEAR TO YEAR

ALL THE YEAR ROUND

A Weekly Journal

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A DATELESS BARGAIN.

By C. L. PIRKIS,

Author of "Lady Lovelace," etc.

CHAPTER XLVI.

"UNCLE ARCHIE, you may take off your over-coat while you eat; but you'll have to put it on directly after. I am going to Greenock to-night, and I'm sure you won't let me go alone," said Joyce to the old gentleman, as she kissed her welcome to him and Aunt Bell.

Uncle Archie arrived at Tretwick on the day that Kathleen had her interview with Joyce in the churchyard. He and Kathleen must have passed each other on the road.

"To Greenock!" repeated Aunt Bell. "My dear, do you know your uncle was sixty-five last week, and can't be expected to fly about the country like a bird?"

The old gentleman turned upon her sharply.

"Well, what if I did have a birthday last week," he said raspingly, "I'm none the worse for it this week, am I? And if Joyce and I choose to start off on a journey to the North Pole, whose business is it so much as our own, I should like to know?"

Aunt Bell was silenced at once. Mrs. Bullen's exclamations died unspoken. She contented herself with taking possession of Aunt Bell and her wraps, and escorting her upstairs to her room.

Uncle Archie looked grimly after the retreating figures of the ladies. Then he turned to Joyce.

"Now that those women are gone, Joyce, we can talk in peace; or rather, you can, for I see you have something to tell me."

He paused a moment. Years ago he had got into the habit of being aggressive in his talk with Joyce, and of making brief

pauses at the end of his sentences in order to give her time to fire off her retorts. It was hard to get out of the habit, although these were days when retorts had ceased to be fired. She had no bright repartees lying in wait for him now.

So he filled in the gap himself with a sigh.

"I know you'll say 'I'm a woman, just as much as the others, I suppose.' Well, I suppose you are; but somehow you're so clear-headed I'm apt to forget the fact at times."

Joyce's reply was to kneel beside him as he sat at table, place Donovan's watch in front of him, and point to the sentence written within the lid.

A great surprise had met Uncle Archie on his arrival at Tretwick. He had expected to find Joyce transformed by her months of sorrow into some shadowy counterpart of Mab. From her letters, he had judged that her strong, brave spirit had collapsed at last, and that to him would be assigned the difficult task of preaching her into her old self again.

"I would sooner, a hundred times over, she should have deteriorated into her mother's likeness than into Mab's," he had confided to Aunt Bell during the journey, "I could then have scolded the pair in one breath. But as no doubt you remember, it was always just as useless to scold Mab as it would have been to scold the mist on the top of the Mendips; and I suppose it will be precisely the same with Joyce now."

But directly he had set eyes on Joyce he was driven to confess that he was altogether out in his reckoning. Although, in the thin, pale girl, who linked her arm in his and led him into the house, there was little enough of the beautiful, light-hearted Joyce of days gone by, there was yet in her no-

thing to recall the likeness of the shadow, hesitating Mab.

"She has taken something into her head now, and whatever it is she shall have her own way about it, though nothing may come of it," the old gentleman said to himself as he felt her grip on his arm, and noted the steady look of purpose in her eye. So her first words naturally did not take his breath away.

But the sight of Donovan's watch, introduced without a word of explanation, did.

"I don't understand—I don't understand," he faltered, rubbing his eyes and turning the watch from right to left, from left to right, as if somewhere in its tarnished silver sides he would get a hint for the solution of the mystery.

Joyce had to tell him the whole of Kathleen's story in the churchyard, before he began to understand at all. Then he, too, as Joyce had done, began to feel his brain overweighted.

"Give me time to think, give me time to think," were his first words.

So Joyce leaned her head against his shoulder as she knelt beside him, clasped her hands over his arm, and gave him as much time as he cared to take.

Five minutes would have covered it. Then there came a question, gravely put.

"And I suppose, Joyce, the outcome of this is that you mean to start forthwith to Greenock, get a boat there of some sort and go steaming away to latitude 62° 32', longitude 7° 10'?"

"That is what I mean to do."

"And when you get there you expect to find——"

He broke off abruptly, not daring to speak the words which might cover Joyce's expectations.

"Uncle Archie, I expect nothing—hope for nothing; but go I must."

"Get me a map."

Joyce spread one before him on the table.

"I have already looked it out," she said. "North latitude 62° 32', west longitude 7° 10', is in the wide ocean. It is close to the Faroes; it may be an island not marked on this map. I don't believe half the islands are marked here."

Uncle Archie shook his head, frowning heavily.

"Mab's last words were 'always the sound of the sea, Joyce,'" said Joyce in a tremulous undertone, as though groping in the dark for the hidden meaning of Mab's words.

Uncle Archie's frown grew deeper.

"Mab suffered from blood to the brain. No wonder she had always a rushing sound in her ears," he said curtly.

Then, as though to prevent a recurrence to a topic which seemed to lift his feet from the solid earth and to set his brain rocking, he began asking a multitude of questions concerning Kathleen and her story.

"You ought to have cross-questioned her rigorously, Joyce," he concluded. "There may not be more than a spice of truth in what she told you. She was always a good hand at fibbing. Her dash of Irish blood is quite enough to make her do her romancing easily."

Joyce shook her head. "There was no romancing in what she told me this morning," she said; "if you had seen her you could not have doubted she was speaking the truth."

"I wish I had seen her. You should have kept her here till I came. It is all so wildly incoherent—inexplicable. Not so far as her story of the League is concerned—that may be true enough, in outline that is—but her own conduct. She vows vengeance against her husband, yet goes a fine roundabout way to get it. This pledge to secrecy, too—I can't understand it!"

"She may be afraid of the consequences if her name should be mentioned."

"Yet her conduct in mentioning it at all is not that of a timid woman."

"A strong purpose makes cowards brave sometimes. Ah-h—" and here Joyce broke off abruptly, as though struck by a sudden thought.

"What is it?" queried Uncle Archie, turning sharply round and facing her.

"No, I will have nothing to do with it," she said, speaking slowly, half to herself. "I see now why she came telling me this story, and who she wants to have the credit of it."

"Who! what!"

"She wants the League to think that Maurice O'Shea, Bryan's brother, has turned informer, and then they'll take his life as they took Ned's, and Bryan will suffer as she has suffered. No, I will have nothing to do with it."

"Upon my word, Joyce, I don't think you need be squeamish on the matter. They're a set of scoundrels, every man of them, and, so long as they get paid out one way or another, I really don't care two straws who helps them into their coffins."

"I will have nothing to do with it,

Uncle Archie. I can't tell you why, but all desire for vengeance has died out of my heart now. I couldn't take it, even if it were offered to my hand."

Uncle Archie looked at her till there came a mist before his eyes.

"Don't get too angelic, Joyce," he said huskily, "or I shall expect you'll get to heaven before I shall."

"Angelic! If you could have seen into my heart at one time, you would have feared I should never get to heaven at all! Oh, Uncle Archie!" she added tremulously, as her thoughts flew back to the hour of agony she had spent on her knees beside Mab's bed, "it was only lack of opportunity saved me. Nothing else."

"Joyce, Joyce," said the old gentleman deprecatingly, "don't speak like that of yourself. It pains me."

"It's true, Uncle Archie. And what is more, Kathleen's little scheme of vengeance is weak beside those I have contrived, and executed in imagination. But all those feelings are dead now." She broke off a moment, then resumed, in a low, uncertain tone, "I didn't sit all those hours on Mab's grave, with Captain Buckingham's tomb facing me, for nothing. I've learnt to look at it without a curse rising to my lips. I feel now the sins of those men might have been mine if——"

But here Uncle Archie laid his finger on her lips.

"That'll do, Joyce, you shake my nerves when you talk in that fashion. Let those men be. As Kathleen said, Bryan will get his dues safe enough some day, and we'll leave him to get them his own way, while we think of something else." Here he laid his hand upon the watch which lay before him, with the map, on the table. "Now, so far as I understand you, your idea is to work out this clue—if clue it be—entirely unaided by the police. Now my idea is to telegraph at once to Morton, and set other brains—brains used to that sort of work—going on the same scent."

"Telegraph then, Uncle Archie; set their brains going; let Morton go with us if you like. I'll see he doesn't do any harm this time," said Joyce, with a bitter recollection of her hour of waiting on the bridge, and her lost chance. "But, all the same, I go to Greenock to-night."

"Very well, then, Morton shall have a telegram before night. Now about Greenock. What are we to do when we get there?"

"Do! there is only one thing to do there.

Get a boat at once. You'll know best what sort of a boat it ought to be."

"No doubt I shall. And then——?"

"Then we'll start at once for—for this place."

"Well?"

"And—and—find out everything that—that is to be found out."

Uncle Archie did not reply. He leaned his head thoughtfully upon his hand. His brains were clouded. Joyce's plan, wild and hopeless as it seemed, was yet one not to be dismissed; unless a better could be substituted.

"The equinoxes are just setting in, I suppose you know that," he said presently, by way of getting time for himself.

"Equinoxes! What are they after what we've been through?"

"And, Joyce, as your aunt said just now, I was sixty-five last week, and if I fall ill you'll have to look after me. I shan't let Aunt Bell come; she's always fit for nothing at sea."

"As if I didn't know how to look after you just as well as Aunt Bell! She had better go back with mother and the General into Gloucestershire. It'll take two to look after mother when she hears we are going," answered Joyce, not intending sarcasm.

"And, Joyce, if I die you'll have to bury me in the sea, you will."

"Uncle Archie, if you're afraid, don't venture. I'll go alone."

"And, Joyce"—and now Uncle Archie's voice took a deeper tone—"you mustn't build on this—this message of Donovan's. After all it may mean nothing—nothing, at least so far as we are concerned. You mustn't build any hopes upon it."

"Uncle Archie, hope is dead in my heart as well as fear."

"And, Joyce"—this yet more gravely and a little tremulously—"there is something else you ought to face, child, though it is hard for me to tell it you. Remember, whatever in the shape of tidings we come upon, there can be little enough of joy for you to be got out of them. Our suspense can be solved only in one of two ways. Frank living, means Frank voluntarily in hiding from us. Frank, honest, true, loyal as he left us, means Frank in his grave."

Joyce's voice was not tremulous as she answered, with never a tear in her sad eyes.

"Then, Uncle Archie, I am journeying from one grave to another; but still I must go."

CHAPTER XLVII.

IT is all very well to say with a fine air of decision "I will," or "I must go here, or there." Solomon's carpet is a thing of the past; and, though we can swim easily enough on our wishes from world to world in the dreamland of poetry, in the waking hours of prose, ways and means have to be consulted. Joyce and Uncle Archie having arrived at Greenock, drew as it were a long breath, opened their eyes wide, and took the measure of the road they had to go. A full purse will carry most things before it, but it cannot quite lift old Time off its feet. It secured a good strong craft—in other words, a small coasting steamer—for the two, in which to undertake their somewhat visionary journey towards the Arctic Circle, an experienced Captain for it, and a competent crew of some ten or twelve men; but it could not compress these achievements into the twenty-four hours which Joyce's eager heart would have deemed a liberal allowance of time for them; so a week from the day on which they had left Tretwick found them still at a Greenock hotel, with preparations all but, yet not finally, complete.

To Joyce's fancy that week at Greenock seemed to stand alone in the current of her life, isolated from the miserable past with its crush of sorrow and strain of suspense, isolated also from the dreaded future with its possible solutions of direful mysteries. It had a lull and a quiet all its own. It was like the brief breathing space on a battle-field, when the sullen roar of the enemy's artillery momentarily silenced, the General in command asks himself, "Now, is the day over, or will they open fire again?"

Every day of that week of waiting and preparation, the feeling seemed to grow upon them that now they were nearing the end of their long, painful suspense; a feeling which Uncle Archie characteristically put under a bushel by exhibiting an extra amount of cynical irritability, and which Joyce, naturally enough, hugged to her heart, saying to herself, with every breath she drew, "By so much nearer the end; one way or another it will soon be all over for us now."

She could not, with any amount of trying, have realised the picture of their little boat cruising fruitlessly in and out among those northern islands day after day, till stress of wind or weather beat them off into some sheltered harbour. It was of

no use for Morton, when in quick response to Uncle Archie's telegram, he made his appearance at their hotel, to shrug his shoulders, turn up his solemn eyes, and say, in an altogether superior manner, "Of course I'm willing enough, sir, to go cruising with you and the young lady anywhere you wish, but if you call a memorandum of that sort a clue, then I've followed my profession for five-and-twenty years for nothing. It was most probably a note scribbled by the Irishman, as an aid to memory of something that does not concern us in the slightest degree." Joyce did not so much as take the trouble to answer him; he might just as well have tried to persuade her that the solid earth on which she stood was nothing but vapour. One question, however, which the man put, set her thinking. "Had Kathleen, when she brought the watch, made any allusion to the handwriting within? Were there grounds for supposing that she was cognisant of any facts connected therewith?"

Joyce could not feel her conscience at rest on the score of Kathleen. She blamed herself bitterly that she had not made a stronger effort to detain the girl. On the day after her arrival at Greenock, Joyce had written a long, kind letter, begging her to come to them at once, and undertake with them this journey to the North. She wrote generously as well as kindly, intimating that her reasons for wishing this were twofold. In the first place, should good result from the journey, there was no one she knew would share more heartily in her joy than the one who had gone halves with her in her sorrow. Secondly, if in the end their worst fears were realised, and nothing but fresh misery lay in store for them, there was no one in all the world to whom she would turn more gladly for sympathy than to Kathleen, her companion as well as maid in days gone by. This letter Joyce addressed to Kathleen at Overbury, totally ignorant of the fact that at that very moment the girl was fulfilling her duties as Sylvia's maid, within a quarter of a mile of the hotel where she and Uncle Archie had taken up their quarters.

Joyce had received no reply to this letter. Morton's question rendered her doubly impatient of Kathleen's silence. She despatched a second letter, even more kind and entreating than the first.

Morton shook his head gravely over it all, and confessed his opinion that everything was turning out exactly as he had anticipated from the very first.

To say truth, Morton could never quite bring himself to believe in Kathleen's honesty of purpose. To his way of thinking, everything she said had a hidden meaning, everything she did was done with an ulterior motive which only an initiate—in other words a detective—could divine.

It was possibly easier for the worthy man thus to magnify Kathleen's capacity for intrigue, than to confess how completely he and his colleagues had been at fault as to the cause of her hurried flight into Ireland.

Uncle Archie, after giving careful consideration to the matter, had decided that no good purpose could be served by communicating to the police in their entirety Kathleen's revelations to Joyce. He had, therefore, adopted a mid-course. The girl's purpose of revenge, after Joyce had let in light upon it, could be easily enough read. No good end would be promoted by furthering it. It would be better, therefore, to leave the tale of the timeless league untold. It had been virtually dissolved by the deaths of the captain and one out of its three working members. It would be easy at any time to relate the story of its formation, should necessity for so doing arise. With regard, however, to Kathleen's statement that her husband had been Ned's murderer, matters stood otherwise. This was a piece of information the old gentleman's conscience would not allow him to keep back. So he handed it over to Morton as though it were a surmise evolved from his own meditations on the matter, or based on the description given of the man who had shot Ned, and had disappeared on the Greenock quay.

"Someone must be sent from Scotland Yard to ask that young woman a question or two. Her statements can scarcely be taken for Gospel," was the remark with which Morton showed Uncle Archie that his innocent subterfuge had been pierced in a moment.

"No one would question her to such purpose as I should. She would tell me what she would tell to no other living soul," cried Joyce, suddenly rising from her chair to fetch pen and ink wherewith to despatch a telegram at once to the Donovans' cottage. A great unspoken dread had suddenly arisen in her heart—what if Kathleen had received the terrible summons to join her husband and had not dared refuse to obey it?

She made the telegram as urgent as she could.

"Come to us here at once, we want you. It is of the greatest importance that you should come without delay," ran the message. In company with Uncle Archie she herself carried it to the office in the town. She would return by way of the quay, she thought, so as to give a passing glance to their little steamer secured alongside, and note how far its preparations for departure had progressed.

Morton had shown himself particularly interested in the outfit of that little steamer and the hiring of its crew. He had displayed a technical knowledge on these matters a little astonishing to Uncle Archie.

"You see, sir," he had said by way of explanation, "my profession gives a man a wonderful facility for acquiring knowledge wherever it is to be had. An orderly brain, and keen powers of observation, I take it, are the first requisites necessary for learning the A B C of any calling. Now unless a man in our profession possesses both these admirable qualities, I assure you he is nowhere at all, sir—nowhere at all."

"Then there must be a great many of you in that delightful position," Uncle Archie had replied snappishly, for Morton's platitudes never failed to irritate him.

Morton had objected strongly to the name of the steamer, "Frea."

"It's a name of ill-omen," he had bluntly informed the Captain, a bluff, good-tempered Dane, who spoke excellent English. "Now if those English or Scotch sailors you are engaging to make up your crew knew a little of ancient mythology they'd refuse to sail in her."

Upon which the Captain had laughed heartily, and had replied: "Yes, but you see, they don't know a scrap of it; nor do I either, for the matter of that. We Danes know nothing of your English superstitions. All I know is, my little craft had her first nail struck on a Friday; she was christened on a Friday, and so we called her 'Frea,' who is the godmother of all the Fridays. And there's not a Dane on board of her who'll give the matter a second thought."

"Not that I'm superstitious," Morton had continued. "But I was born in Cardiff, where they think a good deal of such things. Now, if any man in Cardiff——"

Here Uncle Archie had interrupted him irritably. "My dear sir," he had said, "we are in London, not in St. Petersburg—I mean, we are in Greenock, not in Cardiff. Be so good as to leave your superstitions in the place of your nativity."

Naturally enough the "Frea" saw a good deal of Uncle Archie and Joyce during that week of waiting. Not a day but what they might have been seen making their way along the bustling quay. More than ever crowded and bustling it seemed to be on this particular afternoon that Joyce despatched her telegram to Kathleen. A big steamer was getting under way, its deck was thronged with passengers, who were waving their adieus to cheery or sorrowful friends and relatives lingering yet on the pier. Its prow was turned southwards, and Joyce concluded, from sundry expressions which caught her ear, that New York was its destination.

"One would think," said Uncle Archie snappishly, "from the fuss they're making, and the pocket-handkerchiefs they are flourishing in our faces, that America was the bourne whence no traveller returns, instead of a country which sends back to us our rogues and vagabonds—with one or two native specimens added to the number—almost as fast as it gets them."

Joyce made no reply. Her attention had been attracted by two female figures on board the steamer, whose outlines seemed strangely familiar to her.

They were standing near the wheel, one was tall and of good carriage, the other was short and slight. Both were dressed in neat, plain mourning, with heavy crape veils. The neatness, however, of the one dress was the neatness of a lady, the neatness of the other dress that of a maid.

As the steamer with one final pant and plunge put distance between itself and the quay, the taller of the two, suddenly turning, faced the shore, raising her veil.

The shifting September sun, playing hide-and-seek among the crowd on the deck, made plain to Joyce the pale face, fair hair, and satirical mouth of Sylvia Buckingham.

Joyce's heart failed her lest the small figure beside Sylvia might be Kathleen.

There could scarcely be a doubt but what Sylvia had seen Joyce as she stood on the quay, for although the slight smile which parted her lips and showed her small teeth, could scarcely be construed into one of friendly recognition, it had yet a world of meaning.

"See," it seemed to say; "you and I have had more than one tussle together, who do you think has got the best of it now?"

A letter received the next morning from old Donovan gave substance to Joyce's

misgivings. He wrote, with many apologies, in reply to Miss Shenstone's telegram, that Kathleen had left home about ten days previously, having undertaken the duties of travelling maid to a lady who had shown him and his family great kindness in their time of sorrow—a Miss Buckingham. He thought the lady's name was not unknown to Miss Shenstone. It was a bitter blow to him that Kathleen could not rest contented in her own home. He had received a letter from her only that morning, stating that she was on the point of starting for America. When he would hear from her again he did not know.

"I am now bereaved of both my children," concluded the old man, in simple, scriptural fashion; "and I am bereaved."

CHRONICLES OF SCOTTISH COUNTIES.

FIFE AND KINROSS.

THE shores of Fife, indented with bays and inlets, gave a home from indefinitely early times to a race of hardy seamen and adventurous traders, who may be said to have been the making of Scotland. The kingdom of Fife, indeed, seems to have been the nucleus of the monarchy. The notable [little towns that clustered about the havens and inlets on the coast were, probably, once united by some mutual bond, like the Cinque Ports of the coast of Kent; but like those ports, they were more concerned as to having their own way at sea than upon land, and were content to pay a moderate tribute to the overlord of the district. The secret of the prosperity of these early seats of commerce is probably to be found in the trade with the East, which, from the seventh century downwards, found an outlet in the Baltic ports, and brought the spices and rich tissues of the Indian shores among the cold regions of the North. Then the herring fishery contributed its share to the prosperity of the men of Fife; and the long wars with England, especially when France was, as generally happened, an ally, threw into their hands most of the foreign trade of the country. These old seafaring towns are now mostly decayed, their harbours only resorted to by a few trading brigs or coasting steamers. But the wealth acquired by the merchant adventurers was chiefly invested in land, and the great part of the landed gentry of Fife owe their origin to

ancestors who ploughed the waves and brought home harvests from the deep.

Thus it happened that there was gold and silver in Fife, when all to the westward there was only wild heath and shaggy wood; and, as a natural consequence, it was in Fife that the King of the country had his chief seat and kept the royal exchequer. It is generally the fate of prosperous and cultivated countries, to be ruled by a dynasty from the hills; and the King of Scotland, who was for long little more than King of Fife, was a Gael no doubt, who, recognised as chief of chiefs among neighbouring Highland tribes, was able both to intimidate and protect a more industrious and peace-loving people. When the Prince waxes old, and, perhaps, fat and indolent, he is often superseded by some more energetic leader; and, allowing for romantic embellishments, perhaps, after all, the story of Macbeth resolves itself into a contest between rival claimants for the crown, something like that of the Bruce and Baliols centuries later, in which Macbeth was the nationalist champion, while Malcolm was supported by all the power of the Saxon kingdom.

If we cross the Forth to the county of Fife by Queensferry, we are reminded at once of these old-world matters, and are more or less surprised at the tenacity and vitality of local tradition in these parts. In England, it is the rarest possible thing to meet with a countryman who knows anything about the past history of the district in which he lives; but here the first passer-by will tell you how Queensferry took its title from Margaret, the Saxon Princess, who has also given her name to the adjoining bay, called Margaret's Hope, because there her ship was cast ashore and wrecked, as with her brother and sister she made her escape from the cruel Normans. Rescued from the waves, the Princess and her train made their way across the country to Malcolm's royal castle at Dunfermline, and the spot where the Princess rested on the way, was long pointed out as St. Margaret's Stone.

The peninsula where the ferry lands its passengers is of some interest, as having formed the camping-ground of Oliver Cromwell's army, when he led it across the Forth in 1651; and as the proposed site of a settlement of an extraordinary character, planned and even partly commenced before the civil wars. This was no less than a New Jerusalem of a material type. Jews from every part were to be invited to take up

their abode here, and help to found a commercial city, which should open out the dimly-remembered tradewith Eastern lands, and bring the ships of all nations to its capacious harbours, while temporal and spiritual blessings should be showered down upon the land. That all this promising scheme came to nothing was due to the malevolence of the existing Government, who had no sympathy with the national aspirations.

Had the New Jerusalem ever come into existence, its patriarch would necessarily have been the parish minister of Inverkeithing, in whose pastoral charge was the whole of the surrounding district. The old burgh of Inverkeithing is notable for little beyond an old Palace called the Inns (now reduced to the condition of humble lodgings) where Annabella Drummond, the Queen of Robert the Third, and mother of James the First, died early in the fifteenth century. To a recent date, at all events, so staunch are ancient customs and privileges in these parts, the Palace preserved its immunities, although deserted for centuries by its royal tenants; and, while everywhere else in the burgh only freemen were allowed to practise any art or handicraft, those living within the limits of the Inns might exercise their trades without any other qualification.

Still stands on the coast beyond Margaret's Hope the huge square tower of Rossyth Castle, altogether surrounded by the waters at times of high tide. This was once the family seat of a branch of the royal Stuarts, from whom, it is said, were descended those Stewarts who settled among the fens—that Prior of Ely, for instance, who is said to have been the great-uncle of Oliver Cromwell's mother. It was a curious turn of Fortune's wheel that brought Oliver with an army to chase the Stuart King from his throne, and that placed his camp within sight of the tower which, if genealogists were to be believed, was the castle of his ancestors. There were those about the Parliamentary General—the courtiers of the rising sun—who did not fail to remind him of the supposed connection; and Oliver, it is said, spent an hour in a visit to the castle, even then desolate and ruinous.

There is nothing else to detain us till we reach Dunfermline, about which may still be imagined an air of royal dignity, as its spires and towers are described rising from a rich border of woods and plantations.

There we may still find a fragment of Malcolm's royal tower, the last remnant of the ancient Palace where he received the fugitive Saxon Princess, whom he wedded in some early church hard by. To Margaret's influence was due the founding of the stately Abbey close to the royal Palace, which Malcolm endowed with fond munificence. He was but a rude Highland chieftain after all. If his early days had been passed in the Court of the Confessor he had profited little by his opportunities of culture, for he could not read, and was content to kiss the fair illuminated volume in which his wife took such delight. We hear nothing but good of Margaret, of her godly life, and her sorrowful death. The love and compassion of generations have followed this saintly figure—a faint waft of the sweetness of her character seems to linger still about the places she inhabited.

Everywhere hereabouts are ruins, the mere shells and huaks of the royal dwelling-places—here on a wooded mound the tower of Malcolm; there, overhanging the ravine, a broken wall of the Palace of the Stewarts, with mullioned windows and graceful openings all overgrown and dismantled. The royal Palace was originally but a wing, as it were, of a great religious establishment, the Scottish Escorial—palace, monastery, mausoleum. Duncan's body, as Shakespeare tells us, was taken to the old burial-place of the royal line at Iona—

Carried to Colm-kill,
The sacred storehouse of his predecessors,
And guardian of their bones.

But Malcolm, the son of Duncan, was buried by the high altar of the Abbey he had founded—he and his saintly Queen, in the same grave, no doubt, for Margaret hardly survived the news of the death of husband and son, slain by the walls of Alnwick Castle. About them were reared the tombs of descendants and successors, seven other Kings, five other Queens, all remembered daily in the services of the Abbey, while the altar-light shone steadily above them day and night, till it was quenched at last in the cold dawn of the Calvinistic Reformation.

The nave of the old Abbey church is still in evidence, with traces of fine solemn Norman work in solid piers and arches; but the chancel and transepts, and all the marble tombs of Kings and Queens had disappeared long before the building of the new and handsome church and tower, the newness of which half a century's wind

and rain has toned down, and which harmonises better than might be expected with the ancient stem.

It was in preparing the foundations of the new church that the bones of Robert Bruce were disinterred. The marble tomb had been buried beneath accumulated rubbish, and below was found the skeleton of a tall man, with fragments of the cloth of gold that had formed his winding-sheet. A further proof that these were indeed the bones of the great Bruce was the mark of the saw where the breast-bone had been cut away to remove the heart of the great King, which Douglas was charged to carry to the Holy Land. Walter Scott records how all the people of the neighbourhood flocked to see the remains, so that the church could not hold half the numbers, and the people passed through in long processions; the body thus lying in state more than five centuries after its first interment. "Many people shed tears," writes Sir Walter. And yet generations had gone by, few individuals of which cared a rush for Robert Bruce, while none had raised a finger to save his tomb from desecration. The bones of Bruce were re-interred, with all respect.

The Palace of Dunfermline was occupied by the Stuart Kings down to the time of the union of the crowns of the two kingdoms. Charles the First was born within these ruined walls; a peevish child, who annoyed his honest father by his ceaseless cries. One night there was a great disturbance in the royal nursery, and the royal father, disturbed from his peaceful slumbers, hurried to the scene. "An awld man came into the room and threw his cloak owre the prince's cradle," explained the terrified nurse. "Fient, nor he had taken the ginning brat clean awa," cried the irritated parent, although it is hardly fair to report his hasty words under such provocation. "Gin he ever be King there'll be nae gude in his ring. The deil has cussen his cloak owre him already." Assuredly it was not the shade of Bruce who had cast his mantle over the young Prince.

At Falkland, too, we may hear a good deal about the domestic life of the Stuarts. There the Palace is well preserved, and even repaired and restored into a modern residence, retaining its original frontage, which recalls Holyrood on a smaller scale, with its pepper-box turrets and flanking towers. The existence of two royal Palaces in such immediate neighbourhood is explained by the fact that Falkland Palace

was originally the castle of the Thane or Earl of Fife, and that, up to the time of the abolition of heritable jurisdictions in the last century, the town was the seat of the Courts of Justice, and of the local administration of the province. The Earldom of Fife, of which Shakespeare's Macduff was the most notable holder, in course of time was merged in the crown, and the Earl's castle became a royal Palace.

The Stuarts have left their mark about the place in proverbs current up to recent times, all ending "as King James said"; while the ancient social distinction of the place as a provincial capital, and often the seat of the royal Court, is brought to mind in the appellation of anything polished and distinguished in people's bearing as Falkland manners—an expression used not sarcastically, but, as it seems, in all good faith. Of itself, indeed, the Court of James the Fifth was hardly likely to have given a reputation for excessive polish. The King himself was not exactly a *preux chevalier*. The courtly graces of the French régime had been lost in the long domination of pedagogues and Puritans, while the want of manners was not stoned for by any superiority in moral tone. The relations between King James and his Queen may be guessed at from the following story, which, if it suggests both Desdemona's handkerchief, and the diamond studs of Anne of Austria with which were concerned the Duke of Buckingham and the better known Three Musketeers—of whom there were four, by the way.

The story goes that at Falkland Palace, one bright and sunny day, King James was strolling up and down the trim walks and pleached alleys of his pleasure garden, when he espied fast asleep on a grassy bank a youth, one Alexander Ruthven, brother of the Earl of Gowrie, at that time one of the gentlemen in attendance on Queen Anne. The King was of a prying, inquisitive disposition, and peering about here and there he saw half hidden in the bosom of the youth a knot of ribbon of some rare and peculiar texture, which the King recognised as having been his own gift to his wife a few hours before.

Now James was not a King Arthur in the way of marital confidence; he was never very sure about Anne, and this discovery seemed to confirm his suspicions. Away went the King full of justifiable anger to tax his wife with falsehood—a serious matter for any woman—but for a Queen,

with the memory of King Bluebeard's victims so fresh in people's minds, enough to daunt the heart of the bravest.

Happily for Her Majesty, King James had been followed at a distance by one of the Queen's pages, who noted the perquisitions of the King, his horrified start, and his quick departure, and suspecting something wrong, the youth followed in the King's footsteps, detected, like him, the knot of ribbon, snatched it from the sleeper, and hurried with it to the Queen, throwing it into her hands, and escaping while yet the heavy tread of the royal husband sounded in the outer chamber.

"That ribbon I gave you, madam!" demanded the King hoarsely.

"Ah! you would take it back again," replied the Queen reproachfully; "and I have worn it ever since next to my heart," and she clutched the knot, and threw it indignantly towards the King. James picked it up, examined it, scratched his head; finally, his face expanded into a broad grin of satisfaction. "Eh! like is an ill mark," he is reported to have said; and thus the proverb has come down to us with all the authority of the Scottish Solomon.

But the sequel to this comedy was tragic enough: Alexander Ruthven and his brother, the Earl, both falling victims to the vengeance of the King, as may be read between the lines in the history of the Gowrie conspiracy.

Another of Queen Anne's favourites was the handsome young Earl of Moray, the Bonnie Earl, as people called him, whose fate was equally tragic. On the shores of the Firth stands Dunnibersel House, a gloomy white building, on the very margin of the sea; and here the Earl was living when he fell under suspicion. Upon some frivolous accusation, which suggested no suspicion of his real offence, a Gordon, the Earl of Huntly, his hereditary foe, was sent to take him prisoner. The Gordon, who wanted no better errand, began the work by surrounding his enemy's house, and then setting it on fire. The Sheriff of Moray was a guest in the house at the time, and, with noble devotion, assuming the cognizance of his friend the Earl, rushed out among the assailants, and was quickly despatched, while the Earl made his escape towards the sea. But as the Earl had burst through the flames the silken tassels of his hood had caught fire, and by their gleam brought upon him the avenging Gordons. The young lord was

struck down by Gordon of Buckie, who, on his chief reaching the scene, compelled him, at the point of his dagger, to give the Earl the coup de grâce. "You shall be as deep in as I," quoth the wary Buckie, prudent in the midst of slaughter. The King, it is said, good-naturedly pardoned the offenders.

The town of Falkland, still a quaint old place, with market square, and courts, and wynds opening out, is overshadowed by the great Hill of Lomond, whose pastures once belonged to the town, and supported a half gipsy race, known as the Scarpies of Falkland, who, with pony and cart, traded about the country, and as petty carriers, smugglers, and occasionally thieves, had no very good repute with their country neighbours. These at last obtained an Act of Parliament for dividing among the neighbouring proprietors the ancient inheritance of the Scarpies, and thus made things even all round.

The Lomond Hills, which are well in view from the heights about Edinburgh, overlook Loch Leven, a quiet and somewhat melancholy inland lake, dotted with islands, the largest of which, with its square ruined tower and sparse vegetation, formed the prison of Mary, Queen of Scots. Loch Leven, although possessing a purely Celtic name, has a popular etymology of quite another kind. It is Loch Eleven, say the peasantry, for it is eleven miles round; is surrounded by eleven hills; is fed or drained by eleven streams; has eleven islands; and is tenanted by eleven kinds of fish. It may be added, that Queen Mary was eleven months a prisoner in the castle; and other coincidences of the kind might probably be discovered by a curious enquirer.

The Lady of Loch Leven, in whose charge Mary was a prisoner, had, in her youth, been a mistress of James the Fifth, and her son was the Regent Murray, the Queen's half-brother, who had now proved himself her bitterest enemy. Could there have been found a penitentiary after the modern fashion, where all the keepers were women, it might have been possible to keep the Queen under lock and key; but no man could long resist the fascination of her winning ways. Young George Douglas soon fell a victim, and was turned out of his mother's island; but a younger kinsman was left there, and Willie Douglas was soon the Queen's devoted slave. One night he stole the keys of the gloomy tower, let out the Queen and her servant, and, locking up

everybody else safe and fast, rowed the prisoner to the shore in his little skiff. There George Douglas, Lord Seton, and a party of the Hamiltons were waiting to receive the Queen, and with them she rode away to the ferry. There is evidence that Mary, who had more heart than most of the women of her period, did not forget her "little Vulley," but even after she was in captivity, troubled herself about his welfare and that no harm should come to him for his share in her escape.

Except for the little bit of Highland country which reaches to Loch Leven, and forms the mere wisp of a county called Kinross, there is little in the way of strongly picturesque scenery between Forth and Tay. The chief natural feature in the county of Fife is the wide, saucer-like valley called the Howe of Fife, beginning at Falkland and ending by the sea-shore at St. Andrews. Half-way between the two lies Cupar, notable as the destination of headstrong people in general, though why the place should be thus singled out it is hard to say. The old road from Cupar to St. Andrews is wild and dreary enough, and here, some three miles from his episcopal Palace, Archbishop Sharpe was overtaken and murdered by a band of Covenanters under Hackston of Rathillet.

There is something impressive in the sight of St. Andrews, with towers and spires springing from the sandy level of the shore, and its castle rising from a bold projecting bluff. The castle is not the original one, by the way, by whose walls George Wishart suffered a martyr's death by fire, and where Cardinal Beaton, who had watched his victim's sufferings from the ramparts, was soon after slain by Norman Leslie and his band. The present edifice is the work of Beaton's successor, Archbishop Hamilton, who himself was destined to a violent death. The episcopal lot was not a happy one in those days in Scotland, and the Primate's chair at St. Andrews was especially unfortunate.

Of the cathedral of these old Archbishops not a vestige remains. It was destroyed in the days of the Reformation, and the four great conventual houses, that once adorned the place, have left but few remains. But the square tower of St. Roche rises picturesquely from its surroundings, with something of Italian grace; and there is a neatness and propriety about the collegiate town that redeems its placid dulness. The University dates from 1410, but its annals have not been marked with many incidents

of notable picturesqueness. An old prophecy of the days of the martyrdom of Wishart, dooms the town, in consequence of that event, to be one day destroyed by the sea.

Turning southwards along the coast, the links of St. Andrews, of high repute among golfers, are succeeded by the cliffs of Kinghorn, where we shall find, between that place and Burntisland, a precipice still called the King's Crag, where Alexander the Third, the last of the direct descendants of Duncan, was unhappily killed by falling over the cliffs. The day of the King's death was foretold by Thomas of Ercildoun, it will be remembered, as the stormiest that ever was witnessed in Scotland, and the forecast was correct, for, though the weather was clear and mild, yet, when the news was spread, it was acknowledged that there was never tempest which could bring more ill-luck to Scotland. For the disputed succession which resulted, was pregnant with all kinds of calamities for a country which, up to this time, was prosperous enough with

Wealth of ale and bread,
Of wine and wax, of game and glee.

Round by the Eastneuk o' Fife lies Crail, noted for its capons, which, in this case, are fine fat haddock, and beyond is a cluster of seafaring towns, which were probably the seat of considerable trade in days gone by, and may have boasted of wealthy merchants, and bold, adventurous seamen, but which are now little more than fishing villages. On the edge of the rock overlooking the harbour of East Anstruther stands the ruined tower of Dreel, the first seat of the distinguished family that takes its name from the town. The first of note of this line is famous in story as Fisher Willie, a kind of personification of the bold and warlike merchant adventurer of earlier times. Willie is the mark of envious malcontents among the neighbouring lairds, one of whom, Third-part, invites him to an entertainment, intending either to poison his grog, or to knock him over as he sits at the banquet. Willie is warned by a blind bedesman who has received kindness at his hands, and sends an excuse to Third-part, but invites him in his turn to a feast in the tower of Dreel. The tower is reached by a long flight of narrow stairs, and as the laird mounts the stairs in all confidence, anticipating only a jovial feast, Willie sets upon him with his battle-axe, and leaves him as food for fishes in the harbour below. Now,

even when told by a friendly narrator, this story has rather an awkward appearance. Third-part's wickedness had never come to actual deeds, and there was only the blind beggar's word for it; but the dead laird with the cloven skull was a manifest fact, that it was difficult to explain away. Willie was conscious that evil might be said about him, and resolved to go to Court and demand the King's pardon for what he had done, and he spent the greater part of his gear in fine apparel, and especially in a coat of gold cloth of surpassing richness. Of course, on his arrival at Court, Willie attracted the attention of the King, who was delighted at his brave appearance; and thereupon Sir Willie was emboldened to ask a boon, which was simply that such estate as he possessed might be spared to him. This was granted at once, and then as a corollary of the first request he begged that he also might be spared to his estate. Thereupon Willie confessed to his treatment of Third-part, but justified himself by the law of self-preservation, and the King, who had many lairds in his dominions, but never another such a brave fisher laddie, gave Willie his pardon, and sent him home rejoicing.

To Anstruther, locally called Anster, belongs the Isle of Moy, the guardian of the Firth, once inhabited by fourteen or fifteen families, and with a small monastery upon it, where St. Adrian, whose stone coffin is to be found in West Anstruther Church, is said to have been an inmate. A lighthouse was erected upon the island as early as the reign of Charles the First, and now the light-keepers and their families are the only inhabitants.

Nearly every island in the Firth had, at one time, its own little cell or priory after the pattern of Iona. King Alexander, driven by stress of weather upon Inchcolm, found a hermit there, who subsisted on the milk from a solitary cow, and the shell-fish that he picked up on the shore. The Monarch and his suite shared the hermit's fare for several days, and, when the weather abated, sailed thankfully for the mainland; and in gratitude for his preservation the King founded a monastery there, of which some remains still exist.

The caves, too, which the sea has scooped out along the coast have mostly each a tale to tell of saint or martyr. The little town of Pittenweem is noted for the cave of St. Fillan, in whose honour a priory was afterwards built on the height above. Once upon a time Pittenweem was a terrible

place for witches ; they swarmed all about, and held their kitchens and their sabbaths with great éclat. Thus, at all events, the seafaring folk believed, who attributed all the misfortunes that came to boats or nets, to the evil influence of the witches, and terrible were the cruelties practised upon any unfortunate old dame who came under suspicion.

Close by is Newark Castle—once the seat of Alexander Leslie, the General of the Scots Covenanters—thrice burnt, but which, according to a popular prophecy, is destined once more to shine upon the Bass, the Bass Rock being a conspicuous object from the shore.

Then we come to Largo Bay, celebrated in the popular song—

I cuist my line in Largo Bay,
And fishes I caught nine :
There's three to boil, and three to fry,
And three to bait the line.

Nether Largo is noted as the birthplace of Alexander Selkirk. Although the cottage in which he was born was pulled down in 1880, the site of it is still pointed out, and something may yet be gathered as to his kinsfolk and belongings in the neighbourhood, although, alas ! nothing is known of Man Friday. Selkirk's chest and cup are now in Edinburgh Museum, and his gun is still preserved in one of the neighbouring country seats. But the general impression in the neighbourhood was, that after a short stay at home, and subsequent to his adventure on the island, he went away, and was never more heard of. Hence it was an agreeable surprise for his townfolk when they learnt from an inscription lately put up by the officers of Her Majesty's ship *Topaze* in the Island of Juan Fernandez, copies of which have reached them, that he died in the honourable position of Lieutenant of His Majesty's ship *Weymouth*, in 1728. Selkirk was a hot-tempered chiel, who made his home too hot to hold him, and he was found one too many for the officers of the *Cinque Ports* galley, who put him ashore on the island, so that his rise in the naval service is all the more remarkable.

Beyond Largo lies Buckhaven, famous for its college of the Gotham pattern, whose alumni are the honest fishermen, who have done nothing to earn the facetious character attributed to them. Rumour has it, that the inhabitants of Buckhaven are chiefly descended from the crew of a Brabanter which was wrecked on the coast a couple of hundred years ago.

Next comes Wemyss Bay, with Macduff's castle in ruins on its shore ; that Castle of Kennoway from whose walls Lady Macduff hurled defiance at the cruel Macbeth. "Do you see yon white sail upon the sea! Yonder goes Macduff to the Court of England!" But whether the castle was stormed and wife and children slain as Shakespeare has it, or whether the brave woman held the fort against the tyrant, is a matter of doubt which is never likely to be resolved.

SONNET.

ACROSS the hedges, thick with Autumn's flowers,
I watch the wild rough wind's breath come and go,
Bending the leaves until their pale backs show ;
And each small bird that there for safety cowers,
To hide before the storm that darkly lowers,
Is shown to us, who did not even know
They shivered there—for they were hidden so!—
Until the wind put forth its stronger powers.
Is this not like some life of sweetest rest—
Passing its years in a most even course
Through sun and summer's perfect, peaceful smile ;
Yet when rough trials search that quiet breast,
It shows beneath the calm, that Love's vast force
Has lain there, hiding humbly, all the while ?

A LONG LANE.

THAT it is a long lane that has no turning, is a favourite maxim in the mouths of parents who have made the unwelcome discovery that certain of their offspring are not endowed with the gift of conduct, and, happily for them, it comes much nearer the truth than some other favourite maxims in common use. Still, there are instances in which, by wilful blindness or neglect, the youngster has been provided with surroundings in such direful combination, that he has been, as it were, fore-ordained to destruction. When once thus set going in that long lane of depravity, the odds are heavy, indeed, that he will ever turn either to the right or to the left.

The direful combination above named is the system of training, or rather, absence of all training, which produces those listless, aimless lives which drift so surely to shipwreck at the first venture in dangerous seas. This system takes no heed of the permanent necessity of teaching a boy how to fill up his leisure time pleasantly to himself and innocuously to the world at large. "Nature abhors a vacuum," says Science ; "Satan finds some mischief still," and so on, says Dr. Watts ; and the man who sets out without carrying within himself the capacity for simple recreation, does so "omine nefasto."

"Dear me," I hear some critic say, "has not wisdom been shouting this saying in the streets ever since the time of King Solomon? What need, therefore, for you to jot down your trite moralisings, and tell us that Queen Anne is dead and no longer rules these islands?"

My dear sir, have you ever reflected what would be the condition of the printing, publishing, type-founding, paper-making, printer's-devilling, and editing industries, if nothing save new and original sayings were given to the world? Even in his own day, King Solomon was in the habit of proclaiming, with considerable iteration, that there was nothing new under the sun, and are we justified in proclaiming ourselves to be wiser than King Solomon?

Again, even at the risk of being called plagiarists, tautologists, and what not, must we not set up moral sign-posts inscribed with directions written in a tongue to be easily understood by contemporary wanderers? In the Book of Proverbs there is enough wisdom to last any ordinary man a lifetime. There are moral tales, both genuine and apocryphal, in the Persian and Arabic literatures, in which we may read of the sure crown of virtue, and the no less inevitable penalties of vice, in narratives set thick with flowery illustrations and the most beautiful moralising. In the pages of the British Essayists, the entrance to the straight path is no less plainly displayed to the young man desiring to walk therein. Every age, in short, has produced its own sign-posts, and there is proof enough, in this fact alone, to show that the warning words of one age lose their efficacy for the generations which come after. This, then, is why I point my pen and sit down to describe one of the contemporary aspects of this ancient "hostis humani generis." My conscience tells me that I am only doing my duty; observation informs me that the age is rather badly off for sign-posts just at present; and hope whispers softly that, perhaps, my editor will send me something besides that odious printed form, which I have ere now found nestling in the folds of my beloved MSS. after their homeward voyage.

To the fathers of families I say, would you expect your own younglings to apply to their own case the example of those interesting, if somewhat prosy, youths, Sophron and Tigranes; Rustum and Mirza? Youth, as a rule, is desperately practical, and little prone to be swayed by allegorical lessons. and it is. indeed. asking a good

deal to require our boys in England nowadays to grow up into good men by taking heed of what Sophron did, and Rustum left undone, in Persia some centuries ago. If they read them at all, they will read them for the sake of the fearsome djinns and afreets which flap their gruesome wings so plentifully, and not for any moral lesson.

A faint flavour of Persian and Chinese moralising, a lingering odour of Araby the Blest hangs about your Tatlers and Spectators, a witness in itself of the artificial and posturing morality of these lately-added tenants of the tomb of all the Capulets. What good were they; think you, as restraining or stimulating influences to the demireps and macaronis to whom they were addressed? But little, I imagine; and, if they failed to touch their own age, how will you rate their value as guides of conduct to the Johnnies and Chappies of the present day? You will tickle their conscience with the lightest of feathers; you will appeal to their hopes and fears with the most unappetising sugarplums and the most inefficient bogies, if you propose to encourage or coerce them by a consideration of the careers of John Trueman, or Tom Rakewell, or Will Heedless: their doings at Ranelagh or the Cocoa Tree, their penance in Bridewell or the Sponging House, and their final journey to Tyburn Tree.

No one, who diligently studies the comic and society journals of the present day, will deny that Tom and Will have their social co-efficients in these modern times; that is, if the journals above-named are to be taken in any way as trustworthy delineators of what Sir Roger or Isaac Bickerstaff, Esq., would have called "the town." It is to be feared that in this, the latest development of journalism comes pretty near the truth—nearer than it does when it concerns itself with State secrets and the intentions of illustrious personages. But there is no need to go to the journals; in the streets, in the public places and theatres, Tom and Will, or, to speak more correctly, Johnnie and Charlie, throng the ways. They are. They exist and fill up a certain amount of space in the world, but that is about all that can be said of them. What a contrast is their solemn viciousness, their dreary degradation, physical as well as moral, to the jolly, ruffing decalogue smashing of Fielding's gallants, or even of the Bucks of the Regency! Where they spring from? What they do? Where they go to!—for they must.

after a bit, move off the stage which would otherwise soon be inconveniently full, so large is the crowd waiting for admission—are questions which the sociologist of the future will certainly have to take into consideration.

Their lives move in an orbit which crosses my own at no single point, so I can give very little information first-handed. Indeed, but for a singular chance, I might have been able to put nothing on record about them, to contribute no driblet to the sociologist's full stream of knowledge, no particular to his generalisations on the fate of the crowd of sickly boys who are supposed to do duty as the "jeunesse dorée" of our age, and never have doubted the truth of the proverb which we are now considering.

Some two years ago I was a passenger on board the P. and O. steamer "Woolloomooloo," bound for Sydney, and, having a rooted dislike to the howling of children, the scolding of nurses, to the contemplation of half a dozen groups of poker players, or a dozen pairs of flirting couples—all of which I must have heard or seen had I remained on the quarter-deck—I used to make my way every morning to the fore part of the ship, and divide my time between my book and watching the flying fish skim away, as the black prow of the great ship scared them out of their azure solitude. As I passed backwards and forwards between the quarter-deck and my point of observation, I used to remark, always standing in the same place, a young man gifted apparently with a faculty for doing nothing, greater than I had observed in any other person on board—and we had some good idlers too. I never saw him reading book or newspaper, or addressing a word to any one of his fellow passengers. Whenever I looked at him his eye fell, as if he were ashamed that he was not like myself, in the first class. He took his station on the second-class side of the line suffered to exist between the two orders of passenger, and would stand, by the hour at a time, looking at the distant groups of men and sickly-looking boys trying to while away the hours over some senseless game of cards. Though the sea might be alive with flying fish; though a school of dolphins might be dancing and playing around the ship; though the sea might be strewn with pumice and other strange wreck of some submarine volcanic disturbance; though the sun might be setting in a glory such as neither words nor brush could describe;

the card-players sat with their eyes fixed on the board, and my young man stood gazing in envy at them. At his best the youth could never have looked like a Peri or any other angelic being, and certainly the poker table was not to myself in any way suggestive of Paradise; but, as I watched first one and then the other, I felt inclined, to compare the young man, in spite of his outward seeming, with the interesting sprite so well known to the readers of Lalla Rookh. Never did that young person long after heaven more ardently than did my young man after the poker table, and the B. and S. and "cobbler" standing beside the players. To him the spar deck and its occupants were as "dark and sad" as were even the "diamond turrets of Shadukiam" to Mr. Moore's candidate for Paradise. As I passed him, he would look at me as if he wondered how it was that anyone should go and sit among the Lascars and sheep pens in the fore part, instead of playing poker aft. It is an infirmity of mine that I cannot go on meeting the same person, day after day, without beginning to feel an interest in him or her; so before a week had passed I managed, by the familiar expedient of asking for a light for my cigarette, to enter into conversation with the young man—whom I will call Leopold—and to learn how it was that he was bound for Sydney, second class.

Leopold was the son of rich and presumably honest parents; that is, they no doubt paid their bills with praiseworthy regularity—a virtue not transmitted to Leopold, as I afterwards found out; went to church; sent little cheques to this and that worker in the field of alms-giving, to be distributed as the worker might think fit, so long as he did not bother the donors; coddled their children in infancy; and grew a little tired of them when the time came to take them away from school, and set them going in the world.

Leopold's father had begun life in a humble walk of commerce, but, unhappily for him, his reward had come in the shape of sudden and ample fortune before he had reached middle age. He had gone into a "corner" in coffee, and had come out with more money than he had ever dreamt of possessing, instead of labouring patiently for thirty thousand pounds or so till he was hard on sixty. Instead of retreating to Surbiton or Finchley, Leopold pere took a large house in Westbourne Terrace, and proceeded to spend his money in what

he considered to be the most approved fashion. There were six children in the school-room and nursery at this time, and for the first half-dozen years of the new ménage the family cares were few, so long as the elder boys were at school under the care of the Rev. Lemuel Sacchary, and the younger under the tuition of Miss Rudge, the governess. But time will not halt, and boys will grow up; and Leopold père wanted all his income to keep going the house in Westbourne Terrace. He had made his money himself, and he was possessed with the idea that his sons ought to do likewise; so one morning he announced to my young friend, who had just turned eighteen, that he must prepare to earn his own living.

Now the father, properly speaking, had never had any youthful cultivation or training at all, so he had set out to make his fortune with nothing either for or against him, so far as early preparation was concerned. He had, in his own estimation, made a brilliant success, and he reasoned that, if he himself could do this after a commercial academy education lasting till he was thirteen, his son ought to go out into the world and lay at once the foundation of a princely fortune, seeing that he had received the best, or rather the most expensive, education till he was almost a man. But it is to be feared that he gauged the value of his son's training by the length of the Rev. Lemuel Sacchary's half-yearly bills, and by no other standard. He may have read the terminal reports which told how Leopold's progress in this subject was satisfactory, in that "good" and in the other, "excellent," but they did not convey any deep impression to his mind as to how Leopold was qualifying himself to compete with the long heads and sharp wits of Capel Court or Mincing Lane. One thing was certain; these reports did not contain anything calculated to induce him to remove Leopold from De Courcy College—and this was all the Rev. Lemuel wanted.

The greater part of the pupils at Courcy College were young gentlemen from the larger public schools, who had neglected to keep pace with the form work, or had found the school discipline irksome, and had become too much a law to themselves. Under the mild sway of the Rev. Lemuel there was very little to distress them. The amount of school work was such as might have been prepared in an hour by the dullest; and on those occasions when the books were left unopened till the class was called, the penalties were not excessive. As to

discipline out of school, there was none to speak of, and the pupils were free to amuse themselves as they best could in the village. Here they found a horse-dealer's yard, with the usual set of breakers and rough-riders; divers retailers of the wares most in favour with school-boys; and the "White Hart" family hotel and posting-house, where there was a billiard-room, a good dry skittle alley, and a snug bar parlour, in which Miss Eliza and Miss Caroline, the daughters of the house (two young ladies with bold black eyes, and a generally florid style of beauty) dispensed the good things of the establishment to such as had plenty of cash to spend; and, even when ready money might not be forthcoming, the attendant Hebe would be just as gracious on credit, provided that information received concerning parents and guardians might be satisfactory.

In these hours of recreation—there were a good number of them between sunrise and sunset—Leopold picked up a good deal of learning, though not exactly of the sort he was sent to imbibe at Courcy College; still it was, perhaps, as useful towards preparing him for a mercantile career as any he may have gathered in the school-room. When he left he knew about as much of the three R's as would pass muster in the fourth standard of an elementary school. Of the classics and modern languages he had been taught just enough to make him dislike all learning. As to general knowledge, his mind was a perfect blank.

His father's command to go out into the world and earn a living was for Leopold a figure of speech, and nothing else. A man who makes a fortune by a "corner" in coffee does not leave many threads out of which his son can weave a second fortune; so Leopold, jun., had to seek for an opening, and until this was found he lived at home on an allowance, and came in and went out very much as it pleased him. Six months of this, following upon six years of De Courcy College, and the diversions there in favour gave the coup de grâce to his chances of success in life. He fell in with several of his late school-fellows, and began to "see life," as the phrase is. No need to weary the reader with a detailed account of this pitiful rake's progress, its sordid riot, its dull profligacy, and its inevitable termination. It is a subject for regret, but not for wonderment. What was the boy to do? He could not sit doing nothing in the house all day long. He had no taste

for any one of those profitless, but at the same time inoffensive, occupations over which boys, as a rule, will make away with such vast portions of their time. He hated reading, even novels were "dry" and "slow," so what was more natural than that he should seek the same amusements—a little town-bedizened and accentuated—which had given him pleasure during his school-days?

At last he was sent into the City to sit on a high stool and add up columns of figures in an office. At the time of his launch in a mercantile career he was about five hundred pounds in debt, to say nothing of divers acceptances given to money-lenders, and for six months or so he came and went every morning, doing for his employers all he had covenanted to do; but before the first year came to an end there happened the inevitable "irregularity" in his accounts. There was something wrong in a balance under Leopold's control, not to the advantage of the firm, which was followed by allusions to the Mansion House Police Court; but it did not go so far as this. Immediate dismissal from his employ; disgrace at home; a second-class ticket to Sydney; a hundred pounds paid to an agent there, to be doled out at the rate of a pound a week till Leopold should be settled somewhere and somehow—that was the end of Leopold's start in life.

Leopold was only a mortal, and a weak one to boot, so I am not surprised that, with such a start, he should have gone straight in the direction of perdition. I was able to give him a little help on landing. I got him a place on an up-country station, and he parted from me with many professions that he intended to buckle to now and no mistake; but I had a suspicion that I should meet him in Sydney again, if I only stayed long enough. About six weeks after I had bid him good speed he sauntered into the balcony of the hotel where I was staying; and, not in the least crest-fallen, told me that life at Marangaroo was beastly dull, and not at all to his taste. They refused to advance his wages too, and a man he came across up there had advised him to chuck up the place at once.

For some weeks he loafed about, living on the balance of his hundred pounds, and then came an ill-starred remittance from home, elicited by the report that he had found employment. He now invested in a tight-fitting suit of clothes and a betting-book, and went in for backing racehorses;

and at this pursuit, I believe, his remittance lasted exactly a month. It did not all go in betting, however, for I came across him several times during the month above-named, and on every occasion he was more or less intoxicated. When I left the colony I believe he was penniless. About my last transaction in Sydney was to give him a sovereign—why, I could never satisfactorily explain to myself—for I am to this day assured that I never laid out a sovereign to a worse purpose.

On my homeward voyage I often speculated as to his ultimate fate. Perhaps he may now be a boundary rider, earning rations and a trifle besides. More likely, he is a helper to some Sydney or Melbourne horse-keeper; most likely of all, he has ceased to cumber the earth with his presence, having succumbed to the effects of Colonial brandy, taken in too liberal quantities, under a more burning sun than that of his native land.

Leopold, alas! is not alone in following that long lane of the proverb without deflection. On board the "Woolloomooloo" there were doubtless many of the same type, in slightly varying phases of growth. In a few years, in a few months, or even weeks, divers of those poker-playing and betting youths, whose blissful estate on the quarter-deck aroused Leopold's keenest envy, may very likely have sunk to a similar level, and have set their faces to traverse the long lane that leads to perdition, with no intention of turning to either hand. Most of them had seemingly been fairly launched and subjected to the same influences; so why should they not come to the same bourne?

While he was in statu pupillari, no doubt his father was careful that the clothes which Leopold wore were good in quality and moderate in price—that he got fair value for his money spent with the tailor, in short—and had there been any thing very wrong in the food at Courcy College, the Reverend Lemuel would most likely have heard about it. Why did he waste all his watchfulness in seeing that his son's body was duly clothed and nourished, and take no heed of the mischievous forces which were warping and deforming the boy's mind, and rendering it permanently as unsusceptible to the innocent and delightful influences of nature and art, as is the sea sand to the spring shower?

Then it was that the lane, in which poor Leopold was destined to walk, was fenced in so narrowly that he must needs go on

to the end of it, there being no room to turn round. How is it that parents are so slow to see what an important factor in life is the capacity of self-amusement; that they do not realise how, nurtured by a little parental sympathy, this capacity will spring up in a child's mind, from the appreciation of a fairy tale, from the relish of pure fiction, from some elementary trial of the powers in painting and modelling? Man must have recreation of one sort or another, and his recreation will be so much the healthier, in proportion as it is inexpensive, simple, and ever ready at hand. That man is fortunate who can find it within the limits of his circulating library subscription, or who is able to see in the trees, and the stones, and the brooks, all that the melancholy Jaques discovered in the Wood of Arden some centuries ago.

A CAPTAIN OF INDUSTRY.

JOHN RYLANDS, the largest captain of industry in Lancashire, was born at Parr, near St. Helen's, in 1803; and if poets are born ready-made, so are traders; for whilst a mere schoolboy he became a merchant and a manufacturer. His first commercial venture was made in his fourteenth year, when he invested his pocket-money in a parcel of trinkets bought at an auctioneer's sale. Having sold them at a good profit, he told his good luck to an old nurse of the family who had been trained in hand-loom weaving. At her suggestion, he bought some warp and weft with the money, and the old woman wove it for him. The speculation proving profitable, he continued to employ her, and thus laid the foundation of the gigantic manufacturing concern over which he still presides. In his eighteenth year he became partner with his brother Joseph in a small mill at Wigan, and undertook the commercial department. Whilst Joseph superintended the manufacturing department, John travelled on horseback throughout Lancashire and adjacent counties, and even to remote districts of Wales. He succeeded so well that his father joined the firm, which then became "Rylands and Sons."

An important departure shortly afterwards took place from the established custom of despatching goods to customers direct from the factory only. It consisted in establishing a warehouse in Manchester for supplying the wholesale trade. The proposal was at first opposed

by his father and brother, but was eventually accepted. A shop was accordingly opened in High Street, and for the first week not a soul crossed the threshold of the door. To most men this would have been a crushing blow; but John, with confidence in his wares, was prepared to wait his time. Customers came at last, and a good business was gradually built up. The firm employed a number of hand-loom weavers in the manufacture of checks. There is, says Mr. J. T. Slugg, a Manchester worthy, a characteristic anecdote told of young John by an old man who is now employed in carting coals at Altrincham. It would appear that it was a practice with some of the weavers to damp the "cut," as it was called, for the purpose of making it heavier before bringing it to the employer. When this carter was a lad his mother used to weave for Rylands and Sons, and she occasionally sent her son with the cut. It was young John's business to receive the cut and examine it. On the lad's bringing a cut one day the following conversation took place:

"Now, my lad, I want you to tell me something. If you'll tell me the truth I'll give you a penny."

"Aye, my mother tells me allus to tell t'truth."

"Very well. What did your mother do to this cut before she gave it you?"

"Hoo did nowt, nobbut just weest it a bit."

"Robert" (to the cashier), "give this lad a penny."

A neighbour, who had also brought some work in, overhearing the conversation, and getting home before the lad, told his mother what had been said, whereupon the good woman prepared to give her son a good thrashing on his return; but he made such a piteous appeal to her, to the effect that she "had allus tow'd him to tell t'truth," that he quite disarmed her wrath. The practice of damping cloth is not unknown at the present day; but Messrs. Rylands have always avoided such a dishonourable proceeding. By using the best material he could secure; by economy, industry, intelligence; by adopting the latest improvements in machinery; Mr. Rylands built up a vast business and achieved world-wide fame.

As we have already said, Manchester itself is ceasing to be a manufacturing town, and some of the works of Messrs. Rylands' are situated in more healthy localities, though easily accessible. A few facts about

two of the largest may not be without interest. The Gidlow works at Wigan are remarkable, not only for the architectural taste and elegance shown in their erection, but also for the admirable arrangement and order in the internal management of an intricate business. The building is truly palatial, being worked in varied tints of brickwork, with nine square turrets to break the eye-line of elevation, which otherwise, from its immense length, would have been painfully monotonous. A mile of railroad connects the mill with the main line for the transport of goods. The presence of three coal-pits within the grounds adds greatly to the value of the mill, as they not only enable the owner to compete more successfully with his neighbours, but also make him independent of the general market. When fully worked they yield six hundred tons of coal per day, which is used almost entirely in the various works of the firm: the surplus is sold.

The Gidlow works are three hundred and fifty feet in length by one hundred feet in breadth. The total area of their several stages is not less than two hundred and fifty thousand square feet. All these are spacious and airy from complete and scientific ventilation, and are arranged and equipped in a manner to ensure the utmost order and regularity in the conduct of the business, and in the necessary supervision and control of the vast establishment, the spindles amounting to seventy thousand, turning out one thousand five hundred million yards of yarn per week. The special work of these spindles is to provide yarns for the looms to make into cloth, the best known and most appreciated of the domestic calicoes, as twills for sheeting, shirts, and printers' cottons, of the very finest and best workmanship in every variety. There are one thousand five hundred looms at work, to which are allocated seven hundred and fifty weavers, so that no one workman has more on his hands than he can well and carefully attend to, a principle which pervades the whole establishment. No single piece of goods is sent off to market without undergoing the most accurate inspection, so as to ensure its coming up to the well-known standard of excellence which the firm has earned. The machinery provided for driving all this busy hive is of the most costly character, nothing having been spared to make the Gidlow works efficient in operation and a model of simplicity and elegance. The firm has also

mills at Gorton, Bolton, Swinton, Chorley, and at Manchester.

The bleach works at Chorley are considered the largest in the world. They are situated at Heapey, on the Lancashire and Yorkshire Railway, in a picturesque valley near Chorley. The works themselves are built of red sandstone, and are very imposing in appearance. They are six hundred and twenty feet in length and three hundred and forty feet in width, and occupy nearly five acres in extent. The work done here is the washing and bleaching of the grey cloth woven in the other works of the firm. For this purpose they require no less than two million gallons a day of the purest spring water, of which the estate affords an ample and, indeed, almost exhaustless supply.

The cloth is made up into lengths, which extend to in some instances thirty-two miles. In the finer sorts these lengths are first passed over red-hot plates, so as to clear off the loose fibres which adhere to the rough cloth as worked. This fits them for entrance into the bleaching processes. They are first steeped in water, disposed in tanks spread side by side in a compartment measuring two hundred and forty feet across, and large enough to take in the whole length required. They are then passed into the boiling kiers, which are constructed of sufficient size to take the whole at once, amounting to not less than two tons weight at a time. From these the cloth is carried to be rinsed and cleansed, before being placed in the vats where the bleaching operations are performed. When the whole is completed, the cloth passes through "scutchers," to clear out the material into an even and uniform surface, after all the twisting and stretching process it has undergone in the several machines of the craft. It is now mangled and starched, damped again, and then dried in rooms heated by hot air, blown by engines into chambers two hundred feet long, twenty wide, and thirty high. In this manner these works are calculated to turn out, bleached and finished in a single day, an average of half a million yards of cloth.

When sorted into the various qualities, known to the trade as Crystal, Canton, Special Calendar, Beetle, &c., they are passed into other compartments of the pile of buildings. Here are carried on the beautiful processes of dyeing in all the colours and patterns which the most scientific apparatus and knowledge can

apply. The operation of clamping, or stretching the cloth to its proper width evenly throughout its whole length, is performed in four separate rooms, each two hundred and forty feet in length, and forty in width, fitted up with beautiful machinery, uniting the most delicate handling with irresistible force to counteract the shrinkage and unevenness which must necessarily accompany all the various processes through which the cloth has passed in all the washing, rinsing, boiling, and bleaching, which have converted the rough grey cloth into the smooth, firm, even fabric of the calico ready for the needle.

In other parts of the building are laundry rooms, starching, ironing, and folding rooms for shirts, all of which are built and fitted in the most perfect manner, both for the performance of the special work, and for the health and convenience of the workers, who, of course, are mostly women. There are also lofty rooms where the several cloths are carefully examined, measured, and packed, after having passed through the same strict overhauling. All the manufacturing operations of the firm are concentrated under the title of the Dacca Twist Company, whose headquarters are in Portland Street. Here are stored the productions of the various mills, which are afterwards transferred to the High Street wholesale and retail warehouses as required. These premises really consist of four warehouses, which are systematically arranged in departments about forty in number, to some of which there are three or four rooms. Each department has its own manager, and must pay for itself. If one man cannot make it pay, another is engaged; if he cannot succeed, it is given up.

It is difficult to convey any idea of the vastness of the business conducted in these warehouses, which combine a huge store, where every article of wearing apparel may be procured, or any kind of furniture, whether for cottage or for mansion. The counter accommodation alone is upwards of two miles in length, and not fewer than one thousand persons are employed in the various departments here. In addition to this home trade, the firm has an enormous shipping trade. The London business of the firm was commenced in 1845, and still continues to expand. It is conducted on the same principles as the Manchester house, and the number of departments is about the same. About two years ago, both the warehouses and the stock were destroyed

by fire; but this accident seems to have interfered very little with the business. The hours of business are long, and holidays few. Both clerks and warehousemen, in Manchester, enter upon their duties before half-past eight, and do not cease work until six. A week's holiday only is allowed. In a few cases a fortnight is allowed to the heads of departments; but Mr. Rylands does not believe in long holidays.

One of his warehousemen, so the story runs, once obtained two weeks' holiday. Having a good time of it, he obtained permission for another week. Returning to work, Mr. Rylands sent for him, and enquired how his work had gone on in his absence.

"Oh, very well," replied the innocent young man.

"Then," added Mr. Rylands, "we can spare you."

Whether Mr. Rylands really discharged him, we do not know; but the story illustrates the importance which Mr. Rylands attaches to personal service. It is clear, however, that he is not a hard taskmaster; for some of his managers can point to a record of forty years' service. Their faithfulness has been substantially recognised by Mr. Rylands.

In 1873 the firm was converted into a company, the directors of which (eight in number) are his own servants, whose average services have been over thirty years each. The founder of the business still remains head of the firm; but the change has been made in order to secure the continuance and stability of the house, and the interests of those who had assisted in making it great. Apart from business, Mr. Rylands has had no ambition. He has dabbled neither in politics nor in literature. He has never even aspired to municipal honours. He is a business man, pure and simple.

To a traveller he is reported to have said: "My good man, if you can afford to waste your words I cannot afford to waste my time. It is very precious; worth, in fact, a guinea a minute."

Nor does Mr. Rylands take any active part in religious work. A Dissenter, from conviction, he has subscribed liberally to the Congregational denomination; but he is reported to be a munificent supporter of private charities. Though not a teetotaler, nor a sympathiser with teetotal movements, he attaches some importance to the subject; and an incident which happened in the warehouse, illustrates the value he puts upon the practice.

“Are you a teetotaler?” he asked a candidate for employment.

“No,” was the answer; “but I never drink on duty.”

The candidate secured employment. One day he was sent out by his superior in office for a jug of beer. Whilst going out at one of the side entrances, Mr Rylands, who has a knack of turning up in unexpected places, entered by the same door, saw the jug, but said nothing. The man had the presence of mind to fill his jug with water and to return as quickly as possible. The moment he set foot in the warehouse, Mr. Rylands accosted him with the question: “What have you got there?” A peep at the contents of the jug satisfied him. Although Mr. Rylands is an octogenarian, his mind seems to have lost none of its power, and his capacity for business is as keen as ever.

TOM'S OUTING.

A STORY IN THREE CHAPTERS.

CHAPTER III.

SINCE Fanny Orpenshaw's defection, the beach had become forbidden ground to little Tom, who, shut up in Miss Parkinson's back parlour, because its ground-floor windows were so safe, felt his heart ache daily with loneliness and misery.

Since there was never anyone to see him there was no good in dressing him up, and so his pretty things lay safely in the bed-room drawers, and his brown holland pinafores did for him all day long. Often, towards night, those pinafores grew sadly dingy; but no one noticed them or cared.

Did Miss Kenwick know she was neglecting him shamefully, and betraying trust? Of course she did, and repented it, and meant to amend. Once she had gained the one thing she coveted, she meant to be good for the term of her natural life. Miss Kenwick, like Becky Sharpe, thought it must be easy enough to be good when one is prospering and in an assured position.

It was such an ugly room, that back parlour of Miss Parkinson's, with a horrible paper on the walls—orange spots on a drab ground—and no pictures; with cut paper in the fireless grate, and sea-shells on the mantelpiece; and nothing within the four walls that it was possible to play with but that eternal box of bricks, of which he was so weary. But Tom would not have told Miss Parkinson what he

thought about it for the world; he knew it would hurt her, and she was very kind. Sometimes she took him into her bright little kitchen, and gave him tea with herself, and jam rolls and other dainties; and often she undressed him at night when Miss Kenwick stayed late on the pier; and though her hands were harder than Aunt Maria's, they were very tender.

But, of course, Miss Parkinson had not time for these little gracious services always, and so, Tom, after a dreary day, would often go uncomforted to bed.

How he wished that Miss Parkinson's back parlour had looked out on the beach, that he might have watched the promenaders on the pier, and the donkeys on the sands, and, perhaps, have caught a glimpse of the fickle Fanny and his freckled rival! It was very hard on little Tom, who loved the sea, and took an interest in all the human kind, to have no outlook but the back yard with its clothes-line and great water-butt.

Tom was rather afraid of that water-butt, it took so many odd shapes, all of them so human and so ugly. Sometimes it was nothing but a gigantic head that grinned at him with a wide slit of a mouth; and again it was a bloated body, protuberant as that of a toad, mounted on three spindle legs, each one, seemingly, determined to march off in a different direction. But, no matter what else varied, one thing was permanent, and that was the way in which it fixed its non-descript eyes on Tom, and stared him out of countenance.

If Tom had had Fanny to play with, he would not have minded; in that case, he believed he could have fearlessly stared back at the truculent water-butt: but, being a lonely, neglected child, shut up in a dismal room all by himself, the water-butt pervaded his whole universe and frightened him. Often he pulled down the window-blind to shut it out, but it possessed that perverse peculiarity that it was only more assertively present when he had thought to exclude it—sometimes, even, coming through the blind and sitting down in the hair-covered arm-chair, and droning sermons at Tom till he fell asleep.

He was sure the water-butt meant no harm, and so he did not like to complain of it; but once, when it had been most didactic, Tom spoke to Miss Kenwick. He did not like the water-butt, it had stupid ways, it talked and talked and

never told him a story, or said anything interesting, and so he wished Miss Parkinson to tell it not to come into the sitting-room.

Miss Kenwick told him he had been dreaming, and made him swallow a nasty powder, and then took him out to the yard and made him feel the water-butt, that it was just of wood, and could not come into the sitting-room, or speak to him. And all the time that Miss Kenwick was talking and poking its rotund sides, the butt was winking at Tom with the most grotesque and horrible affectation of a thoroughly good understanding.

That evening Miss Kenwick dressed Tom, and took him to walk on the pier, and kept him there till long after sunset, and then they walked home again, past the best hotel, and saw the blond gentleman and a friend dining by themselves in a private sitting-room. Tom wondered why they kept the blinds up and let people see them, but thought they must have forgotten the blinds behind the lace curtains.

"Is that other gentleman your cousin too?" Tom asked, after a little admiring study of the pair who lingered over their wine so comfortably. Miss Kenwick said no, that she did not know the other gentleman.

"He is nice. Get your cousin to tell you his name to-morrow," Tom suggested.

Here Miss Kenwick sighed, and said she did not know if she would see her cousin to-morrow, or ever again, and half wished she had never seen him.

Tom's head ached that night, and his throat pained him, but Miss Kenwick told him that, if he went to sleep, he would be better in the morning. But next day he was still not quite well, and so, as a special treat, Miss Parkinson let him into the front parlour.

But now that he looked out on the world again, it did not seem as pretty a world as he had fancied. The sun glared in a bold, angry way; the voices of the children were loud and shrill; and the band of light that he had used to fancy made a pathway of silver across the water out to India, dazzled him, and made his head ache.

And then, suddenly, while he was wondering about all this, the door opened and Fanny, in the crispest of gowns and newest of hats, entered, and, rushing up to Tom, kissed him effusively.

She did not apologise for the past or

allude to it, being perhaps too young to deem apology necessary.

Tom kissed her in return, but not from gladness, rather as a matter of courtesy, for the strange thing was that he was not glad to see Fanny, and, in fact, that he really did not care.

Even when she opened a deal box redolent of pine-wood, and paint, and glue, and other delights, Tom could only rouse himself to a faint and fleeting interest in the farmyard she displayed, with its white fences and bright green trees, and neat red and white houses, and the rotund cattle that were numerous enough to crowd the enclosure, unless she gave them an outlet here and there.

This was Fanny's latest purchase, and, in a half-hearted way she had intended it as a peace-offering to Tom; but since Tom did not seem to care so very much about it, Fanny wisely resolved to reserve it for herself. What was the good of bestowing it on him, if he was prepared to be friendly without it?

"You don't mind what I said about your papa?" Fanny ventured tentatively, as she prepared to withdraw.

"No, I don't mind, because I know my papa is a gentleman," Tom replied with the calm of conviction.

"Yes, mamma says he is."

"Does she know my papa?"

"No, but she says a civil—you know"—Fanny could not bring herself to utter the obnoxious word—"is nearly like an officer."

"Better than an officer," Tom said, with conviction.

"Then we are friends again?"

"Oh yes; but the other boy?" Within the small limit of Tom's intense affections, he could hardly realise how more than one friend was necessary.

"Oh, he is all right, but I like you better."

This was surprising; but what was still more surprising was that Tom did not seem to care. He was sitting on the floor with his back to the seat of the arm-chair, and by-and-by he slid out of this position and lay flat on the floor.

Then Fanny tip-toed her way out again, feeling very thankful that she had the farmyard safe.

And Tom lay on the floor dozing, with the hot sun pouring in on his curly head. One cheek was flushed where the sun touched it, the other was deadly pale.

Out on the pier the band brayed in the most triumphant way; and, up and down the esplanade, cabs, folded back like landaus, bore loads of well-dressed people, who looked at each other with admiration or contempt. But Tom, to whom this would have all been high festival a week ago, kept his recumbent position, and noticed nothing, not even that a heavily-laden fly had stopped at Miss Parkinson's door, and that a gentleman in a light suit—a very big and brown gentleman—was helping two ladies to alight, and that the one lady was very slim and elegant, and the other very soft, and placid, and sweet.

When Miss Parkinson caught sight of the trio on her doorstep, her heart gave a bound. She had a premonition of what was coming, and was half gratified and half dismayed, so that her face was flushed, and her long curl quivering as she opened the door.

"We wish to see Master Tom Coventry," the brown gentleman said, and his voice was as pleasant as his face.

"Yes, sir. This way, sir." Miss Parkinson was dreadfully fluttered, though devoutly thankful that, for once, Tom was as neat as a new pin, and that she had the good luck to have him in the front sitting-room.

So she opened the door with quite a flourish, and showed the forlorn little fellow lying asleep in the sunshine.

"My baby, my dear, dear baby!" It was Aunt Maria's soft voice that was calling to him, and Aunt Maria's motherly arms that drew him to her breast, and Aunt Maria who was shedding tears of emotion over him.

And then the other beautiful lady went down on her knees beside him, and kissed his little hot hands, and pressed them to the velvet of her own cheeks, and murmured a number of inarticulate endearments over him, while the tall gentleman surveyed them all benignantly, and awaited his turn.

But they were all quick enough to discover that there was something the matter with Tom. He lay in his aunt's arms listlessly, stroking the soft fabric of her mantle, and seeming with difficulty to grasp the purport of the questions they asked him. And then one cheek was crimson, and the other very white, and the little hands, when they touched Aunt Maria's hands, were burning.

When Miss Kenwick was enquired for,

Miss Parkinson answered that she had gone out to post a letter.

Of course Miss Parkinson knew that this was dreadfully untrue; but what can you do when you are cornered, and the difficulty is another's? Certainly the little woman had wished often enough that someone would turn up and "give it" to Miss Kenwick; but now that the desired incident seemed likely to occur, Miss Parkinson valorously interposed her veracity between punishment and the culprit.

For half-an-hour they awaited Miss Kenwick in vain, and then Tom's father went for a doctor. And when the doctor came he looked very grave, and said Tom was seriously ill. And Aunt Maria cried dreadfully, and the pretty mamma seemed to blame Aunt Maria somehow, though she did not say much.

When the doctor was going away, Mr. Coventry followed him to the door, and asked if Tom was in much danger; and the doctor said yes, but that young creatures were hard to kill, and he might pull through; and when the father went back to his wife and sister he spoke cheerfully to them, and neither of them knew what an awful kind of feeling was at his heart.

Meantime Miss Kenwick was atoning for all her sins, if they had only known it.

She had seen the Honourable Bertie drive off that morning, with a groom behind him; and now in the evening she took the way he had taken, in some vague hope that she might meet him, and perhaps return with him. She had no object in seeking such an interview, beyond seeing him; but that seemed to her quite object enough.

And good or evil luck was on her side that time, for, two miles or thereabouts beyond the town, she saw him coming back, the sunlight on his handsome face, and the high wheels of the dog-cart flashing forth rays of light from the cloud of dust they raised.

The Honourable Bertie was very happy. Things had gone well with him, and he felt himself the most fortunate man in the universe, as he bowled along the level road that ran parallel with the sea. But suddenly his eyes lighted on Miss Kenwick, and then he was conscious of as distinct and disagreeable a sensation as though he had received a slap on the face.

The smile faded from his lips, and his voice was quite two tones deeper than usual as he spoke to the groom: "You can

drive to the hotel; I shall walk back." Then he handed the reins to the man and alighted; though, at that instant, it would have been easier to have faced a platoon of musketry than to have done so.

Bertie Hunter was naturally as tender-hearted as a man could be, and just then his own happiness made him well disposed towards the whole world; yet here was a poor little woman whose worse offence, so far as he knew, was that she loved him, and she had that to hear, sooner or later, that would go far to break her heart.

"I saw you go away this morning," she said with a tremulous smile. "Have you had a happy day?"

"Most happy."

For all his efforts he could not keep out of his voice the little thrill of rapture that memory awoke within him.

"You were with friends?"

"Yes."

"Dear friends?" jealously jesting.

"As well now as later," he thought desperately. Then, after a pause, with averted face: "I was with the woman I am about to marry!"

"Ah!" If her life had depended on it she could not have refrained from clasping her hands together and wringing them so that they hurt each other. "And who is she?"

"Miss Bonanza, an American heiress."

He did not know why he added this. Certainly from no wish to pain her further.

"Then it is her money?"

"No."

He was looking away towards the sea; he could not look at the poor little pinched face, down which a bitter rain of tears was pouring.

"You care for her?"

"I love her."

In mercy to her he must force the truth home on her; must compel her to understand that he had never loved, could never love her; and yet every word he uttered stabbed himself. If everything about her had not been in his eyes so pitiable, utterance of the truth would have seemed less cruel.

"It is so easy to love an heiress," she said with a husky laugh.

"Yes; but I am not a man to sell myself."

There was silence between them for a moment, unbroken save by the distant sigh of the tide. Then:

"I wonder, is it more ignoble to sell

oneself, being a man; or to give oneself undesired, being a woman?" she asked.

"I don't know; but as the question does not concern either of us, we need not be at the trouble to answer it."

"It concerns me. You are kind to try to spare me, but I am beyond being grateful. I don't seem to mind how much you know, since I have lost you. Had I been one of yourselves, and rich, I might have won you; but, you see, I had no chance, and you have fallen to Miss Bonanza's lot, and she, perhaps, was so happy that she did not want you very much."

Her words lashed him like hail—lashed and tortured him, and yet he was dumb. He felt himself a culprit and despicable, and yet the justice in him cried out inarticulately on his own behalf.

He had never desired this girl—never thought of her; she was nothing to him. But now that her eyes questioned him, burning red-hot through her tears, he could only answer tamely:

"I am very sorry; you do me too much honour."

She gave an hysterical laugh.

"It is hard for you to be told this, and to have to answer that you are very sorry."

"What can I say? Can I lie to you?" he cried desperately. "I love another woman, and I am going to marry her, yet I am miserable for your sake."

Had their sexes been reversed he would have offered her friendship instead of love, and rounded some phrases prettily, and retreated from the situation gracefully. But as things were, that was impossible; nature and circumstances had put him in a false position, and it was on him that the shame and humiliation of the girl's confession seemed to fall.

She had taken his arm and was leaning on it, and, in some unaccountable way, he felt himself mean to abjectness, though he knew himself guilty of no wrong.

"I wonder will the time ever come when I shall regret that I have told you this?" she asked desolately, clinging to the arm that was to support another woman through all the years of her life.

"There is no reason why you ever should," he said gently.

"No; and, except for your sake, I don't think I ever shall, because you are such a good man. I do you full justice, you see, although another woman has won you. You were not to blame, it was all my fault, my madness from the beginning; and since

you are what you are, I am not yet ashamed. It will even help me to bear it better, that you know the truth and are sorry. And do not think I am unconscious of all you have done, of all your courtesy and chivalry, of the respectful kindness you always showed me when I did not seem to respect myself. Well, it is all over now, and good-bye, and Heaven bless you."

They had neared the town, and the lighted lamps were gleaming yellowly in the twilight.

She held out her hand to him, and there was a tremulous smile quivering about her white lips.

"Good-bye," he said huskily, and kissed her on the forehead, and so parted from her.

The sun had long set, and the little stars that Tom had so often watched shiver in the sky, were out in all their brightness when Miss Kenwick pulled the bell at Miss Parkinson's hall door.

The bell tinkled very faintly, for the hand that pulled it was as weak as that of a child, but, faint as the summons was, Miss Parkinson heard and answered it.

"They have come," she said in a whisper, laying her hand on Miss Kenwick's arm, and drawing her into the hall.

The governess was going to "catch it" to a dead certainty, but often as Miss Parkinson had wished for that contingency, now that it was imminent she was sorry.

"Who have come?"

"Little Tom's father and mother."

Miss Kenwick heard apathetically. What did that, or anything else, matter?

"And he is very ill, the doctor has been here, and is much alarmed about him, and his aunt says he must have been shamefully neglected."

Still no answer. She was sure to be blamed, but she did not know that condemnation could hurt her.

"The doctor thinks he is almost sure to die."

"Who is sure to die?" sharply.

"Little Tom."

Then Miss Kenwick burst into a laugh which gave Miss Parkinson quite a turn.

"If he dies, it will be of a piece with all the rest," she said.

However, Tom did not die; and the

reproaches with which Aunt Maria meant to overwhelm the governess were never uttered; for how could a soft, gentle woman like Aunt Maria utter reproaches to a haggard creature who seemed half demented by the child's danger, who attended on him slavishly during the weeks of his illness, and out-wearied the love of those nearest and dearest to him by her watchfulness and patience? The contest with Death was close and keen, and perhaps Miss Kenwick battled in prayer both for herself and little Tom, and found some solace for her sore heart that way.

The doctor said she was a capital nurse, and talked somewhat of a missed vocation; but Miss Kenwick proved herself unworthy of his encomiums by fainting the first time Tom spoke her name.

That is all the story. Mr. Hunter married Miss Bonanza, and made her a good husband, and was very happy as a Benedick; and if his wife never heard the Lykeham episode it is rather her misfortune, as nothing shows her husband in a better light. But there are certain things which a man cannot tell even to the tenderest of wives.

Mr. and Mrs. Coventry have settled in England, much to Aunt Maria's satisfaction; for, though she adores little Tom, and could not live a single week without seeing him, she confesses that the sole care of other people's children is a heavy responsibility.

In Miss Kenwick's case, the sober progress of half-a-dozen years, spent in the Coventry household amid golden opinions, has taken the edge altogether off her personal pain, and she is as happy as most of us. She says she has a faculty for training children, and is proud of it; and occasionally, in solitary moments, she looks forward to the time when she will educate little Tom's sons and daughters. Certain it is, that she has refused some eligible offers to change her lot; and it is questionable if she does not, in some illogical and incomprehensible feminine way, think herself a finer woman for having known, loved, and lost, the one man who ever seemed to her supremely worth affection.

"THE STORY OF OUR LIVES FROM YEAR TO YEAR"

ALL THE YEAR ROUND

A Weekly Journal

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PRICE TWOPENCE.

A DATELESS BARGAIN.

By C. L. PIRKIS,
Author of "Lady Lovelace," etc.

CHAPTER XLVIII.

JOYCE'S fancy had drawn, in sombre colours, many a dismal picture of the events of that memorable night of the twentieth of December. Could it have painted truly, in detail as well as in outline, the interior of the little out-building of the house in Brewer's Court, this is what it would have shown her: Frank lying on the red-brick floor, gagged, his feet bound together, his hands tied tightly behind him; a flickering lantern, on a level with his head, throwing fitful light on his gray, unconscious features; a man bending over him, with face only by one degree less pallid and rigid.

That man was Ned Donovan. He was trying with rapid fingers to unloose the knots of the gag which covered Frank's mouth and nostrils. His breath was coming thick and fast; he was muttering to himself in short sentences.

"If they had told me to stand up against him in fair fight I could have done it, but in cold blood, no; and I don't forget he was trying to protect her——"

He succeeded in loosing the tightly-tied bandage, but some minutes passed before the faintest sign of animation showed in the prostrate man's face. First the eyelids quivered, then lifted; and the eyes turned upon Ned with a vacant, bewildered look in them.

"Lift my head," he said faintly, and then the eyes closed again.

There was nothing in that bare little out-house—not so much as a brickbat—that could be converted into a substitute for a pillow. So the Irishman knelt on one knee on the floor, raising Frank's head

and shoulders by supporting them against the other knee.

Then Frank's eyes opened again, and there came a question in a stronger tone.

"Ned, why in Heaven's name am I tied in this way—what does it all mean?"

Ned's answer came in a low, constrained voice:

"It means," he replied, "that you've walked into the lions' den, and they won't let you walk out of it, if they have their way."

"Who are 'they'? Loose my arms, man, and let me see if I can get to my feet. There, help me to twist round on my side, you'll get at the knots better that way."

As yet he was unconscious that his feet were tied.

Ned in silence did as he was requested, and then busied himself with the knots that bound Frank's arms, moving his lantern so as to throw its light upon his task. But it was not one to be got through in a moment. The cord was strong whipcord; the knots were hard and fast; the arms were doubly tied, at the elbows as well as at the wrists.

Frank repeated his question in another form.

"Does 'they' mean that scoundrel Buckingham and his colleagues? Where are they—the whole lot I saw sitting round the table a minute ago?"

"A minute ago! Close upon an hour ago, sir. I left you in their clutches to get Miss Mab into safety."

"Ah! you got her back all right!"

"I sent her home in a cab. Yes, she's safe enough, thank Heaven!"

"Who was it struck me behind? Hang it, can't you get those knots undone? Haven't you such a thing as a knife in your pocket?"

Ned kept his face bent over the knot.

"I've left off carrying a knife about with me. I daren't trust myself sometimes—"

He broke off abruptly.

"Try your teeth at them. Can't you get help of some sort? Where are those men? Great Heavens, if I could only get at them for a moment."

"You marked one of them for life, sir," said Ned, between his bites at the cord.

"Which one?"

"Maurice O'Shea," answered Ned. "He stood at the door watching while the meeting was held. He had only gone off guard for a moment to fetch a match for his pipe, and then it was that Miss Mab made her way in."

"Ah! Now be good enough to tell me who struck me behind, so that I may know the man when next I see him."

These questions must have sounded oddly enough in Ned's ears, put by a man for whose chances of life the boldest would not have given the toss of a half-penny ten minutes ago. It was time some glimmer of the truth was let into his brain. So he answered slowly, between his efforts at the knots:

"Bryan O'Shea it was who struck you behind; Maurice gagged you; the Captain and Bryan together tied your hands and feet; then, when I got back from sending Miss Mab home, they told me it would fall to my share to do the rest."

"What rest?"

Silence was Ned's answer.

His strong teeth had by this time slackened the last knot which bound Frank's elbows. His wrists, however, were still held fast by the cords.

"So far, so good," Ned muttered, going straight at the other ligature.

"What rest?" again demanded Frank impatiently. "Look here, Ned, if you've anything else to say, out with it. Don't fumble over it."

Ned went a roundabout way to work.

"Our Captain, in sudden cases of emergency, has the right to pronounce sudden and extreme sentences. This right is granted to him by our Articles of Association."

"What on earth has that to do with me?"

Ned still chose to get to his end by circumlocution.

"When I got back I found the Captain had read aloud to the others the Article

giving him this right, and nothing remained but to pass the sentence—on you."

"On me! Ah, I see! And you were deputed to carry the sentence out, and you haven't done it. Well, I need not talk to you of my gratitude; but you shall feel it all your life long. To my dying day I shall never forget that I owe my life to you."

"Owe, sir! No; you don't owe your life to me yet."

Great Heavens! What was this man made of! Was love of life or fear of death unknown to him that murder had to be spelt out to him letter by letter, and then shouted into his ear, before he could be made to understand the dangers that beset him? To most men in his position there would have been no need even to whisper the truth; a failing heart would only too surely have suggested it.

"Well, if I don't owe it to you I don't know whom I have to thank for it," answered Frank heartily, still missing the mark. "If Maurice or Bryan O'Shea had been told off to execute the sentence, I take it they would have made but short work of it."

Ned tugged at his knots for a moment in silence. When he spoke next it was in short, brusque tones.

"You don't see, sir; you don't understand," he said, still with his face bent low and his fingers busy. "I've had a certain work given me to do, and my life must go for it if it's left undone."

Frank missed the man's meaning no longer.

There fell a minute's silence. A minute which held for Frank in its sixty seconds the rush, the whirl, the turmoil of a lifetime.

When he next spoke his voice had changed.

"Well," he said in odd, quiet tones, "are you going to do your work?"

There came no reply from Ned.

"I can't prevent you, you know. I'm at your mercy, tied here hand and foot at your feet—and I'm not going to whine and cry for my life, I can tell you," Frank went on.

Ned's answer was the sudden release of Frank's hands.

"The feet won't take so long to unstrap, sir," he said, "they've not put quite so much strength in there. I dare say they were more afraid of your hands than your legs. They knew you'd be a better hand at fighting than running away."

Whether that was their reason or not,

certain it was that Frank's feet were set free with but scanty expenditure of labour.

At first it was hard for him to stand upright; every muscle in his body seemed bruised and aching. His head whirled; he felt sick and giddy.

He leaned against the bare wall for a moment. When he spoke again, it was with an effort.

"Now you must tell me everything, Donovan, so that I may see exactly your danger and mine, for I take it we stand much upon the same footing now," he said.

"Aye," answered Ned bitterly. "There isn't much of a chance left for either of us, sir."

"Where are those men now?"

"Bryan O'Shea is waiting at the corner of the court, till I come out and report that my work is done. Maurice is stationed about a dozen yards ahead of him, in case he may be wanted. The Captain has gone back to his lodgings at Bloomsbury, where I shall have to report myself to-morrow at six—or rather this morning at six, giving him full particulars."

"Why didn't O'Shea stay with you and assist in your—your work?"

"He is on guard against interruptions. He will signal to me to get into hiding should the police come along. Besides, it is not the custom of the Society to set more than one man on at such risky work as this. If detected, the loss of one man is less than that of two to the Society, and there is also less chance of a betrayal of the Society's secrets. Of course, where there are two men at work there is more or less risk of one buying his life by turning witness against the other."

"And how were you supposed to do your work, may I ask, since they only half did it for you? I see no weapons of any sort—no knife, revolver, nor anything else."

Ned's reply was to open the door of the out-building leading into the little square yard. It let in a rush of cold bleak north wind. Overhead the black snow-clouds were beginning to pile in the night-sky. Not a ray of moonlight or shining of gas-lamp anywhere, only the windy flicker which came from the lantern behind the two men made here and there a fitful patch of light on the outside gloom. Not a sound broke the night-silence save the rush of the north wind as it swept past, and the lap-lap of the river against the sides of some belated

steam launch making its way along the receding stream.

Ned pointed down the narrow yard:

"That leads straight down to the river—at least there is only a low broken fence dividing it from an empty wharf which overlooks the Thames. I am supposed to make sure you are insensible—to use my fist if need be to keep you so, but on no account to shed blood, for 'blood spilt,' says the Captain, 'tells tales.' I am then supposed to drag you down the garden, through the fence on to the wharf in the darkness. You can guess the rest. The tide is running out fast now. 'It'll be miles away before morning,' the Captain said, as he went out at the door."

Frank was silent for a moment. It is a somewhat odd experience for a man, as he stands warm, breathing, sentient, to hear himself spoken of as "it."

His next words had the whole of his heart in them, not a doubt.

"The scoundrel! My day of reckoning with him isn't far off, he may rest assured."

"What are you going to do, sir?"

"Do! What do you suppose I'm going to do but hand the whole lot of them over to the police?"

One long, low whistle at this moment came thrilling through the night air, followed at a short interval by one less prolonged.

Ned stepped out into the windy darkness and gave in response a short whistle on the same note. Then he came back, shutting the door behind him without a sound.

"What does that mean?" asked Frank.

"It means—'Any difficulties? Do you want help?'"

"And your reply meant——?"

"No."

"Ned, that fellow won't be making off before we can get at him, will he? I feel all to pieces to-night, but still——"

Ned impatiently crossed the floor, and stood at Frank's side, laying his hand upon his arm.

"Look here, Mr. Ledyard," he said roughly, "it's time you took in the whole thing, the risk I've run, the danger we're in. I take it you love your life—you've every reason to. I love mine, I know that, though why Heaven only knows, I don't."

It would not have needed a philosopher to answer Ned's "why." At three-and-twenty the love of life is hard to kill, more especially when disappointments and crosses have made a man feel he has

scarcely got his due of enjoyment out of those three-and-twenty years.

"Love my life? I should think I did," ejaculated Frank, thinking of what the morrow promised to bring him; "but I can't see how the love of our lives can in any way interfere with our handing those fellows over to justice."

"Don't you know, sir, neither you nor I would be allowed to leave this court alive if we showed our faces together? Bryan has a revolver in his pocket: he's a sure shot enough."

"Well, then, don't let us show our faces together. You go out first and draw the men off; I'll follow after. There's no difficulty that I can see."

"And when you left here I suppose you'd go straight to the police, and make known the whole thing from beginning to end."

"Exactly; what else on earth is there to be done?"

"And—what—becomes—of—me?"

He put long pauses between his words, doubling their meaning by his slow emphasis.

"What becomes of you?" repeated Frank. "Why, of course, you'd be put under the protection of the police till those scoundrels were disposed of. You'd be safe enough then, I suppose."

Ned laughed a short, bitter laugh. "You forget that those men and I represent not only a small branch association but a big League pledged to—well, no matter about that. What I want you to understand, and what you don't seem able to understand, is that the moment your face is seen alive, here or anywhere else, my life is gone. You may put yourself under the protection of the police, well and good, but there's no twenty bodies of police can protect me. Do you understand now, sir?"

"Ned, I am not likely to play the part of a cur or a coward."

And the tone in which Frank said this showed that, at last, Ned's words held their full of meaning for him.

Then, for a minute, the two men stood staring into each other's faces silently, the flicker from the lantern showing one bitter, haggard look shared between them.

Frank was the first to speak. "Whatever you propose I shall feel bound in honour to accede to. I won't take my life at the price of yours," he said huskily.

Ned stood silent.

Frank went on: "I will remain in hiding where and for how long you please,

until—that is—you can get away into some place of safety. Only one proviso I make; you must take a message from me to Miss Shenstone explaining matters. I can't have her dragged in for any of this misery."

Ned still did not speak. So Frank went on again. "America, of course, would be no refuge for you. Nor France, nor Belgium——"

"No, nor any corner of the earth, so far as I can see," broke in the Irishman impetuously. "Heavens, that I should have sold myself into this state of bondage!" And then in his wrath he lifted up his voice, and cursed the day that he was born; cursed his Irish blood, which had found its kith and kin among traitors and cowards; cursed the tyranny of wealth and rank, which called such a race of traitors and cowards into existence.

Frank subsided into coolness before the tumult.

"Don't let yourself go in that way, for Heaven's sake. Let's take counsel together and see what can be done for the best," he said quietly.

But think as they would, everything seemed for the worst, nothing for the best.

They passed in review every corner of Europe where there would be a likelihood for a perjured Fenian to dodge his destiny.

Ned shook his head over it all. "If I could be tossed out of the clouds into the heart of Norway, or even on the coast," he said, "I might be safe enough there; it's a little out of the track of Fenianism, but the thing is how am I to get there? Not to-night, nor to-morrow night, should I cross London alive with the work I have had dealt out to me to do. The Society gives a man his work for each day, and, if they haven't perfect faith in that man, they appoint two men to look after him and see that it is done. When work slackens, as it may before long, then I can begin to think of my hiding-place. But at the present moment, it seems to me, the only thing to do is to hide you, not me, till my chance comes round."

The happy wedding-day, of which the morrow held the promise, seemed suddenly to disappear from Frank's sight into the dim distance.

He tried to keep his head steady. "As I told you a moment ago, I am prepared to go into hiding where, and for how long you please, on the one condition I have named. So far as I can see, your safest plan will be to turn sailor so soon as you

can get a fair chance of escape, and live upon the ocean."

"Yes," answered Ned thoughtfully, "so long as I kept clear of the Atlantic highway, or the Australian steamers, I should be right enough. The life would suit me—"

"It would be a glorious life," broke in Frank, "and after the bondage you've lived in the last two or three years, I should think you'd hail it with delight. If circumstances hadn't made me a lawyer, I should have been a sailor myself."

A long, low whistle once more broke in upon their talk. It was sounded on a lower note than before.

Ned made no attempt to answer it.

"What does that mean?" asked Frank.

"It means warning. I am not to stir till he signals again."

"The scoundrel! I'd like to signal him. Well, so far as I can see, it only remains now to arrange my hiding-place, the where and how long it is to last. Thank Heaven I have some money with me—ah, I suppose those men didn't rob me of my purse as a finish to their kind treatment?"

With an eagerness he had never before evinced on the matter of pounds or pennies, he ransacked his pockets, and thankfully enough, came upon a roll of bank notes, with which, in view of the morrow's necessities, he had provided himself, and for safety had stuffed into his pocket-book over-night, as he had left his rooms to attend Mrs. Shenstone's evening party.

Ned eyed them. "They wouldn't touch notes—they're too wary," he said; "but if it had been gold no doubt it would have been appropriated for 'patriotic purposes.'"

"Patriotic humbug! But I tell you what, Ned, you shall have half of whatever I've got here, so that we may each have an equal chance of fulfilling our share of our bargain. There's nothing like solid hard cash to tide a man over difficulties." He knelt on the floor beside the lantern, so as to count over the store of "solid hard cash" he had to divide.

Ned stood looking at him, still thoughtfully turning over in his mind the ways and means that remained to him for redeeming his forfeited life.

"Whaling up in the North would suit me better than anything else in life," he presently said, with an energy which showed that, for all his love-lornness and wretched bond-service, the love of adventure and a reckless freedom was strong as ever in his heart.

Frank looked up sharply from his bank-notes.

"That reminds me of the trip I took about four years ago, when I broke down with hard reading. I took passage in a whaler from Dundee, and sailed out beyond the Faroes. A better hiding-place from Fenian Leagues, or any phase of civilised (or brutalised) humanity couldn't be found than the Faroes. For all practical purposes they are as far off from England as Australia."

Ned's face brightened.

"It would be giving me a chance, sir, if you'd manage to get out first to the Faroes and let me later on join you there. I should be safe enough on board a whaler, or anywhere up in those northern regions; but everywhere else, I run the risk of a bullet through my head, or rather, should run the risk, if once it were known I had failed in my duty."

Frank got up from his knees with his bank-notes parcelled into two lots.

"Here you are, Ned," he said, thrusting one lot into the Irishman's hand.

Ned took them a little doubtfully.

"Will it be safe to use them, sir? I mean, do you think their numbers have been taken?" he asked.

"No fear. A man who owed me a lot of money paid me these notes late yesterday as a first instalment. He's much too big a scamp to take the numbers of his notes, or have the faintest notion where he got them from."

"It's a mercy the Captain didn't know that," muttered Ned, as he pocketed the notes.

"Aye. Well, now, I take it we stand on an equal footing, and we'll strike a cool, clear-headed bargain, leaving nothing to hap-hazard or chance. As I told you a minute ago, we put in at the Faroes on our way back to Dundee. I hired a small boat, and went coasting in and out among the islands. Several are uninhabited, and one, I remember, had lost its pinnacle, and was nothing more than a sunken rock. On this rock had been placed a beacon with glass prisms, which refracted the light thrown upon it from a neighbouring islet. This islet was little more than a rocky headland jutting out into the ocean; and beyond the old couple who kept the light-house, and their children, I don't believe it owned to a single inhabitant other than gulls or gair-fowl."

Ned's face brightened. "The very place, sir," he began enthusiastically, ready at

one bound from the depths of despair to take the heights of hope.

Frank went on with his description in a dry, matter-of-fact tone.

"This old couple had lived there for twenty years. The man was a deaf mute, his wife was an old Scotchwoman, deaf, but decidedly not dumb. She took it for granted that every one's first question to her would be for the name of the island, its latitude and longitude; so whenever she saw a stranger she dropped a curtsy, and said: 'Sir, this is Light Island, latitude, 62° 32', north; longitude, 7° 10' west.' I can hear her now. It impressed the latitude and longitude of the place in my memory; but you had better write it down—there may be a hundred or more Light Islands up in the North for anything I know to the contrary."

Ned produced a scrap of paper from his pocket, but pencil he had none.

Frank had a blue lead pencil at command, but he objected to the paper. "You'll lose that," he said, eyeing it dubiously; "or perhaps light a pipe with it."

"Never fear, sir."

"But I do fear. A meeting-place like this ought to be tattooed on your arm or leg, if we had means at command. Have you a watch?"

Ned was not likely to forget he had a watch, over which he had sworn his impetuous oath of allegiance to a League that set time at defiance.

He produced it in its old-fashioned case, with the hands stationary at the memorable hour that his bond-service had begun.

Frank handed him his pencil, and superintended the writing in the inner lid of the latitude and longitude of Light Island.

"It's a special Providence put that place into your head, sir," Ned said, his enthusiasm mounting higher and higher. "It'll be easy enough for you to get away unnoticed, before the hue and cry is set up after you. When once you're missed, there's not a town or village in England could hide you; but out there on the Faroes I take it you'll be safe enough from newspapers or the detectives."

Frank was in no mood to play the echo to the Irishman's enthusiasm.

"Yes, it's a dismal enough look-out," he said gloomily, "but I'm not going to shirk my share of the compact. I can get across London before dawn; take the first train to the North; be at Dundee before night; and on board a whaler or any other boat I can catch before the hue

and cry, as you call it, has had time to begin. Once at Light Island, I remain there until you get free from your bondage and take my place. This is my share of the bargain, isn't it?"

"It is, sir. I wish I could make it lighter for you."

"Never mind about that. I am grateful enough to you that I am here to strike a bargain at all. Now for your share of it. Give me that scrap of paper you offered me a minute ago."

Ned handed it to him.

Frank, supporting the paper against the brick wall, wrote a hurried line, addressed to Joyce, Ned holding the lantern close to his shoulders meanwhile, to give him the necessary light.

"My darling," it ran, "don't be uneasy about me. I'm quite safe, and in a few days will be back again, and explain everything to you."

"F. L."

More than this the paper would not admit of.

He folded it, and handed it to Ned.

"I trust to you to give this into Miss Shenstone's hands yourself," he said, emphasising the last word.

Ned took the paper.

"It shall only pass out of my hands to go into Miss Shenstone's," he said.

"Yes. And it must be delivered at once—at once. Do you hear, Ned?"

Ned's face clouded. Mountains of difficulty rose up before him now.

"The when and the how must be left to me, sir," he answered, with a rough decision.

"No, they must not be left to you. This is a matter which concerns me more than anything else in the world. If you can't tell me definitely when this note will find its way into Miss Shenstone's hands, I shall deliver it myself before I go into hiding, no matter at what risk to my life."

An ugly change passed over Ned's open face.

"Look here, Mr. Ledyard," he said gruffly, laying his hand on Frank's arm, "let me understand where we are. Are you trifling and playing the fool with me? Are you seeming fair and above board with me, and meaning all the time to throw me over at the very first opportunity?"

Frank shook him off indignantly.

"Do you doubt my honour?" he cried. "Is there no such a thing as gratitude in the world? Is it likely I should take my

life at your hands, and then put yours in jeopardy?"

"That is precisely what you would do if you tied me down to time in this matter, or took it into your own hands. You don't know—how could you!—the network which hems me in at the present moment. You don't know how impossible it is for a man, who has once sworn allegiance as I have to a powerful League, to claim an hour to himself. Wherever he goes, eyes are on him; whatever he does, it is reported to his superiors. If I were to go from here to Miss Shenstone, suspicions would be set afloat at once, and my life wouldn't be worth a brass farthing."

Frank's face was growing white and whiter with the effort to keep himself in check. He asked another question.

"How long must I keep in hiding? Tell me."

Ned broke out again into vehemence.

"How is it possible for me to tell you? Ask a man who is crippled hand and foot when he means to use his limbs again. He'll tell you, to-morrow if power comes back to them; and I tell you, to-morrow would see me shake off this cursed bondage, if I could see my way to it. No, sir; time myself I can't, and won't pretend I can. A bargain without a date, it must be, or no bargain at all."

Three short, quick whistles came in succession at this moment from without.

Ned promptly took the lantern from the floor, and went towards the inner door of the room. "That means I must come at once. I daren't delay another moment, or they'll be down upon us. That cord must be hidden. Can you charge yourself with it, sir? I dare not. Better not leave the house for full half an hour after I am gone, then lose no time in getting away. You had better take my great-coat to cover your evening dress, I shall say I 'marked it'"—this said with a meaning impossible to misconstrue—"and threw it into the Thames."

While Ned had been speaking he had been quickly moving towards the front door, after depositing his lantern on the table of the inner room. Frank muttered an angry word. Twenty-four hours would have seemed but a scanty allowance of time for the striking of so momentous a bargain, and here was he begrudged an extra five minutes.

He followed Ned, laying his hand on his arm.

"A moment more. There must be no

loose arrangement of these details—they are of vital importance. I have your word for it that that note goes into Miss Shenstone's hands as soon as possible?"

"As soon as possible. Yes, sir."

"Very well; I trust you, remember. Now, another thing, you must write to me directly you get a chance, and tell me how things go."

Ned thought a moment. "Under what name, sir, shall I address you; I dare not use your own."

"Oh, some common name that won't attract attention. Better keep to my initials though, they're marked on my linen. Say Lee—Frederick Lee."

"Frederick Lee. I won't forget."

"And, Ned, there's one thing else. You run tremendous risks daily, should anything happen to you—forgive me for putting it so plainly—how on earth am I to know it? Or how is anyone to know where I am, and send me word?"

Ned paused with his hand on the lock of the front door, "I will provide against that, also——" he began.

"Yes, but how, man?" broke in Frank impetuously; "tell me in what way. This is a thing of first importance—not to be left to chance or hap-hazard."

"You must leave the whole thing to me, sir, from first to last. It is impossible for me to say how I shall do this or that. If I laid down a settled plan, the chances are that it would be impossible for me to adhere to it. Circumstances, and the thought of the safety of both of us, must guide me."

Frank groaned. The whistle sounded again impatiently from without.

Ned, with his last look, added another last word.

"Don't forget, sir," he said quietly, "we have changed places now, and my life is in your hands."

Frank sprang forward impetuously, seizing him by the hand.

"I'm not likely to forget," he cried vehemently. "I tell you I am simply a dead man till you give the word."

MORE OMENS AND QUACKERIES.*

IN TWO PARTS. PART I.

THE Goddess Hilda, says Kelly, in his "Indo-European Traditions and Folk Lore," is only another form of Freyja or

* "Charms, Omens, and Ancient Quackeries." ALL THE YEAR ROUND, Nos. 932, 933, 934. New Series. October 9th, 16th, 23rd, 1886.

Frea, the wife of Odin, and sister of Fryer or Fro, the God of the Sun and of Love, in whose attributes she participates. The ladybird has many names, all of them mythic, and it is sacred to both goddesses. Its home is in heaven, or in the sun, and German children tell it in rhyme to fly up thither, mount the choir (Freyja's throne), and bring back sunshine and fine weather. They believe that were they to kill the insect, the sun would not shine on the next day. The English rhyme—

Ladybird, ladybird, fly away home;
Your house is on fire, your children will burn—

seems to have some reference to the insect's ministrations to fire, the more so as the ladybird is very commonly addressed in Germany to the same purpose, and the children in Westphalia have a rhyme which plainly implies that the burning house is in heaven, for it states that the angels are crying about it. This little creature is appealed to in Germany as a child-bringer, and is asked to fly up to heaven and bring down a golden dish, and in it a golden bantling.

The following are a few of the names applied to this insect: "The little bird of the sun," "The little lady of the sun," "St. Michael's chicken," "St. Lucia's chicken," "St. Nicholas's little dove," "The Bishop Burnaby," "The animal of heaven," "The little bird of Mary," "The little cow," "Little bird," "Little horse of God." It is difficult to say how or when arose this peculiar idea of their sanctity. They crawl like bugs—in fact, "ladybug" is their real name—and if you push them they shut up and do not even crawl.

In Sweden if the black spots on the wing covers of the ladybird exceed seven, the usual number, it is thought to be a sign that corn will be dear; if they are fewer in number, a plentiful harvest may be expected. In Yorkshire, according to the Rev. Alfred Easter, the following is the local naming:

Cow lady, cow lady, bie thee way whum!
Thy haase is afire, thy children all gone;
All but poor Nancy, set under a pan,
Wavin (weaving) gold lace as fast as sho can.

The services of the ladybird in affairs of love are pretty well known by this time, and were, indeed, mentioned in our previous paper, and therefore need not be enumerated. It is, however, said that if you kill one you will be broken before snow falls. The Kentish people say they are good, when powdered up, as a preservative against measles and colic!

In the Highlands of Scotland, where the white heather is found at exceedingly rare intervals, it is looked upon as a bringer of luck, and in some parts of Scotland she would be thought a rash bride who went to church without it. There is a saying, "Happy is the married life of her who wears the white heather at her wedding." Amongst those who go out early upon the hills to look for white heather, the saying is common, "who finds keeps." The searchers are many; but few find it, even when it is wanted to grace a bridal bouquet. There is health, though, in the pursuit, so that the search itself is "lucky," and it is so good-natured as to be a deceptive plant. The pale sprig, here and there, constantly deceives tourists on the hunt for it into thinking that they have stumbled upon real specimens. A blending of blue and purple is the familiar colour of the heather flower; but it is to be found in plenty in delicate tints, and it is these that deceive the unknowing searcher.

Except in colour the white heather does not differ from that which covers all the Highland hills. It is the ordinary flower; but in its virgin whiteness it stands out amongst clumps of purple like a tint-spray of snow. They say in the far North that when the sheep, hardy devourers of the tender stem of the heather, come across it in their grazing, they avoid harming it; that the grouse have never been known to crush it with their wings. On great occasions the table of a Highland chief would be poor indeed without its sprig of white heather. When the heir presumptive reaches man's estate, he wears it for luck; and it is considered the height of hospitality to present it to the stranger guest. If he loses it, he may look out for disaster. A bouquet formed of this rare flower was carried by the youngest daughter of England's Queen on the occasion of her marriage.

To descend from the beautiful to the unsightly, I may say that amongst the absurd divination customs of our ancestors, there was one which consisted of going outside the house and pulling up the first cabbage-stalk met with, in order to determine the size and quality of the marriage partner. If earth stick to the root it meant fortune, and the taste of the heart or stem was indicative of the future partner's temper—bitter being bad, and sweet good.

A novel custom still prevails amongst ladies in some parts, which will commend itself to maiden ladies growing old. It is

said that she who puts on a silk-knit garter the first day of the year and wears it continually, will certainly marry during the year. It is said that the mother of a young lady, being very much pleased with the silken garter worn by a young lady for this purpose, proposed to knit a "fellow" for it; but the young lady declined, saying she had sufficient confidence in the bewitching circlet, and preferred the natural coming of the "fellow."

In an old work on the occult sciences, the following very singular divination practice at the period of the harvest moon is described. When you go to bed, place under your pillow a prayer-book, open at the part of the matrimonial service, "with this ring I thee wed," place on it a key, a ring, a flower, a sprig of willow, a small heart-cake, a crust of bread, and the following cards: the ten of clubs, nine of hearts, ace of spades, and the ace of diamonds. Wrap all these in a thin handkerchief of gauze or muslin, and on getting into bed cross your hands and say :

Luna, every woman's friend,
To me thy goodness condescend;
Let me this night in visions see
Emblems of my destiny.

If you dream of storms, troubles will betide you; if the storm end in a fine calm, so will your fate; if of a ring or the ace of diamonds, marriage; bread, an industrious life; cake, a prosperous life; flowers, joy; willow, treachery in love; spades, death; diamonds, money; clubs, a foreign land; hearts, base children; keys, that you will rise to great trust and power, and never know want; birds, that you will have many children; and geese, that you will marry more than once.

The poet Moore put into verse two very old-fashioned omens :

When daylight was yet sleeping under the billow,
And stars in the heavens still lingering shone,
Young Kitty, all blushing, rose up from her pillow,
The last time she e'er was to press it alone.
For the youth whom she treasured her heart and
her soul in
Had promised to link the last tie before noon;
And when once the young heart of a maiden is
stolen,
That maiden, herself, will steal after it soon.

As she looked in the glass, which a woman ne'er
misses,

Nor ever wants time for a sly glance or two,
A butterfly, fresh from the night-flower's kisses,
Flew over the mirror and shaded the view.
Enraged with the insect, for hiding her graces,
She brushed him; he fell, alas! never to rise—
"Ah! such," said the girl, "is the pride of our
faces,
For which the soul's innocence too often dies!"

While she stole through the garden, where heart-
ease was growing,
She cull'd some, and kissed off its night-fallen
dew;
And a rose, further on, look'd so tempting and
glowing,
That, spite of her haste she must gather it, too.
But while o'er the roses too carelessly leaning,
Her zone flew in two, and her heart's-ease was
lost;
"Ah! this means," said the girl (and she sighed at
the meaning),
"That love is scarce worth the repose it will cost."

The butterfly was, and is still, considered to be an emblem of the soul, and it used, at one time, to be regarded as almost fatally unlucky to destroy one of these beautiful insects.

Concerning sneezing there are numerous superstitions and omens, and as a commencement I will give an entire week of sneezes :

Sneeze on Monday, sneeze for danger;
Sneeze on Tuesday, kiss a stranger;
Sneeze on Wednesday, have a letter;
Sneeze on Thursday, something better;
Sneeze on Friday, expect sorrow;
Sneeze on Saturday, joy to-morrow;
Sneeze on Sunday, on Monday borrow.

Arbut^hnot said : "Violent sneezing produceth convulsions in all the muscles of respiration; so great an alteration can be produced by the tickling of a feather; and if the action of sneezing should be continued by some very acrid substance, it will produce 'headache,' universal convulsions, fever, and death." Less superstitious, Bacon wrote: "If one be about to sneeze, rubbing the eyes till tears run will prevent it; for that the humour descending to the nostrils is diverted to the eyes." In his "Paradise Regained," Milton thus refers to a sneeze :

I heard the rack,
As earth and sky would mingle; but
These flaws, though mortals fear them
As dangerous to the pillar'd frame of heav'n,
Are to the main as wholesome as a sneeze
To man's less universe, and soon are gone.

It is said that a pestilence was sent on the Romans in the days of Pope Gregory the Great, of which people died suddenly, sneezing as they died; thus, when anyone was heard to sneeze, they that were by said, "God help you," making the sign of the Cross. This is generally believed to be the origin of the custom of after-sneezing salutations. The Romans said that before the time of Jacob men never sneezed but once, and then died. They assure us that Jacob was the first to die of natural decay; his predecessors to the Unknown Land having all died sneezing. The memory of this fact was ordered to be preserved in

all nations, by a command of every Prince to his subjects to employ some salutation after the act of sneezing.

When a King of Mesopotamia took it into his royal head to sneeze, it is said that loud acclamations were made in all parts of his dominions, those omitting to follow suit being liable to a severe penalty. A writer in "The Schoole of Slovenrie," advises us thus :

When you would sneeze, straight turn yourself into your neighbour's face,

As for my part, wherein to sneeze, I know no fitter place;

It is an order, when you sneeze, good men will pray for you ;

Marke him that doth so, for I thinke he is your friend most true.

And that your friend may know who sneezes, and may for you pray,

Beware you not forget to sneeze full in his face alway.

But when thou hear'st another sneeze, though he be thy father,

Say not "God bless him," but "choak up," or some such matter, rather.

Bishop Hall says : "When he nesseth thinks them not his friends, then uncover not ;" and an old proverb says : "He that hath sneezed thrice, turn him out of the hospital."

Even that most necessary act of cleanliness, the cutting and trimming of the finger nails, has its accompanying omen. We are told in ancient rhyme (quoted in our previous article) that

A man had better never be born
Than have his nails on Sunday shorn ;
Cut them on Monday, cut them for wealth ;
Cut them on Tuesday, cut them for health ;
Cut them on Wednesday, cut them for news ;
Cut them on Thursday, for a pair of new shoes ;
Cut them on Friday, cut them for sorrow ;
Cut them on Saturday, see your sweetheart to-morrow.

This, however, would not appear to apply everywhere, for Sir Thomas Browne remarks that, "To cut nails upon a Friday or a Sunday is accounted lucky amongst the common people in many places. The set and statutory times of paring nails and cutting hair is thought by many a point of consideration, which is, perhaps, but the continuation of an ancient superstition. To the Romans it was piacular to pare their nails upon the mundinæ, observed every ninth day."

There are a number of superstitious fancies and omens concerning the white spots which at times appear on the thumb and finger nails, and which are caused by a slight injury to the flesh above the nail root. Of these spots, beginning from the thumb, you may read,

A friend, a present, a foe,

A letter to come, a journey to go.

That is to say, a white spot on the thumb nail means "a friend;" on the index finger, "a present;" and so on to the little finger, which signifies "a journey to go." Another version tells us that all spots are presents to come, whether on the thumb or finger ; but that

A present on the finger is sure to linger ;

A present on the thumb is sure to come.

In bygone day it was commonly believed that it was unlucky to a traveller if a hare chanced to cross his path, especially if the hare appeared when the traveller was on horseback. The Roman augurs considered it an exceeding ill omen. Ramsay, in his "Elminothologiæ," p. 271 (1668), says : "If a hare cross the traveller's path, he suspects he shall be robbed or come to some mischance." The reason for this silly superstition is, in all probability, that witches were formerly supposed to be able to transform themselves into hares. Ellison, in his "Trip to Benwell," makes reference to the superstition in these words :

Nor did we meet, with nimble feet,
One little fearful lepus ;
That certain sign, as some divine,
Of fortune bad to keep us.

Purchasers of horses nowadays will hardly believe that not so long ago superstition had much to do with the choice of a horse. The rhyme which follows is English, and had its origin in the West of England :

If you have a horse with four white legs,
Keep him not a day ;
If you have a horse with three white legs,
Send him far away ;
If you have a horse with two white legs,
Send him to a friend ;
And if you have a horse with one white leg,
Keep him to his end.

The regard in which the swallow is held is on account of the omens attendant upon its movements. Swallows were sacred to the Penates, or household gods, of the ancients, and their preservation became, therefore, a matter of religious concern. Hence arose the superstition that whoever destroys a swallow, or her nest, destroys his or her own fortune in doing so. Where the swallow nestles, it is said no lightning will fall ; while the place she deserts is taken possession of by death. Whoever gives the swallow shelter will be thrice blessed. Formerly it was believed that the swallow did not migrate, but formed itself into a ball, and so passed under the sea or through the sea. Russian peasants believe that the swallow arrives from Paradise to warm the earth ; that its presence keeps off fire and lightning ; that its arrival

early foretells abundant harvests; and that to steal its nest brings bad freckles on the face of the robber. According to Scandinavian legends, the swallow hovered over the Cross on which the Redeemer was hanging, singing "Svate! svate!" (cheer up! cheer up!), and hence it received the name of "svate," or swallow—"the bird of consolation."

Another superstitious belief, associated with their migratory habits, is that swallows go to distant lands in search of a certain wondrous stone, "seeking with eager eyes the wondrous stone, which the swallow brings from the shores of the sea, to restore the sight of its fledgelings." Weather-wise people will say, if the swallows fly high, "fine weather;" but if they fly low, "rain to come."

In many parts of the country the following lines were believed to be true with regard to the wearing of shoes:

Tip at the toe, live to see woe;
Wear at the side, live to be a bride;
Wear at the ball, live to spend all;
Wear at the heel, live to save a deal.

A most unique superstition about shoes tells us that, if a young lady be desirous of dreaming of her absent lover, it is only necessary to go through the following formula, previous to retiring for the night:

Hoping this night my true love to see,
I place my shoes in the form of a T.

The following rhyme is current in the North of England concerning the good and ill luck of the wash-tub; and though it has a tinge of superstition about it, the ideas embodied are remarkably good ones:

They that wash on a Monday
Have a whole week to dry;
They that wash on a Tuesday
Are not so much awrye;
They that wash on a Wednesday
May get their clothes clean;
They that wash on a Thursday
Are not so much to mean;
They that wash on a Friday
Wash for their need;
They that wash on a Saturday
Are clarty paps indeed.

"Clarty paps," be it understood, are dirty folks.

In the South of England there is a general belief, that it is unlucky to sleep in a room with the whitethorn in bloom in it during the month of May. Anyone who is foolhardy enough to tempt the Fates thereby will surely be followed by some great misfortune. According to an old saw:

If you sweep the house with the blossomed broom
in May,
You are sure to sweep the head of the house away

An anecdote is related in Sussex, which will show the strength of superstition of a young girl who was lingering in the last stage of consumption, but whose countenance always lighted up at the sight of flowers. One day, though, she appeared so unhappy after a nosegay of bright spring flowers had been laid on her bed, that she was asked if their smell was disagreeable? "Oh, no!" she replied. "They are very nice indeed; but I should be very glad if you would throw away the piece of yellow broom, for they do say death comes with it if it is brought into the house in the month of May." I have never heard this superstition spoken of anywhere north of the Trent.

There is carefully preserved at Eden Hall an old drinking-glass upon the safety of which, tradition says, hangs the luck of the family. In days gone by, it is said that the glass was stolen from the fairies, who did all they could to recover the ravished property, but without success. Finally they disappeared, after pronouncing this spell:

If that glass either break or fall,
Farewell to the luck of Eden Hall!

So long as this mysterious glass is preserved intact, the luck of Eden Hall will last; but should the day ever arrive when it is broken, or allowed to fall, there will be no more luck in the family. The goblet, which, in all probability, was a sacred chalice, is now in the possession of Sir C. Musgrave, the owner of the Hall.

The fate of Ettrick Hall was long ago predicted in the following lines:

On it the sun shines never at morn,
Because it was built on the widow's corn;
And its foundations can never be sure,
Because it was built on the ruins of the poor;
And ere an age has come and gone,
Or the trees o'er the chimly tops grow green,
We dinna ken where the house has been.

How literally true this prediction has proved, is evidenced by the fact that there has not for many years been a vestige of the grand old mansion. Its site can only be known by the avenues and lines of trees, while we are told that many clay cottages that were built previously "are standing in state and form." Around Ettrick Hall was originally a considerable village, which, as recently as the Civil War, contained as many as fifty-three fine houses; but about the year 1700, according to Chambers's "Popular Rhymes of Scotland," one of the Tushielaw family turned out the remnant of these poor and small tenants and sub-tenants. (The numbers

being then very considerable. He built a splendid house on the property, all of which he took into his own lands. There is no means of ascertaining whether the prediction was written before or after the event.

One of the most foolish omens I have come across, and one that has been told to me over and over again with the utmost solemnity, is that if a person breaks a looking-glass, inadvertently or purposely, he or she will have no luck for the space of seven years. I have not broken one of these articles for the purpose of testing the truth of this superstition, but I have heard many a one affirm most positively that, following a broken looking-glass, domestic trouble had never ceased for seven years. It is related that, when the Emperor Napoleon was engaged in one of his campaigns in Italy, he broke the glass over a portrait of Josephine. This accident so disconcerted him that he immediately despatched a courier to convince himself of her safety, being fully impressed of her death. In parts of England the belief is strong that the breakage of a looking-glass or the glass of a picture is the sure precursor of a death in the family.

The owl has always been held to be the emblem of wisdom by some, and by others as an object of detestation and dread; and the cry of the screech owl at night in rural districts is said to precede disease and death. Should one of these birds screech while flying over a house, death is certain to follow to someone residing therein. Imperial Rome twice underwent lustration to save her from the direful consequences of a visit from one of those ill-omened birds, which penetrated even to the Capitol. Butler thus alludes to this event:

The Roman Senate, when within
The city walls an owl was seen,
Did cause their clergy with lustrations
(Our Synod calls humiliations),
The round-fac'd prodigy t' avert,
From doing town and country hurt.

The placing of an even-leaved ash under one's pillow at bed-time will, it is said, cause the sleeper to dream of his or her lover. Moreover, it is further boldly asserted, it will tell you who you will have for a mate, as surely as the dead man lies in his grave.

This even ash I carry in hand,
The first I meet shall be my husband;
If he be single, let him draw nigh;
But if he be married, then he may pass by;

refers to the day-time, and to ensure success, the leaf should be thrown at the

passer-by. Another rough poem of the Middle Ages informs us that we should

Burn ash-wood green,
'Tis fire for a queen.
Burn ash-wood rear,
'Twill make a man swear.

Even ash, I do thee pluck,
Hoping thus to meet good luck;
If no luck I get from thee,
I shall wish thee on a tree.

A triplet, dealing with three separate trees, tells us to

Beware of an oak, it draws the stroke;
Avoid an ash, it courts a flash;
Creep under a thorn, it will save you from harm.

The foregoing, of course, refers to sheltering during a thunderstorm. The following refers to an old superstition:

When the oak comes out before the ash,
You'll have a summer of wet and splash;
When the ash comes out before the oak,
You'll have a summer of dust and smoke.

That is to say, if the oak gets into leaf before the ash, we may expect a cold summer and an unproductive autumn; while, if the contrary is the case, we may expect a fine and productive year. Putting this to the proof, we find that in the years 1816, 1817, 1821, 1823, 1828, 1829, 1830, 1838, 1840, 1845, 1850, and 1859 the ash was in leaf a full month before the oak, and the autumns were unfavourable. In 1831, 1833, 1839, 1853, and 1880, the two species of trees came into leaf about the same time, and the years were not remarkable either for plenty or the reverse; whereas in 1818, 1819, 1820, 1822, 1824, 1825, 1826, 1827, 1833, 1834, 1835, 1836, 1837, 1842, 1846, 1854, 1868, and 1869 the oak displayed its foliage several weeks before the ash, and the summers of those years were dry and warm, and the harvests abundant. The winters do not seem to have showed any marked characteristics, being sometimes very cold, sometimes very warm, both when the oak-tree came first in leaf, and when the foliage of the ash-tree preceded that of the oak.

It is said to be a serious ill-omen to look or turn back after setting out on a journey, a superstition, in all probability, as old nearly as the world itself. This originated with Lot's wife looking back, when he and his family were being led outside the doomed City of the Plain. In Roberts's "Oriental Illustrations" it is stated that the Hindoos consider it exceedingly unfortunate for a man or a woman to look back when they leave their homes; consequently, if a man goes out and leaves something behind him, which his wife knows he wants, she does not call

after him to turn or look back, but takes or sends it after him; and, if some great emergency obliges him to look back, he will not then proceed on the business he was about to transact.

It has been declared, on the usually competent authority which originates superstitions of every sort, that it is highly unlucky for a rose, when worn on the person, to scatter its leaves on the ground. I venture to quote an illustration of this from the "Life and Correspondence of M. G. Lewis." The lady to whom this portent happened was Miss Ray, who was murdered at the Piazza entrance of the Covent Garden Theatre by a man named Hackman. When the carriage was announced, and she was adjusting her dress, Mrs. Lewis remarked on a beautiful rose which Miss Ray wore in her bosom. Just as the words were uttered the flower fell to the ground, and when Miss Ray stooped down to pick it up the red leaves scattered themselves on the ground, the stalk only remaining in her hand. The poor girl, evidently affected by this incident, said, in a slightly faltering voice: "I trust I am not to consider this an evil omen." But soon recovering her presence of mind, she expressed a hope that they would meet again after the performance; a hope which it was decreed should never be fulfilled.

ITS BIRTHDAY.

In my hid heart my holiday I keep,
I crown my royal day with dewy flowers;
Across the chords a joyous hand I sweep,
Triumphant song should hail the golden hours.
My day of days, whose sun arose in clouds,
Yet slowly brightened in its majesty,
Till the full glory touched the highest shrouds,
Where the frail ship sailed o'er life's troubled sea.
My day of days, how the rich gifts it brought,
In its own generous fulness soothed and cheered,
Till the pale plant new strength and vigour caught,
Despite the storms that crushed, the blights that seared;
The drooping tendrils rose to meet the glow,
And clung around the strong support it gave,
While the old perfume it was wont to know,
Rose for his incense who had come to save.
None know my day; the tide of life flows on;
Kind voices greet; kind presences are near;
One viewless shadow falls for me alone,
One sweet dumb voice is whispering in mine ear.
The household music never knows a break,
Yet through it all I know the master chords;
To my own shrine my offering I take,
My Idol answers, but none note his words.
And so I keep its birthday quietly,
With many a pretty, silly, silent rite;
Its birthday, who brought joy and peace to me,
Its birthday, who lent glory to my night:
And, as I twine its wreath from richer bloom,
From radiant blossoms, foliage sweet and rare,
Of delicate grace and passionate perfume,
I turn, and place a purple heart a-ease there.

AN AFRICAN BISHOP.

NOT many months after we followed Mr. H. H. Johnston to the wonderful country of Kilima-Njaro,* we are again attracted to the same region by the tragic death of Bishop Hannington, who was murdered by the son and successor of the famous African potentate, King Mtesé. But how came a Bishop in these wilds? and why was he murdered? and how is it that King Mwanga has shown a disposition towards a white man, the reverse of what one has been led to believe by Speke, and Livingstone, and Stanley, and other travellers, to have characterised his father, the much-spoken-of Mtesé? Let us see by the light of the martyred Bishop's own journals, and the volume of memoirs of him by his friend, the Rev. E. C. Dawson, of Edinburgh.

James Hannington was the first Bishop of Eastern Equatorial Africa, but not the first victim there to the struggle between Christianity and barbarism. It is only some fifteen years since the Methodist missionary, Mr. New—the first Englishman to reach and ascend Kilima-Njaro—was robbed by the Chaga people, and left to die in the wilderness. But since that time, as we have seen before, the Chaga country has been visited by Mr. Joseph Thomson and by Mr. H. H. Johnston, and since that time also, the Church Missionary Society have established a number of stations in Eastern Equatorial Africa, with head-quarters at Frere Town (Mombasa).

It was in June, 1884, that Mr. James Hannington was consecrated Bishop of this wide and somewhat undefined diocese, in consequence of the conviction which had been long growing up in the Society, that for the effective prosecution of the Missions, a supreme head was needed, with "authority to command, wisdom to organise, and character to ensure that his commands should be obeyed."

James Hannington was the son of Mr. Charles Smith Hannington, a gentleman who, having amassed a fortune in business, had purchased an estate at Hurstpierpoint, in Sussex, about eight miles from Brighton. Brought up in the country, James was enabled to indulge in boyhood in his natural taste for "sport," and in cultivating his faculty for observation of

* "An African Arcadia." ALL THE YEAR ROUND, No. 905. New Series. April 3rd, 1886.

Nature, for he appears to have been a "born naturalist." Destined for business, he was, after a somewhat spasmodic and imperfect course of private education, sent to his father's counting-house in Brighton. But a commercial life was found to be unsuited to him; and, indeed, he does not seem to have had much of it, for, during the six years of his experiment, he seems to have had a great deal of yachting and travelling with his parents and brothers. Still business was admitted to be a mistake, and he resolved to enter the Church. At Oxford he distinguished himself rather in athletics than in scholarship; for exuberant good-humour than for theology; but he was a general favourite with both dons and students. After being ordained he obtained a curacy in Devonshire, where again his love of outdoor life and adventure, and of botanical, entomological, and geological studies had ample field. It was while in this charge that his mind became turned permanently to more serious things, and that missionary enterprise began to attract him. This "great, broad-shouldered, genial Englishman," began in time, as every right-minded man does, to see that there was work for him to do in the world for which he was specially qualified. He had a sufficient competency to enable him to lead the life of a country gentleman of scientific tastes, and he would probably have distinguished himself as a naturalist, but he was destined for other ends. From Devonshire he removed to the incumbency of St. George's, on his father's estate, where he laboured for some seven years, "almost unknown to the world, but winning the affection of his people in a manner in which it is given to few clergymen to do." His biographer says of him, that he knew exactly how to combine perfect freedom and familiarity of manner, with a self-respect with which the rudest dared not take a liberty. "He could be hail-fellow-well-met, with rough men and lads with enviable impunity. The workmen of Hurst knew him among themselves by the pet name of 'Jemmy.' He was Hurst-pierpoint's Jemmy, their own Jemmy. But there was no one in the district to whom the men raised their caps more willingly, or to whom the boys looked up with more unquestioning admiration."

This brief introduction was necessary to show the kind of man, whose name will now always be associated with the records of Central Africa. It was not to be his fate to rival in extent and duration the

work of David Livingstone, but his memory must ever be held in honour by Englishmen.

It was in 1878 that Hannington was stirred, by the story of the labours and death of Lieutenant Shergold Smith and Mr. O'Neill on the Nyanza, with a strong desire to join the ranks of the Central African Mission Army; but it was not until 1882 that he offered himself and was accepted for the work. He then placed himself at the disposal of the Church Missionary Society, to serve in the Nyanza district for five years, paying fifty pounds towards his own outfit, and one hundred pounds per annum towards travelling expenses, on the sole condition that the Society should undertake to supply his place at St. George's during his absence.

It was then that Hannington was given the lead of a little expedition of six persons—five clergymen and one artisan—who were about to be despatched to reinforce the Mission at Rubaga, near the "mystic source of the Nile," where Mr. A. M. Mackay, C.E., and the Rev. P. O'Flaherty were then labouring alone. At that time King Mtesé was alive, but was not proving quite the devoted friend of the missionaries, which Stanley in 1875 had judged him. In fact, Mtesé was thinking more about the commercial than the spiritual advantages of his European connection, and his trading instincts were being skilfully played upon by the Arab traders, who knew that the dominance of Englishmen means the annihilation of their profitable traffic in slaves. These Arabs, who had formerly persuaded Mtesé to become a Mahomedan, were now intriguing to turn him against the Christians. Then some Jesuit priests had made their way up from Zanzibar, and, crossing the Victoria Nyanza from Kagei, had arrived in Uganda in 1879 and established a Mission station at Rubaga. It was to this place, and at this juncture, that Hannington's party was to be despatched; but with the affairs of the Mission we do not propose to concern ourselves here.

In May, 1882, the little party left England with instructions to endeavour to reach Uganda from Zanzibar by the old route via Mamboia, Uyui, and Msalala, and from thence to cross the Victoria Nyanza by boat to Rubaga. A glance at any recent map of Central Africa will show that this meant approaching the famous lake from the South.

At Zanzibar the usual delays and difficulties about porters, etc., occurred, but

towards the end of June the party crossed to the mainland, and started for the interior. In a fortnight they were all down with fever, but Mamboia was duly reached on the twenty-first of July, and there they were heartily welcomed and cared for during a few days by the resident missionary, Mr. Last, and his wife. The march thence through the Ugogo country was very trying; but Hannington kept his eyes and ears open in pursuit of his favourite studies, and he made a large collection of birds, insects, and plants, which was subsequently sent to the British Museum. The Ugogo people—or Wa-gogo—have not a good reputation among travellers; but Hannington's party did not suffer so much from them as from bad water and fever. When Hannington reached Uyui on the fourth of September, he was seized with dysentery, and lay for ten days at the very door of death. It is pleasing to record that the Jesuit priest at Unzamzembe (celebrated as the place at which Livingstone and Stanley parted) was very kind to him, and even prescribed medically for his ailment. Meanwhile, the rest of the party went forward, and Hannington, hardly better of the dysentery, was again struck down with rheumatic fever, from which it seemed at one time as if he would never recover, and he even selected a spot for his grave. But he did recover, and was already slightly better when the caravan returned to Uyui, having been prevented from reaching the lake by the old route owing to the large demands of the natives for "hongo," or way-leave. It was then determined to try another route, and Hannington resolved to go forward with them this time, even although he had to be carried in a hammock. On the twenty-fifth of October Msalala was reached, and they were now in a country which had only been touched before by one white man—Speke. Although still very weak, Hannington's health went on improving, and he was enabled to resume his botanical studies. Finally, in November, the shores of Victoria Nyanza were reached, at a point to the west of Kagei and Jordan's Nullah, from which they despatched messages to Uganda, asking the Mission there to send canoes for them. Meanwhile, as the rainy season was on, they had to build huts in which to encamp until assistance came. But here the party had to separate—two of them having to take up their residence at Uyui, and another having to return to the coast.

One thing which eminently fitted Hannington for the work of African explorer, was his extreme coolness and courage. A couple of incidents will suffice to illustrate these traits; and they are interesting in themselves.

One day, he and his boy, Duta, were trying to stalk some antelopes—Hannington never shot for the mere sake of "sport," but only for the purposes of the larder or in self-defence—when he saw something dark beyond the high grass through which they were creeping. It turned out to be a black rhinoceros. Hannington has thus himself described what followed:

"Back we darted into the thicket and took a large circuit, coming out again on the edge of the plain just in time to see a cow rhinoceros, with her calf, retiring slowly in the jungle. Quietly we crept back and again emerged, this time about twenty yards from her. Her head was turned from us, and on her back were a number of yellow 'rhinoceros birds.' These flew up with a screech, and apprised her of her enemy. Before she could spring round, I fired. As the bullet struck her, she uttered a fierce and screaming grunt, and, in a moment, about ten yards from where I stood, there rushed from the jungle a bull and another cow rhinoceros, bellowing most furiously. Happily for us, they did not see us, as the vision of the rhinoceros is very limited, and we were to leeward, so that they could not get our wind. But, when about thirty yards distant, some whiff of our wind must have reached them, for they wheeled round and charged furiously towards us.

"'Fire, Bwana, fire!' excitedly cried my boy; and, as he ceased speaking, I could hear his heart thumping violently.

"'Be still,' I said. 'Stand perfectly still;' and the lad, to his honour be it said, was brave enough to obey. When about ten paces distant, seeing that we remained motionless, they came to a halt and eyed us, fiercely pawing the ground and snorting defiance. It was an embarrassing situation. The eye wandered round for a tree up which to climb; but there was not one within reach. We were standing in dense mimosa tangle about chest-high; flight through this was impossible. I thought, should I fire? But I determined not to do so, for even if, by the greatest good fortune, I brought one to the ground, there were still the other two. They themselves at last took the initiative. The cow, which I had wounded, stole away

across the plain. I decided at once to follow her and get another shot. The other two stood gazing at us until they saw that she had out-distanced us, and then they quietly turned and disappeared in the jungle."

This was a daring enough exploit; but nothing to another, somewhat later.

One day, in December, Hennington went out for a stroll, in search of botanical specimens. About a mile from camp he saw something moving in the scrub, and, firing, killed what proved to be a large lion's cub. His gun-bearer then fled in terror, shouting: "Run, Bwana, run!" At the same moment Hennington heard a double roar. He was face to face with the bereaved parents! With long, bounding steps the lion and lioness were coming towards him, with their horrid growls. Instead of turning to run, as anybody else would have done, and have, therefore, been destroyed, Hennington deliberately faced round upon the enemy.

"The enraged lions were distant but a few paces, but they suddenly checked, and both stood, as though transfixed, glaring upon him. So they remained for some time, till Hennington, placing one foot behind the other, and still keeping his eyes fixed upon the yellow orbs before him, gradually increased his distance, and having placed about a hundred yards between himself and the monsters, quietly walked away."

But this was not all, although more than enough to content most people. Hennington wanted to secure the skin of the cub he had killed, so he determined to return through the waning light.

"When near enough to observe their motion, he could see that the lion and lioness were walking round about their cub, licking its body and filling the air with low groanings. At this moment an unknown flower caught his eye. He plucked it, took out his note-book, pressed it between the leaves, and classified it as far as he was able; then, with coolness perfectly restored, he ran forward a few paces, threw up his arms and shouted! Was it that the lions had never encountered so strange an antagonist before? At all events, they looked up, then turned tail and bounded away. He dragged the cub for some distance, till, having left the dangerous vicinity, he shouldered it and brought it into camp."

Such an exploit as this was bound to give him immense influence with the men,

who learned not only to regard him as invincible, but also dreaded opposing his expressed will.

Meanwhile affairs had gone badly with the messengers, and it seemed evident that, to get out of Msalala, Hennington would have to obtain boats somehow himself. For this purpose he resolved to visit Romwa, the King of Uzinza, whose "capital" was a few days' journey from the encampment, which was now almost denuded of cloth—the currency of the country—and was getting short of needful supplies. Part of the journey to Romwa's had to be performed by canoe, which was hired from some natives. But on the second day the weather became very wet, and the men began to turn the head of the canoe towards land again, with the expressed determination of going no further, in spite of their bargain. Hennington asked, "Should we find canoes there?"

"No."

"Was it far from Romwa's?"

"Yes; altogether out of the way."

"Why, we shall die if we are left in this way."

"Well, Mzee (the captain) says he will not go on."

"Then," I said, in a firm, clear voice, "give me my gun."

I deliberately proceeded to load it, and, pointing at Mzee, at about a yard distant from his chest, I said:

"Now will you go on?"

"Yes, Bwana, yes! Don't fire!"

The effect, adds Hennington, was magical, the canoe was slung round, and sped over the waves in the right direction, and, moreover, he found from that moment that he was master.

After much difficulty with Romwa, who was superstitious, and must consult the "medicine men," and was then greedy for larger presents of cloth and guns than Hennington could give, a canoe was at length provided for the conveyance of Hennington alone and his two boys to Uganda, the others to remain behind. But he got no farther than Kagei, for there, obtaining assistance to bring on the rest of the party, he returned by land to Msalala to accelerate the movements. Attacked with dysentery and violent pains on the road, he had to walk with his hands tied to his neck, to prevent his arms moving, as the least motion of them gave him intense agony. When he reached Msalala he was completely done. "Racked with fever, torn by dysentery, scarce able to stand

upright under the grip of its gnawing agony, the bright and buoyant figure which had so often led the caravan with that swinging stride of his, or which had forgotten fatigue at the close of a long march, and dashed off in pursuit of some rare insect; his beard a foot before him, and his hair a yard behind, was now bent and feeble, like that of a very old man." He, therefore, after arranging the plans, and assigning the duties of his companions, made his way slowly and painfully to the coast carried in a hammock, reached Zanzibar in May, 1883, and in a few weeks more was again among his friends in England—an apparent wreck.

When his health was fully restored, Hannington was offered, and accepted, the Bishopric of Eastern Equatorial Africa, an office which, it was said, demanded "a man of dauntless courage, tact, spirituality of mind, and prompt business-like habit." Hannington had shown all these characteristics, and the doctors declared that his health was again such that he might return to Africa and labour there for many years without danger. He was consecrated on the twenty-fourth of June, 1884, and left England on the fourth of November following, with a commission from the Archbishop of Canterbury to first visit Jerusalem and confirm the Churches on the way out. After completing his work in Palestine the Bishop reached Mombasa on the twenty-fourth of January, 1885, and at once entered upon the work of his diocese. With this, however, we are not at present concerned, further than to say that the whole working-staff consisted of twelve clergy, priests and deacons, eleven laymen, and four ladies—in all twenty-seven persons—scattered over an enormous extent of country.

Shortly after his arrival, the Bishop, after consultation with Sir John Kirk at Zanzibar, determined to push the Mission to Taveita and the Chaga country; that is to say, right up to the base of Kilima-Njaro, where Johnston, not long before, had been residing.

In prosecution of this design, the Bishop set out to cross that dreary intervening wilderness, which both Thomson and Johnston found so trying and discouraging. The terrible journey across the Taro Plain almost finished Johnston and his party. This is how the Bishop traversed it:—

"On the morrow we started for the dreaded Taro Plain; nor did we make a

very happy commencement; for soon after leaving camp down came the rain in a perfect deluge, so that in a very short time the ground was covered with an inch or two of water. Cloth, rice, and other loads were soaked, and their weight much increased for the poor men. We did not find the right track till nightfall, and halted to wait for the men. At one a.m. we made a move . . . and went on till nightfall. Had to camp without water. Off again at two a.m., and by nine a.m. we reached Maungu, after one of the most trying marches I ever remember. The road is most dismal. It passes through closely-packed thorn bushes, under, over, or through which you have to go. They tear your clothes and flesh without affording a particle of shade. . . . I retched with the intense heat. The sun literally seemed to bake one through."

After another day's march they reached Taita, an outlying Mission station in charge of Mr. Wray, who was found to be in a state of semi-siege, the Wa-Kamba having burned the villages around. The Bishop deemed it advisable to transfer Mr. Wray to another station, and passed on towards the Chaga country. Two days later: "After a short climb over a steep, rugged track, we reached the headland of the Bura Mountains, and crossed the beautiful Pass of Kilima-Kibomu. As we topped a rise, suddenly before our astonished gaze flashed Kilima-Njaro in all his glory! How lovely the great mountain looked—all radiant with the rays of the rising sun. We had, by the best fortune, arrived at this point of vantage just at the hour of sunrise, when the vast silver dome for a short time shakes aside the mist-wreaths, which, during the rest of the day, so frequently enswathe his snow-crowned summit. The sight was so surpassingly beautiful that it called forth long and loud exclamations from the stolid Africans around us, many of whom had accompanied Thomson or Johnston, some both, and who were well acquainted with the snow giant. . . . We at once called a halt, and, as long as time permitted, we feasted our eyes on snow under the burning sun of Africa."

Travelling now became easier until Taveita is reached—that spot of Arcadian beauty so glowingly described by Mr. Johnston. But Hannington says: "This is not the place for a European missionary. Travellers who recommend it have probably not seen it as we did, in the depth

of the rainy season, when the rich, black vegetable soil constantly exudes poisonous vapours . . . so that beautiful as the place is, we were uncommonly glad to be out of it." There are always two sides to every picture—especially in Africa.

Moshi was duly reached, and Mandara sent presents to the party, although he was disposed to be sulky at the manner in which Mr. Johnston had eluded him when he made his famous ascent of the mountain. Mandara complained bitterly of the way in which he considered he had been treated, and told Hannington that he would have no more white visitors, although he would receive a resident teacher. "To the end," said Hannington, "Mandara maintained the same princely bearing and gentlemanly conduct. With the exception of Mirambo, I have never met in the interior a shrewder or more enlightened chief." The country, too, reminded the Bishop, as it did Johnston, of Devonshire.

Besides prosecuting his inquiries towards establishing a chain of Mission stations westwards to the lake, the Bishop did not neglect his tastes for collecting, and ascended some distance up the mountain. He sent home a box of butterflies and mosses, gathered on the slopes, for the British Museum.

Towards the end of April, 1885, the Bishop reached Mombasa again, possessed with the great idea of pushing through to the Nyanza, from the north end, as Thomson had done. The more he thought about it, the more feasible did the plan appear, and he set to work to mature it. This route would be considerably shorter, much healthier, and through a country thoroughly suitable for European residence. True, there are the warlike Masais; but Mr. Thomson had shown that it was quite possible to pass through the country of these warriors without greater danger than is incidental to nearly all Central African travel. Hannington saw no great difficulties in the way of establishing a chain of Mission stations from Mombasa, through Taita or Chaga, by Lakes Naivasha and Baringo, right on to Uganda. But what the Bishop was not aware of was, that already great suspicions were being attached by the Uganda people to all who approached them from the north-east. The rumours of German annexations had extended to them, and excited all sorts of vague fears. Mtesé was dead, and Mwanga, his son and successor, had been incited by the chiefs to

repel any attempt of any white men to enter his kingdom by the "backdoor" of Kavirondo. Nor did either Sir John Kirk, Consul Smith, and others, at Zanzibar, whom the Bishop consulted, have any suspicion of the real dangers; and all agreed with Hannington on the propriety of his scheme.

Prior to embarking on it, the Bishop made another expedition to Taveita, in convoy of two missionaries, whom he was despatching to take up their quarters in Chaga. Returning to the coast again by forced marches, he eclipsed Thomson's great feat, and covered the distance between Taveita and Rabai, at the rate of forty miles a day—accomplishing one hundred and twenty miles in three days and half-an-hour.

Within a month he had begun his ill-fated journey, to open up a new route to Uganda, through Masai-land. On the twenty-fifth of July, 1885, he set forth at the head of a caravan of two hundred porters, and accompanied by one native clergyman, Mr. Jones, who describes him as: "Arms swinging, eyes ever on the alert to notice anything new or remarkable. Now a snatch of song; again a shout of encouragement; a leap upon some rare flower or insect; the very life and soul of his company; while ever and anon his emphatic voice would be raised in the notes of some old familiar tune, and the wilderness would ring to the sound of a Christian hymn."

The last letter to his wife was dated the eleventh of August, 1885, and was written at Kikumbuliu, not in the best of spirits at reports which had come in from ahead, but concluding, "We will trust and not be afraid." Not until the first of January, 1886, did the news come home that Bishop Hannington had been taken prisoner by Mwanga, when within two days' march of Uganda. Some months later his pocket-diary was purchased by a Christian lad at Rubaga from one of the murderers, and was sent to the coast.

Mr. Jones, the native clergyman who accompanied the Bishop as far as Kwa-Lundu, has narrated the history of the expedition up to that point. All the dangers which Thomson escaped had been escaped by them, and the Marai were found even hospitably inclined. Lake Naivasha was safely reached, although after much toil and difficulty; then the volcanic country near Lakes Elmeteita and Nakuro was passed, and a new lake was discovered which Thomson had not seen. Then they

lost their way through some error in the map, but in time they reached Thomson's resting-place, Mkuyu-ni, and gained their course again. Not, however, to prolong a narrative which can only be marked by unfamiliar names, it must suffice to say that Kavirondo was reached on the eleventh of October, and at Kwa-Sundu, a village in the country, a halt was made. Then the Bishop decided to go on to the lakes alone, with an escort of fifty porters, and to leave Mr. Jones behind in charge of the caravan. He intended to cross the lake from Lussala or Massala, to Uganda, and thus reach the station at Rubaga, from whence he would despatch someone to take the caravan back to the coast, his own intention being to return by the old route, via Unyamwezi, so as to visit the Missions to the south of the lake.

On the twelfth of October the Bishop left Kwa-Sundu, and Mr. Jones heard nothing from or about him until the eighth of November, when two natives brought the news that the Bishop and his party had been killed.

The Bishop's own diary in the little book so curiously recovered, is from the twelfth of October to the twenty-ninth of the same month. On the seventeenth is the record: "We are in the midst of awful swamps, and mosquitoes as savage as bees; the Lord keep me from fever!"

The eighteenth: "I can hear nothing about the Nile. . . The nearer I get the more anxious I seem to be about arriving."

The twentieth: "I fear we have arrived in a troublesome country."

The twenty-first: "I climbed a neighbouring hill, and to my joy saw a splendid view of the Nile. . . Suddenly twenty ruffians set upon us, violently threw me to the ground, and proceeded to strip me of all valuables. . . They forced me up and hurried me away. . . until we came to a hut, into the court of which I was forced. . . and I learned that the Sultan meant to keep me prisoner until he had received word from Mwangi."

The twenty-second: "I found myself in bed in a fair-sized hut, but with no ventilation, a fire on the hearth, no chimney for smoke, about twenty men all round me, and rats and vermin ad lib; fearfully shaken, strained in every limb; great pain and consumed with thirst. I got little sleep."

We pass on to October the twenty-eighth, (seventh day's prison): "A terrible night: first with noisy, drunken guards, and

secondly with vermin, I don't think I got one sound hour's sleep, and woke with fever last developing. O Lord, have mercy upon me and release me. I am quite broken down and brought low. . . Evening, fever passed away. Word came that Mwangi had sent three soldiers, but what news they bring they will not let me know."

The last entry in this pathetic journal is as follows: "October twenty-ninth (Thursday, eighth day's prison): I can hear no news, but was held up by Psalm XXX., which came with great power. A hyena howled near me last night, smelling a sick man, but I hope it is not to have me yet."

What followed has been learned from the four men who escaped from the massacre of his little party. He was conducted to an open spot in the village and placed in the midst of his own men. Then, "with a wild shout, the warriors fell upon them, and their flashing spears soon covered the ground with the dead and dying. In that supreme moment we have the satisfaction of knowing that the Bishop faced his destiny like a Christian and a man. As the soldiers told off to murder him closed round, he made one last use of that commanding mien which never failed to secure for him the respect of the most savage. Drawing himself up he looked around, and, as they momentarily hesitated with poised weapons, he spoke a few words which engraved themselves upon their memories, and which they afterwards repeated just as they were heard. He bade them tell the King that he was about to die for the Wa-Ganda, and that he had purchased the road to Uganda with his life. Then, as they still hesitated, he pointed to his own gun, which one of them discharged, and the great and noble spirit leapt forth from its broken house of clay and entered with exceeding joy into the presence of the King."

Thus died the latest martyr to civilisation in Central Africa.

ALL ON ONE SIDE.

A STORY IN FIVE CHAPTERS.

CHAPTER I.

WHETHER you enter the town of Battingen from the north, the south, the east, or the west, or from any of the intermediate points of the compass, you pass through streets that are narrow and

rooked, between houses that are ancient and quaint. Whichever way you look, to right or to left, behind or before, there are short crowded vistas of broad, high-pointed, overhanging gables, roofed with bright crimson tiles, and sheathed to the ground in armour of purple slate, or painted in soft tints of yellow and embroidered with traceries of black beams; and these houses stand grouped in such grotesque confusion that they seem to form nothing but a casual assemblage of street-corners out of bygone ages. If, however, you pursue your way (with many pauses before the strange sudden perspectives that vary with every ten steps) in any one direction for a few hundred paces, you will find that each roughly-paved little street converges to a certain centre. This is the Martinplatz, in which, girt about by all the oldest and quaintest houses of the township, stands the Lutheran church with the crooked steeple.

There are two other steeples in Battingen, but they are straight, and call for no remark. It is the old crooked Martinthurm, which gives the special character to the town on the wooded slope overlooking the Ruhr. The people of Battingen do not remark its oddity. Nay, rather their orthodoxy seems incorporated in the deferential attitude of the Lutheran steeple, which contrasts so markedly with the stalwart erectness of its neighbour, the Papist church, and its rival, the Calvinistic, both of which, so to speak, point at Heaven defiantly from other parts of the straggling town.

It is very peaceful in the Martinplatz, for the narrow streets dwindle into mere passages between the tall slate-fronted houses before they finally lead into the little square, so that no rattle of wheel or hoof can echo along its uneven pavement. You can, if you choose, with some little risk to life and limb drive in and out of the network of streets above-mentioned. I have done it myself; but if you want to see the old Church and the Martinplatz, or to visit Herr Pastor Menzel, or to pay your respects to the schoolmaster Thorbecke, you must go humbly on foot, as do the good townspeople of Battingen.

When Herr Doctor Max Sartorius used to come to see his oldest friend, the Pastor of the Martinkirche, he always left his handsome carriage and horses at the Golden Eagle in the Brückgasse. He might have left it at home altogether, and have paid his visit on foot, for his country-

house of Horst was only just on the other side of the river; but he felt it to be more compatible with his dignity to return the salutes of the townsfolk from his phaeton. For Dr. Sartorius was a great man in Battingen. He was very rich, and fabulously learned. He was said to have written a book, perhaps several books, on abstruse and intricate subjects, such as Astronomy. He was, however, very seldom visible to the admiring simplicity of his fellow-townsmen; his big house at Horst was but a dull abode for a man of far-reaching interests; and he had no wife or child to make a centre of his busy life.

It was strange he had not married, for he had many things to recommend him besides his large fortune. He had an extremely winning manner, and a pair of very dark blue eyes which could look unpeakably tender when he chose so to express himself. His many lady friends felt sure he must have an unhappy hidden attachment, since no one could believe that so loveable a man as Max Sartorius could have reached the age of five-and-forty without losing his heart some time or another on the way. But if he had been disappointed in love he kept the secret very well, and even Herr Pastor Menzel, who had known him from the cradle, knew nothing of any story of blighted affection.

It was a certain afternoon in June; the curved outline of the crooked spire leant against the floating clouds in placid resignation; the sunshine poured down on the scarlet tiles and broad-leaved limes in the Martinplatz with all the somnolent emphasis of three o'clock. There was no sound but the hum of many voices through the school windows, and no one to be seen except in front of the Pfarrhaus, where sat the Herr Pastor with his friend, Dr. Sartorius. A long-necked bottle stood on the ground beside them; in their hands they held tall glasses of golden Lörcher.

"Welcome back, Max!" said the old Pastor, as the glasses clinked. "Welcome back from a longer absence than usual!"

"Prosit," replied the other. "Yes, it has been a long absence; the world has turned round once or twice while I have been away, without, however, disturbing the ancient traditions of the town of Battingen."

"For which we are all very thankful," said the Pastor; "in a world where so many things get whirled out of place, it is no disadvantage not to be improved too quickly."

Sartorius smiled. His handsome face looked very pleasant when he smiled.

"We will drink," said he, "to the immutability of the ill-paved streets and crooked spire of Battingen; to the ancient prejudices—I mean customs—of its ancient population; and may the march of progress pass it by, and may a far distant generation discover it—fossilised, but perfect of its kind—under the dust of centuries!"

The old man did not like to hear his native town made fun of. He changed the subject.

"And you have once more come home alone, Max."

"I have, Herr Pastor," replied Max, laconically.

"I am sorry," continued the other. "Always, when you are away so long, I say to my wife: 'Ah, the next time he comes back he will bring a mistress for Horst; he will make a home for his heart at last.'"

Sartorius laughed again.

"And what does the Frau Pastorin say?" he asked.

"She says, she hopes so, too."

"Well, I'm sure you are very kind to concern yourself about me and my probable marriage. I must say that, for my own part—though I often get interested in women—I have never yet got interested in the subject of a wife. Indeed, I think now that I have gone past the age for marrying."

"Scarcely so bad as that," replied the old man seriously; "though there is no time for delay. I hope I may live to see you married."

"I hope you will live to be a hundred," laughed Sartorius. "The momentous question would be settled by then."

As they spoke the door of the school opposite to them burst open. Afternoon lessons were over, and class after class clattered out of the dim, dusty schoolroom into the glowing sunshine, exchanging the dull hum of recitation for loud cries of freedom.

"Who is that standing in the school porch?" asked Sartorius, when the boys had disappeared. "She is surely a stranger."

"That," replied the pastor proudly, "is my godchild, the schoolmaster's daughter, Hedwig Thorbecke."

"Hedwig Thorbecke!" repeated the other. "Why, she was but a child the other day; a great gawky child with staring eyes."

"Time passes, Max," said the pastor. "As you just now remarked, the world has been turning round since you left us. Our Hedwig is no longer a gawky child."

"By Jove, no!" returned Dr. Max. "She has made use of the time to become a very beautiful woman."

There could not be two opinions on the matter; Hedwig Thorbecke was, beyond dispute, beautiful. She had dark, dreamy eyes, and a firm, clear-cut mouth; which contradicted one another point-blank, and gave a mysterious attraction to her child-like face. Her knowledge of life was very limited. All her experiences centred themselves in the little Martinplatz. All her joys and troubles, all the threads of her history were there, shut in from the turmoil of the outer world and sheltered by the spreading lime-trees. She had been as far into the world as Cologne, where she had seen the great Dom and the broad Rhine, and, in the dim distance, the Siebengebirge. That was all she knew of what lay beyond the Valley of the Ruhr, and it had not made her discontented with the lot that had fallen to her.

Her father had educated her chiefly himself, and in wider fields of knowledge than usually fall to the lot of German women. She had read the *Æneid* from beginning to end, and had, unconsciously, learnt from it the real meaning of poetry; then, as a counterpoise to this development of her imagination, she had worked her way with much toil through quadratic equations. She also knew something of English and French, and, if she had not been the simplest-hearted maiden under the sun, she might have been disagreeably learned, and her heavy studies might have written ugly lines on her fair forehead. But this had not come to pass, for Hedwig would as soon have boasted of being tall and shapely as of having more learning than her friends. She went about her household duties as humbly as the most illiterate of her sex might have done; and when she had swept, and garnished, and cooked, and done all the other things that fall to the lot of German womankind, she would go sedately into the long schoolroom and take her place in the youngest class, and, with her sweet voice and gentle glance, help the poor unwilling little souls through the bewildering labyrinth which grows nowadays round the tree of knowledge.

In the evening, when Herr Pastor Menzel and old Johann Holzinger, the forester, came to sit with the schoolmaster

and smoke a friendly pipe, Hedwig would sit quietly by with her knitting and listen to the talk of old times and new times; of things as they used to be, and of things as Bismarck has rearranged them. Sometimes with the forester came his son Hermann, the under-forester, a tall, broad-shouldered man of five-and-twenty, with keen, grey eyes and a face full of patient expectation, such as men come to have when they wait and watch early and late in the lonely woodland.

Hermann seldom talked with the older men, unless the conversation turned on woodcraft or poaching. He seated himself near Hedwig, and, when he spoke, it was quietly to her. If by chance she raised her eyes as she answered, she always met a look full of tenderness and trust, which changed to brightest happiness to meet her glance, and lit up his honest sunburnt face as the sunshine falls across the paths in the forest.

He had never yet found any words to tell his love. He was so sure that Hedwig knew of it; that her father and the Menzels knew of it; that it seemed almost superfluous to make a declaration of it. Yet he knew that some day he must speak, because some day must come the solemn betrothal when the Herr Pastor would bless them and place a gold troth-ring on each right hand; and then later would come a day, still more solemn and sweet, when, kneeling in the church with the crooked spire, they would be made man and wife, and they would walk out into the sunny Martinplatz and away to the Forstei on the edge of the forest; and death alone would be able to part them after that.

This was the dream that Hermann dreamt daily and nightly; and, when he came from time to time to talk to Hedwig, under cover of the old men's friendly disputations, she could not do less than read somewhat of his heart's desire in his eyes. Only as yet all was unspoken.

"We were talking of marriage and of old age," resumed the old pastor, when his goddaughter had followed the example of the boys and disappeared; "it reminds me that I am going to celebrate my golden wedding next week. Will you do me the pleasure of being of the party?"

"With all my heart," replied Sartorius promptly, "if you will allow me to dance with your goddaughter."

CHAPTER II.

It was the Herr Pastor's golden wedding-day.

"A golden wedding-day," the old man had said to his wife with incontrovertible truth, "can only occur once in a man's lifetime. How can we keep the festival, Liebchen?"

Frau Pastorin paused in her knitting.

"Do you remember, Fritz," she said, "how, the day we were married, we went to the Isenberg with Luise, and Gottfried, and Else, and the others, and how we wandered about in the woods, and how we danced in the evening? You have not danced since then, Fritz, and it is fifty years ago, all but a few days. Luise and Else are dead, and Gottfried is a tremulous old man, while you and I are hale and strong."

"For which I thank God," replied her husband.

"Amen," she rejoined, laying her wrinkled hand in his. "And, Fritz, would it not be nice to spend our golden wedding-day just as we spent our first wedding-day? Let us go to the Isenberg, and ask all our friends to come too, and let us fancy ourselves fifty years younger, and dance once again together."

The Herr Pastor had found it a very good idea; and so it came to pass that on a glorious June day there came together in the little Wirthschaft on the Isenberg a goodly gathering of young and old to celebrate the golden wedding-day.

When coffee had been drunk, and cakes had been eaten, in the wooden balcony which looked down upon the river, the whole company wandered away into the pine-woods. The golden sunshine streamed down on the dark trees, and soothed them and caressed them till every sunbeam was laden with their scent. The paths, stretched away in mysterious vistas of interlacing boughs, along which the squirrels ran chattering, and between which lay bands of rosy light.

It was only natural that Hedwig and Hermann should wander away together down one path after another, till they were all alone in the eloquent stillness of the forest.

"Is it not a beautiful thing?" said Hedwig, breaking a long pause, "that my godfather and godmother should come back here to spend their golden wedding-day. Fancy how, fifty years ago, when all the world was

quite different, they walked here, young and happy, with all life before them. Think how many things have changed; but their love is still the same, and they still wander under the same trees in the same happiness."

"Hedwig," said Hermann suddenly, "suppose we are alive, you and I, fifty years to come, would it be possible that—? Oh, Hedwig, it is so hard to say what I have wanted to say so long. You are so clever—you know my meaning. I love you so dearly, Hedwig; all to-day I have been thinking how happy I should be if, when I am old like the Herr Pastor, I could lay my hand on yours, and look into your eyes, and know that we had spent fifty happy years together."

He had taken her hand; she did not resist as he drew her to him. She had known this was coming. Every one had known that Hermann would ask her to marry him some day. She felt his lips on her forehead for the first time. She scarcely knew whether or no she was very happy; a picture flashed into her mind of Hermann and herself, grown old and grey, with a past full of common memories which reached back to their childhood.

"Say it shall be so, Hedwig," he whispered.

"It shall, Hermann," she whispered back. Then his lips touched hers in a long, clinging kiss, and the clasp of his arm tightened round her. When he raised his eyes again the pine forests seemed too narrow for his joy; he longed to be in the length and breadth of the sunshine, to see the far-off hills, and to tell his gladness across the wide world.

Later on they came back to the little inn to find supper ready, and that a distinguished guest had arrived.

"Max," said the Pastor, "let me introduce my goddaughter to you; you remember seeing her at the school door the other day."

Dr. Sartorius did remember. He made Hedwig a profound bow, and took his place opposite to her at table. Hermann slipped into the seat beside her, and laid his hand on hers under cover of the table.

"How happy I must be," she thought. "Hermann loves me. Women are always happy when a man gives them his love."

But somehow, she could not mark any difference between her actual happiness and her happiness of yesterday, or of the day before.

"I suppose I have known so long that

he loves me; that must make a difference." Then she drew her hand away, and looked at Dr. Sartorius. Long ago, before she went to school in Cologne, when she was a "gawky girl with staring eyes," Hedwig had been struck by the contrast between the well-bred refinement of Dr. Sartorius and the heavy solidity of all the rest of her world. She had seen him sometimes at her godfather's, and had shrunk shyly out of his way, because he did not seem to be aware of her existence. She had heard a great deal more of him than she had seen; of his world-wide travels; of his vast learning; of his great friends; of the notice the Emperor had taken of his new book—and now she was sitting opposite to him at supper. It scarcely seemed possible; it was so very like a dream, that would be nowhere in a couple of seconds. And so she took a long look at him to make sure she was wide awake; and, before she was quite convinced, she met a glance from a pair of very dark blue eyes, which looked totally different from any other eyes hers had ever met before. She felt embarrassed, and the slightest possible shade of crimson ran over her face. That was how Hedwig and her godfather's distinguished friend began their acquaintance.

The long meal was over; many healths had been drunk, and the tables were drawn aside to make room for the dancing. Hedwig found herself in the long line of the polonaise, hand in hand with Hermann. They had often danced together before, and she found it quite natural; Hermann was silent from pure happiness. He could only clasp the firm, slender fingers he held, and look down proudly on the crown of golden plaits beside him.

"What are you thinking of, Hedwig?" he whispered at last.

"I can't exactly say," she answered.

In point of fact, she was wondering if clever people like Dr. Sartorius found dancing enjoyable.

"I," pursued Hermann, "was wondering if you and I will dance together fifty years hence, as the Herr Pastor and the Frau Pastorin are doing to-night."

"I wonder," said Hedwig dreamily.

The polonaise lasted a long time. Hermann wished it would last for ever; but it came to an end at last; and then he danced with Hedwig again; and, when he could not dance with her, he stood against the wall and watched her dancing with others. He felt so proud of her, especially

when Herr Dr. Sartorius asked her to waltz.

Max was making himself very agreeable, apparently without effort, though he was more or less of a stranger to everyone in the room. Hedwig felt a little shy as she took his arm. His waltzing must be so immeasurably superior to anything she could do. She was afraid he would find her awkward; but, if he did, he bore it very well, and Hedwig found her shyness gradually wearing off. They stopped in one of the pauses of the dance in the recess of a window. It was uncurtained. Sartorius threw it open, and they leaned out into the soft, balmy night air.

"A festivity like this makes one feel very imaginative," he said. "As I look at each person I do a mental sum of addition or subtraction, altering their age by fifty years, and comparing the present with the possible past and probable future. It is extremely interesting."

"Which do you find the most interesting, the addition or the subtraction sums?" asked Hedwig.

"The addition naturally," replied Sartorius promptly. "It is much more amusing to weave a romance out of the boundless possibilities of half a century, than to decipher the lines of sorrow and wear and tear which the same length of time can write on a face."

"Fifty years!" repeated Hedwig. "I shall be nearly seventy in fifty years. How old that seems!"

"And I," returned Sartorius, "should be within five years of a hundred. So you see I am at an awkward age, which neither lends itself to addition nor to subtraction. I have not much to look forward to, and it does not seem as if I had much to look back upon."

He spoke half sadly, half mockingly.

"Oh!" said Hedwig softly, "I am sure you must be wrong. Of course I know nothing of your past, but I hope you have much happiness before you still."

"What sort of happiness do you mean?" he asked, drawing nearer to her.

"Every happiness," she replied ambiguously; "there are so many things to make people happy."

Then they stood silent for a time, his arm against hers, as they stood looking out.

"Shall we finish the dance?" he asked at last, taking her hand.

But just then the music ceased. He did not loose her hand, nor did he speak. Hedwig wondered to find herself standing passively with the clasp of his fingers on hers.

"You are mistaken in what you said just now," he said, after what seemed an age. "The many things that make people happy, are not many, but one. If you do not know that now, you will know it some day."

"I am not sure if I understand you."

"Perhaps you don't—most likely you don't; but some fine morning you will wake up and realize it for yourself—you will not believe it till then."

Then he loosed her hand, and Hedwig found herself wishing that he would take it again. She seemed to lose something she was just finding, when the touch of his fingers was withdrawn.

Hedwig awoke the next morning with the sense of something new in her mind. What was it? The early summer sunshine was streaming in through the green shutters, the bell in the crooked steeple was just ringing six.

"You will find that the many things to make you happy are only one," was the first definite thought in her mind. Then she laid her hands one over the other on the counterpane.

"It was such a gentle clasp," she thought, "and yet he held me so firmly. Hermann would have grasped me so tight that I should have felt the throb of his pulse. I suppose Hermann is very fond of me. I wonder, if Dr. Sartorius were fond of any woman, how he would show it to her!"

After which the schoolmaster's daughter got up and dressed, and went down to make the coffee.

THE
CHRISTMAS NUMBER

OF
All the Year Round,

CONTAINING A COMPLETE STORY,
ENTITLED

THE HOLY ROSE,

By WALTER BESANT,

Author of "All Sorts and Conditions of Men," etc. etc.

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A DATELESS BARGAIN.

By C. L. PIRKIS,

Author of "Lady Lovelace," etc.

CHAPTER XLIX.

IN the snowy dimness of the winter's dawn Donovan crept back to his lodgings, after reporting to the "Captain" that his work was done, balancing in his mind the question, how it was possible for him to keep his pledge and inform Joyce of her lover's safety without risk to his own life.

Meanwhile, Frank was putting distance between himself and all he held most precious in life. The whole thing, looked back upon, seemed to him like some wild, melodramatic dream in which he had lain quiescent while another man had played his part.

The over-night—the brilliant evening party, the tumult of expectant joy in his heart—had been real enough to him, not a doubt; the common-place life beginning to stir in the wintry streets was real enough also, with its suggestions of work-a-day squalor and grinding misery. But this midnight interlude, which linked the brilliant over-night with the squalid dawn, seemed less like a bit of his own actual experience than a fantastic nightmare, whose grip had set his brain rocking.

The bruises with which he was covered literally from head to foot, the ugly red rims round his wrists, the Irishman's coarse great-coat were, however, evidences not to be disregarded of the reality of the experience of the past few hours. Without them he might easily enough have believed that his memory was playing tricks with him, and have gone about his day's work as usual.

He felt terribly shaken. The cold, fresh

air of the morning, though it steadied his nerves somewhat, could not work miracles; some little vigour it put into him, although scarcely of the quality he was accustomed to have at command. It was a relief to him that he was compelled to keep moving; an enforced inactivity at that moment he felt might have annihilated what little reasoning power was left to him.

He had made no outward sign to Ned how hard hit he had been by the weight and suddenness of his mischance. He was not disposed to set up a moan over it now; as a matter of fact, little power for moaning seemed left to him. His thoughts were all one confused, incoherent whirl, in which the events of last night mingled oddly enough with the earlier occurrences of the day. The only fact which he seemed to realise distinctly was that he was to go into hiding somewhere, skulk away from the notice of men as though he were a criminal eluding justice. And this part of the compact he set himself scrupulously to fulfil.

He felt faint and giddy still. He would have been grateful enough for a stimulant of any sort. He looked enviously at the working men getting their early breakfasts from the itinerant coffee vendors. But he dared not run the risk of getting a cup for himself. Then the snow began to fall. His teeth chattered, and he shrank from the north-easter in a way that seemed to him unaccountable.

When he reached the Great Northern station, an early train was about starting for the North. He had only time to get his ticket. He chose a well-filled compartment, wisely reasoning that in a crowd he would be less likely to attract attention. One of his fellow-travellers chanced to be a British workman of "advanced" democratic opinions. These he proceeded to air for

the benefit of those about him. More than once he appealed to Frank for confirmation—or the reverse—of his political notions. Frank's replies must have been given in odd, incoherent tones, for the British workman turned to his companions and openly expressed his opinion of the gentleman's condition. Then he addressed Frank again, advising him in kind, fatherly fashion to get home as soon as possible and "sleep it off."

He little knew, good man, how gratefully Frank would have welcomed the power to lie down in some quiet corner, and in heavy sleep toss into oblivion the whole hideous drama of over-night!

Three times he had to change trains on his way to Dundee. At each of these stoppages he contrived to get refreshments for himself, of which he stood greatly in need; without which, indeed, he could scarcely have arrived at his journey's end.

About nine o'clock at night he reached Dundee, with head burning, limbs aching, and thoughts, if possible, more chaotic than before, with his long day of rapid travelling. The bustle of the town bewildered him. The quay seemed one mass of moving heads, dancing lights, deep shadows, ringing bells. To his fancy everyone seemed staring at him, and he could not divest himself of the feeling that presently someone would come up, lay a hand upon his shoulder, and tell him that, in spite of all the fine precautions he had taken, everyone knew who he was. He slunk away from the busy thoroughfares, engaged a night's lodging in a quiet street leading off the quay, borrowed a razor, and with a more unsteady hand than he had ever in his life owned to before, shaved off his moustache and whiskers.

Then he went out once more, trying his hardest to collect his thoughts, and plan step by step his temporary exile. He bought a portmanteau at one shop, which he filled with some necessary articles of clothing at another. Among other articles he purchased a low-crowned felt hat, rightly judging that his present hat showed somewhat incongruously against the Irishman's rough great-coat.

Then he returned to the quay, and proceeded to make cautious enquiries as to out-going vessels.

He scarcely realised his own identity as he went about these things. It was for him an altogether remarkable experience to be skulking in corners, shunning men's eyes, giving a false name, drawing his hat

low over his brow, turning his coat collar as high as it would go; in fact, doing the best that lay in his power to elude every sort of observation. It would not have required a very strong stretch of his imagination to have persuaded himself that he had, in very truth, committed some crime, and was doing his utmost to escape the hand of justice.

Before he betook himself to his night's lodging he ascertained that two or three small steamers were on the point of sailing for the Faroe Fishing Banks.* In one of these he contrived to secure a berth. It was of a better build than most of the out-going boats, and promised a quick passage. It was fitted with a large square tank in the middle for the purpose of bringing back live cod for the London market, and the Captain, a Norwegian, readily consented at Frank's request, to take a day's journey beyond the fishing banks to Light Island, when he understood that he might put his own price on the passage. But best of all, at least for Frank's chance of a successful disguise, was the fact that the boat was to sail at sunrise the next day.

His night's rest in his quiet lodging of necessity was brief; also of necessity it was troubled. Hideous dreams peopled it with all sorts of terrors. Now he was a murderer or some other criminal endeavouring to escape into hiding. Now it was Joyce who was trying to save him from prison; now it was he who was trying to save Joyce, for it seemed to him that she had shared in his crime; and through it all the noisy, bustling quay figured as background, with lights swinging; crowds of heads; bells ringing; perpetual shoutings, jostlings, and confusion.

He woke, with a groan and a great start, about two hours before daylight, gathered together his few belongings, and hastened on board the little steamer.

Once on board, the inevitable physical reaction set in. He hid his face in the narrow dark berth assigned to him, and worn out with the heavy mental and physical strain he had endured through the past forty-eight hours, collapsed utterly. He felt himself alike incapable of thought or movement. With but brief interludes he slept at least half-way across the rough,

* The author desires here gratefully to acknowledge indebtedness to Sir Wyville Thomson, author of "The Depths of the Sea," and to the anonymous author of "Some Faroe Notes," in the May number of the "Cornhill Magazine," for their graphic descriptions of the Faroe Isles.

wild stretch of ocean which lay between Dundee and the Faroes. If the boat had added one to the nameless wrecks which the hurrying tides were busy burying under their swollen loads of tangly seaweed, Frank would have gone down knowing nothing of that passionate longing for one more glimpse of loved faces, one more clasp of loved hands, which makes the bodily agony of poor drowning souls by comparison a thing of naught.

As the boat neared the Shetlands, however, youth and a good constitution, under the kindly influence of the sea-breezes, began once more to assert themselves.

He collected his thoughts together and strove to look the inevitable fairly in the face. He strove even to make the best of it, buoyed himself up with hope, and forced himself to believe that Ned's sturdiness of purpose to escape from his thralldom was not for a moment to be questioned. Ned would not shirk his share of the bargain, he assured himself, and he (Frank) had no wish to shirk his. Ned's last words, "My life is in your hands now, sir," were not words to be lightly forgotten. Of course, the man would as speedily as possible get his freedom, redeem his promise, and release him from his miserable exile.

These were the whisperings of his hopes.

The Shetlands passed, and the Faroes in sight, however, other thoughts not quite of so bright a hue came to him. He stood on the deck, leaning over the side. The steamer was flying along easily before the wind, with but little steam on. It was a bright winter's day, the white foam came dashing into his face with every plunge the boat made in the waters. The wind had a touch of ice in it. It seemed to tell tales of Norwegian glaciers and fiords; brightly-dressed, yellow-haired maidens; rough fisher-folk, strong-handed, sea-roving Norsemen.

Frank recalled with a pang one happy half-hour when he and Joyce had been discussing their wedding-trip together, and she had said, in her usual gay, frank manner: "Now, if it had only been July instead of December, how delightful it would have been to have packed a knapsack and 'made tracks,' as the Americans say, for the land of the midnight sun!" And he had promised her, that the very first summer holiday they took together should be in that delightful region. Here was he, well on his way to the Northern latitudes, but it was scarcely in the holiday spirit he had contemplated.

The more he thought over things, the more discontented he grew with them. Why had he not arranged matters more definitely with Ned, and when he as good as gave his word not to send letter or message to Joyce, why had he not stipulated that she should be informed of his hiding-place, so as to be able to send letter or message to him?

Looked back upon now, his midnight interview with Ned seemed so hurried and confused that everything that ought to have been done had been left undone. It would have lightened the gloom of this dreary exile—would have turned it by comparison into a holiday—could he have looked forward to a line from Joyce telling him how things went with her, what sort of a stand she might make against Buckingham's insolence and her mother's foolishness.

For foremost among his anxieties, naturally enough, was the thought that this man was left free now to act according to the dictates of his audacity.

Frank had no wish to underrate Joyce's courage or strength of will, but he knew how limited her knowledge of the world was; and what feeble weapons, after all, a woman's courage and strength of will were when opposed to the unscrupulous villany of a man like Buckingham.

"There'll be a heavy day of reckoning for him—the scoundrel, when once I get a chance," Frank muttered, shading his eyes with his hand, and momentarily shutting out the bright seascape of dancing waves and winter sky.

A sailor touched his arm, and offered him a glass wherewith to get his first glimpse of the Faroes. Frank put it on one side without a word of thanks. It seemed to him he would see enough and to spare of the Faroes before he had done with them. There they were, straight in front of him, treeless, sunless, their soft colouring and bold, fantastic outlines looming dimly out of a shrouding veil of clinging silver mist. He looked across the roughly dashing waters of the Sound, which rolled between him and Light Island, where the tall, round light-tower showed like some ghastly monument to the dead, and for the first time the whisperings of mutinous discontent with his own ethics made themselves heard in his heart.

"Now," he said to himself, "in the name of common sense, can it be expected of me to hide myself from my fellow-creatures like some escaped felon dodging

the hangman just to save the life of a man who, no doubt, in the eyes of the law, has forfeited it a hundred times over!"

Common sense held her peace. Possibly the matter was a little outside her domain; but honour and gratitude joined voices together, and in chorus preached his duty to him. They did it simply enough, too, just repeating his own promise over again in his ear: "I shall simply be a dead man, Ned, till you give the word;" and the question was settled at once.

CHAPTER L.

THUS, when the hue and cry after the missing man was at its loudest; when Ned, like some hunted hare, was so sore beset with actual pressing dangers, that he dared not trust himself to give a thought to Joyce's by one degree less urgent necessity; when Mab was striving her hardest to attain the seer's gift; and Joyce was looking longingly at widow's weeds and tombstones; Frank, on his sea-bleached rock, was fighting with might and main to preserve a fortitude, which, in the circumstances, fell little short of the heroic.

Although it was veritable midwinter, and King Fog reigned supreme, it was a matter for congratulation, that by comparison with the general run of winters in these Northern latitudes it was mild in the extreme. Of necessity, Frank's life among these uncultured, though kindly islanders, promised to be a rough one, and climate became of proportionate importance.

Light Island, by comparison with Stromoe—the island on which Thorshavn, the capital, is built—was a desert. Its population, all told, was but a feeble company, consisting of the old lighthouse-keeper, and his children of a second and third generation.

Frank's intercourse with the people was at first naturally much restricted. He knew scarce a word of Danish; they had but little English at command. The few idioms they knew had come down to them strongly flavoured with Scotch, from the old lighthouse-keeper's Scotch wife. She, poor soul! had been gathered to her fathers in the preceding year, and had been borne over-sea for burial in a Faroe whaling-boat to one of the Shetland Isles, where lay her dead kith and kin. Old Christian, however, the deaf-mute, lived on to trim the lamps of the light-tower; a task which had been assigned to him by

the Lag-Thing, or Faroe Parliament, some twenty years previously. Not once in all those twenty years had he been known, through illness or any other cause, to fail in his trust. Day after day did the old man make his way up the rough ladder into the round tower, there to watch out the long hours of the dreary winter's night, or the short golden ones of the summer night, which, in truth, had not much of night in them after all.

This round white tower, whose light fell athwart the sunken rock, was built on the very edge of a jutting headland, which stood nearly two thousand feet, without break or so much as an outstanding ledge, above the sea. A plain, straight, awful fall of rock it showed from above or below.

The light, like the tower, was of primitive construction, and was fed by the whale oil which came so readily to hand in these islands. Of late years, however, since the toppling over of the pinnacle of the Monk Rock into the sea, it had been supplemented by a somewhat modern contrivance—a metallic reflector, which threw a parallel beam of light on the sunken rock. An apparatus—an arrangement of glass prisms—had been erected on a beacon on this sunken rock. This caught the beam of light and refracted it, giving the appearance of a flame springing up from the rock itself.

On his first arrival Frank threw himself heartily, if a little spasmodically, into the pursuits of the islanders. A man must do something with his days, even though they may consist but of eight hours at their longest. So in turns he fished, he trapped sea-fowl, or mended boats or nets.

After a time, however, this light-tower saw more of him than did any one of the grass-covered huts. He speedily made the calculation that two thousand feet of rocky height with forty feet of tower superadded, could command a noble view of the sweep of ocean which separated Faroe from the British Isles, and consequently of every northward-bound vessel.

Henceforward the old deaf-mute became almost his sole companion, if, that is, a deaf-mute who can neither read nor write can be dignified by such a title.

Three low cottages, roofed with growing turf and huddled on a sheltered inland ridge of rock, sufficed for the little colony.

The good, kindly souls accepted without question Frank's statement, that he had made their island a place of assigna-

tion with a friend, who would shortly cross over from England or Scotland.

They made him heartily welcome to one of their huts, set apart for him the warmest corner by their peat-fire, and treated him to the best of the frugal diet they had at command—rye-bread, whale-meat, wind-dried sea-fowl, disdaining so much as to look at the English coin he ventured to tender in acknowledgement.

Among its scanty furniture the one room of the light-tower numbered an ancient telescope. It did little more than double the range of the naked eye; but that even was a gain not to be despised. The old man, as he came heavily up the ladder with his oil-can, would find Frank with a sigh putting on one side the ricketty old thing for the night; and, long before the sullen red flush of the winter's dawn gave him warning that the night watch was ended, Frank would come springing up the ladder two steps at a time, eager to take up his post once more.

It made a pathetic picture—that drowsy old man nodding in his wicker-chair over his knitting-pins, with dumb lips, and ears locked against every sound, noisy or gentle, jubilant or sad; and that eager young one, with senses strung to highest pitch by an expectancy so intense that it was near akin to agony.

Facing the old man was another wicker chair, high-backed like his own, and, like his own, blackened with age and the smoke from the peat-fire. On it lay a pair of rusty knitting-pins and a ball of sheep's wool. That was the chair whereon the old wife had sat keeping him company through the long night-watches, and that was the last scrap of work wherewith her thin, feeble fingers had busied themselves. To this chair the old man's eyes would lift dreamily at times. In it no doubt he read a page of past history, or, perhaps, a line or two of blessed hope for a future meeting—who could say?

Facing the young man was the sweep of ocean without a sail, and sky without a cloud—a great impassable barrier between him and all he held most precious in life—a wide desolate blank, which pained his eyeballs to scan, and made his brain sick with its staring emptiness.

That was on bright, keen, frosty days. But when the north-east wind set in, and brought with it rolling masses of formless vapour, which compacted into one solid wall of fog, everything was changed. A great wonderful hush seemed to fall alike

on sea and land; it was as if some mighty power had held up its finger to all creation, imposing a sudden, awful silence. Even the rush and swirl of the waves at the base of the rock sounded muffled and far away; the cry of the gair-fowl came distant and stifled.

High up in that round tower; cut off from the land; shut away from a glimpse even of sea or sky; dense, dun fog everywhere; with never a book within reach, nor a soul with whom to exchange a thought, it was no wonder if Frank at times found it difficult to realise his own identity.

"Great Heavens!" he cried aloud once in the extremity of his impatience, "a man might as well be shut up alive in a tomb at once and be done with it!"

It mattered very little whether he cried loud or whether he cried low. That old deaf-mute, with the knitting-pins in his hand, never moved a muscle nor bent the ear towards him.

It seemed as if Heaven itself had grown equally hard of hearing; as if that great dense wall of fog were playing the part of sounding-board to him, throwing back his cries in his teeth.

MORE OMENS AND QUACKERIES.

IN TWO PARTS. PART II.

HORSE-SHOES are surrounded as it were with a halo of superstition, and in all times an awe seems to have been felt of them. Where, however, to begin with an account of them and where to end, is a matter somewhat difficult to decide, the subject being so rich in folk-lore. It is considered, even in the present day, particularly lucky to find a horse-shoe that has been lost; and a horse-shoe nailed over a door is said to be effectual in keeping out the Evil One and his earthly satellites—witches and warlocks. This superstition possesses a firm hold in many rural districts, and may be seen in the horse-shoes that are nailed over stable and other doors. The principal gateway at Allahabad, India, is thickly studded with horse-shoes of every size and make. There are hundreds of them nailed all over the great gates, doubtless the offerings of many a wayfarer, who has long since finished his earthly pilgrimage. It has been suggested, and apparently with some reason, that in ancient Pagan times the horse-shoe may have been a recognised symbol in serpent-worship, and hence may have arisen its common use against all

manner of evil. The resemblance is obvious, more especially to the species of harmless snake which is rounded at both ends, so that head and tail are both apparently alike. The creature moves backward or forward at pleasure; hence the old belief that it actually had two heads, and was indestructible, as, even when cut into two parts, it was supposed that the divided heads would seek one another and reunite. It stands to reason that in a snake-worshipping community such a creature would be held in high reverence. Even in Scotland various snake-like bracelets and ornaments have been found, which seem to favour this theory, and at a very early period both snakes and horse-shoes seem to have been engraved as symbols on sacred stones. We hear of the latter having been sculptured not only on the thresholds of old London houses, but even on the ancient churches in various parts of Great Britain. They are constantly nailed upon houses, stables, and ships, as a charm against witchcraft, in Scotland, England, and Wales, and especially in Cornwall, where, not only on vans and omnibuses, but sometimes even on the grim gates of old gaols, we may find this curious trace of ancient superstition. Aubery, in his "Miscellanies," says: "Under the porch of Stainfield Church, in Suffolk, I saw a tile with a horse-shoe upon it, placed there to hinder the power of witches, though one would imagine that the holy water would have been sufficient." The charm of the horse-shoe lies in its being forked and presenting two points. Thus Herrick, in his "Hesperides," says:

Hang up hooks and shears to scare
Hence the bag that rides the mare,
Till they be all over wet
With the mire and with the sweat;
Thus observed, the manes shall be
Of your horses all kept free.

Even the two forefingers kept apart are thought to avert the Evil Eye, or prevent the machinations of the lord and master of the nether world. The pentacle, or seal of Solomon, is supposed to possess great powers, as being composed of two triangles presenting six forked ends, and, therefore, called pentacle erroneously. Mr. Timbs states that when Monmouth Street was a fashionable locality of London, it was noted for its number of horse-shoes nailed over the doorways or on the sills. In 1813 Sir Henry Ellis counted seventeen here; in 1841 there were six; in 1852 the number had increased to eleven; and since that time their number has declined to nil.

Nelson, it is said, had great faith in the power of the horse-shoe, and one was nailed to the mast of his flagship "Victory."

"Lucky Doctor Jones" attributed the success of his fever powder to his finding a horse-shoe, which he adopted as a crest upon his carriage. At the gate of Meux's Brewery, Tottenham Road corner, and on the trappings of the horses of the establishment, a horse-shoe is very conspicuous. The lucky belief in the horse-shoe may have led to its adoption as the ornamental part of a scarf-pin.

Mr. Moule tells us of a very curious superstition which prevails in Java and in China, answering in some measure to our practice of nailing horse-shoes over stable doors. The following reference occurs in "Leland's Letters": "It is, as all the world knows, considered lucky to find a horse-shoe, but I picked one up just as I set foot on the track. I am assured by the most experienced sorceresses and witches among the people, that of all others a shoe found on a race-track, but especially on the Derby, is a talisman of most potent power. It is explained that 'perhaps one of the horses running lost the race by losing the shoe, and so you'll get the luck which he lost.'"

Who has not heard of the ominous "Flying Dutchman" and the devastation he has wrought amongst shipping? And yet comparatively few know the origin of the story. Here it is: About three hundred years ago, more or less, when the Cape of Good Hope was in the hands of the Dutch, a vessel sailed from that place bound for Europe. The ship was caught in one of those dreadful storms which are so frequent off the Cape, and the passengers and crew saw no hope in safety except in immediately returning to port. They went to the Captain in a body, and implored him to put the ship about, and make the best of their way back again before it was too late. The Captain's name was Vanderdecken, and he was one of those obstinate, daring, and blasphemous skippers who, because they set at defiance all the courtesies of life, are supposed to be best qualified to do battle with the winds and waves. Vanderdecken received the panic-stricken deputation with a volley of oaths, and told them, "that rather than put back he would beat about there until the Day of Judgement."

The story goes that the vessel, with all hands, was lost; but that in stormy weather the phantom of the vessel can be seen

beating about until the Day of Judgement. It is further said that any vessel meeting with this phantom ship is doomed; in fact, is never more heard of. How Vanderdecken's exact words have come to be known, seeing that his ship and all hands were lost, I do not pretend to tell. Doubtless, if the origin of the story could be traced at this distance of time, it would be found to have originated in the "fo'c's'le" of some of our merchant or man-of-war's men in times gone by.

Says one who has been amongst cabmen a great deal, "a cat crossing in front of a 'night-hawk's' outfit is considered bad enough to dwarf the whole night's business; but a white cat means utter demoralisation for the night. Some Jehus immediately begin to drink in order that they may forget the apparition of the white cat; and when a night-hawk is visited with the delirium tremens, he does not see snakes like the ordinary sufferer, but hundreds of white cats crowd before his vision. A driver of an all-night hack never puts his left foot on the wheel first in getting on the box, because he thinks it bad luck; and nothing can induce him to open the door of his cab or carriage with his left hand. If a shoe becomes loose on one of his horse's feet, that's a bad omen, and causes the driver to believe that some bad luck is in store for him. When the moon is shining brightly, and a dark cloud suddenly hides it from view and causes darkness to settle on the streets, the 'hawk' grows suspicious. If his first passenger happens to be a drunken man with a torn umbrella, that is considered good luck, and a sign that rain will be plentiful and business good. Some will not eat during the night, lest it bring bad luck; others believe that the lighted stump of a cigar, picked up after it has been thrown away by a well-dressed man and quickly smoked, brings good luck. The majority of them will gladly carry an actress or actor free, believing that the profession are harbingers of good fortune. Many believe that they have to turn their horse a certain number of times before they will catch a customer. Nearly all are great card-players, and believe that if they are lucky at cards they will be lucky on the streets, and vice versa."

At Wardle Hall, an ancient mansion, about seven miles from Manchester, there is said to be a skull with a history attached to it. Mr. Thomas Wardle, who visited the house at the close of the last century.

says there is a tradition that, "if removed or ill-used, some uncommon noise or disturbance always follows, to the terror of the whole house. Yet I cannot persuade myself that this is always the case; but some years ago I and three of my companions went to visit this surprising piece of household furniture, and found it as above-mentioned, and blanched white with weather that beats upon it from a four-square window in the hall, which the tenants never permit to be glazed or filled up; thus to oblige the skull, which they say is unruly and disturbed at the hole not always being open. However, one of us who was last in company of the skull, removed it from its place into a dark part of the room, and there left it and returned home. But the night but one following, such a storm of wind and lightning rose about the house as tore down some trees and unroofed out-houses. We hearing of this, my father went over a few days after to see his mother, who lived near the hall, and was witness to the wreck the storm had made. Yet all this might have been stopped had the skull never been removed; but withal it keeps alive the credulity of its believers. What I can learn of the above affair from old people in the neighbourhood is that a young man of the Downes family, being in London, one night in his frolic vowed to his companions that he would kill the first man he met. Accordingly he ran his sword through a man immediately, a sailor by trade. Justice, however, overtook him in his career of wickedness, for in some while after, he being in a riot upon London Bridge, a watchman made a stroke at him with his bill, and severed his head from his body. The head was enclosed in a box, and sent to his sister, who lived at Wardley, where it hath continued ever since."

In the West of England the fortunes of children are believed to be much regulated by the day of the week on which they are born. Here is a rhyming adage on the subject, common to all parts of the country, but to Tavistock in particular.

Monday's child is fair of face;
 Tuesday's child is full of grace;
 Wednesday's child is full of woe;
 Thursday's child has far to go;
 Friday's child is loving and giving;
 Saturday's child works hard for a living;
 But a child that is born on a Christmas Day
 Is fair, and wise, and merry, and gay.

Sunday is excluded from the list, probably because the composer of the rhyme could not find a sufficiency of words to fit in nicely.

In equally as poor verse the following lines inform candidates for matrimony which are the best and worst days in the week for marrying. The ancient quackery is, I may add, firmly believed in in some parts of England and Wales. Sunday, it will be observed, is again not included in the list of days; hence, I presume, it may be taken that there is no luck, good, bad, or indifferent, attendant upon Sunday weddings.

Monday for health, Tuesday for wealth,
Wednesday the best day of all;
Thursday for crosses, Friday for losses,
Saturday no luck at all.

A broad-sheet belonging to the latter part of Elizabeth's reign, warns those about to marry in the following terms:

Who marieth a Wife vpon a Moneday,
If she will not be good vpon a Tuesday,
Lett him go to ye Wood vpon a Wenesday,
And cutt him a Cudgell vpon a Thursday,
And pay her soundly vpon a Fryday;
And she mind not, ye Devil take her a Saturday,
That he may eat his Meat in peace on ye Sunday.

In the Harleian MSS., in the British Museum, the following ancient bogey will be found:

Yf Chrystemas Day on Thursday be,
Of wyndy wynter se shalle yee,
Of wyndes and weders all wrecked,
And harde tempestes strong and thycke,
The somer shal be good and drye,
Cornys and bestes shal multiplye,
That yere ys good landes to tylthe;
And kynges and prynces shal dye by skylle.
What chylde that daye borne bee
He shall happe ryght well to the,
Of dedes he shal be good and stabylle,
Of speche and tonge wyse and reasonabyll.
Whoso the day any thefte abowte
He shal be shente wythoutyn dowte;
And yf sekeness on that day betyde
Hyt shalle son from the glyde.

Over and over again persons have prophesied the end of the world on certain fixed days, and under a combination of certain circumstances; but the only effect of their prophecies has been to prove the truth of the Yankee saying, that it is never safe to prophesy until you know. There has recently been unearthed another of these predictions, this time by the greatest quack that ever lived—Nostradamus. Persons disappointed in the non-fulfilment of Mother Shipton's prophecy—

The end of the world shall surely be
In eighteen hundred and eighty three—

began to pin their faith to this, delivered in the year 1566. This famous wizard says:

When on St. George's Day the Crucifixion,
And Jesus' Rising on St. Mark's Day fall;
And John the Baptist bear him, great affliction
Upon the world shall come, the end of all.

This combination has twice occurred since the introduction of the New Style, and the world is still alive. The first of these two occasions, however (1815), did, strangely enough, bring the end of the world about—the end of the Roman Empire, which died in name and in fact in the Treaty of Vienna, and never until then. As the Roman Empire claimed, at one time, to be the empire of the world, Nostradamus, were he alive, might claim to have been more successful than any other prophet of the world's end on record; and the strange coincidence is well worth noting amongst the chronicles of such curiosities. The same idea, with slight variations, is preserved on an old stone tablet in the church of Obermund, near Trevori, in Germany: "When Mark shall bring us Easter, and Anthony shall sing praises at Pentecost, and John shall swing the censer at the Feast of Corpus Domini, then shall the whole earth resound with weepings and wallings." The Anthony referred to is the Saint Anthony of Padua, and this also coincides with Whit-Sunday.

One of the most picturesque of flowering shrubs, the hazel, is, or was, held in but poor repute, having the name of being too intimately connected with the black art. Beautiful though it is, and pungent though its odours be, there are those who see in it nothing but power of unlawful enchantment, and trust to its divination to inform them where water exists underground. For some time this superstition dropped, but has been revived latterly. The hazel is called "The Rod of Jacob," "The Twig," and "The Divining Rod;" and recent correspondence in the newspapers has proved that, whatever may have been the truth about the "Twig," belief in its power is still very prevalent. It has been used not only to find water, but to detect thieves and murderers. In 1719 John Bell was travelling across Asia, and fell in with a Russian merchant, who told him of a custom among the Mongols. The Russian had lost some pieces of cloth, which were stolen out of his tent. The Kutuchta Lama ordered the proper steps to be taken to find out the thieves. One of the Lamas took a bench with four feet, and after turning it in several directions, at last it pointed directly to the tent where the stolen goods were concealed. The Lama was mounted across the bench, and soon carried it, or, as was commonly believed, it carried him to the very tent, where he ordered the cloth to be produced.

The demand was promptly complied with, for it was in vain to offer any excuse in such cases. When a man walks round with a "witch hazel-rod" in his hand to find out where to dig his well by the twisting or deflection of the rod, or worse still, when on the faith of its movement he digs for buried gold, he deserves to be exiled to the Black Forest to the companionship of those people who, during a thunderstorm, take refuge under a twig of hazel hung over the door, believing that, so protected, the lightning will be powerless to harm them. There are extraordinary virtues enough actually existing in the vegetable kingdom, so that none need have recourse to the imagination to find more.

According to Dr. Grasse, an indefatigable investigator of matters mysterious, Castle Rodenstein, near to Darmstadt, was once inhabited by a knight who was the terror of his neighbours, and passed all his time hunting, and never bestowed a thought upon the fair sex. On one occasion the Palatine gave a tournament, to which he invited all the knights resident on the Rhine, the Necker, and the Maine. Von Rodenstein made his appearance, looking very magnificent, unhorsed every adversary, and received the prize from the hand of the noble Lady Marie von Hochberg, with whom he at once fell desperately in love. She readily became his wife, and for some time they lived happily together in Castle Rodenstein, when one unlucky day he became involved in a quarrel with one of his neighbours. He was already tired of the calm enjoyments of domestic life, and the opportunity of a return to his old habits was by no means unwelcome. In vain did his wife, who undoubtedly thought that matters might be amicably settled, entreat him to abstain from broil and battle; in vain did she fling herself on her knees before him, and implore him, for the sake of herself and her child yet unborn, not to leave the castle. He coldly thrust her aside, and rode off on his courser with all possible speed. Almost immediately afterwards the poor lady gave birth to a child and died. At night, while the knight lay in ambush near Schnellert, watching for his enemy, he saw a white figure approaching him from his own castle. This was the spectre of his wife, who, bearing her child in her arms, reproached him with her death, and told him that he was doomed to wander about as the herald of wars in Germany. Not long afterwards

he was mortally wounded in a skirmish, and died in Castle Schnellert, in front of which he has since made his appearance whenever a war is about to break out.

The following table of comets, and of the events by which they have been succeeded, shows that the popular belief that comets predict remarkable events is not altogether unreasonable. Before Christ, 480, Battle of Salamis; 431, Peloponnesian War; 331, Battle of Arbela; 43, Death of Cæsar. Anno Domini 1, Birth of Christ; 62, Earthquake in Achaia and Macedonia; 70, Destruction of Jerusalem; 79, Eruption of Veuvius, which caused the destruction of Herculaneum; 337, Death of Constantine; 400, Invasion of Alaric, in Italy; 813, preceded the death of Charlemagne; 877, Death of Charles-le-Chauve; 999, preceded the disasters and terrors of the year 1000; 1066, Conquest of England by the Normans; 1223, Death of Philip Augustus; 1264, Death of Urban IV.; 265, preceded the death of Manfred, King of Naples; 1273, Accession of Rodolph of Hapsburg; 1293, modified character and conduct of Koublai Khan, founder of the Tartar domination in China; 1454, Taking of Constantinople; 1500, Irruption of Tartars in Poland, famine in Swabia, and expedition of Charles XIII. in Italy; 1516, announced the misfortunes of Munster, under John of Leyden, invasion of the Turks in Hungary, civil war in Switzerland, plague in England, inundations in Holland, and an earthquake in Portugal; 1556, Abdication of Charles V., 1560, Death of François II. of France; 1572, Massacre of St. Bartholomew and death of Charles IV.; 1577, King Sebastian made an unfortunate expedition into Africa, where he lost his life; 1580, Epidemic in Italy and France; 1793, Execution of Louis XVI. in France; 1804, Downfall of the Empire; 1811, Birth of the King of Rome; 1820, Napoleon considered the appearance of this comet a sign that his dissolution was at hand; 1858, the attempted assassination of the Emperor of France by Orsini, and the Italian War; 1861, Inundation of the Danube, American Civil War, earthquakes of Guatemala and Rhodes, death of Prince Consort, the new Kingdom of Italy, emancipation of Russian Serfs, death of the Sultan of Turkey, and the end of Rome as a Power.

The Romans augured from the entrails of birds, dreams, stars, sortilege, etc., and should a bird of good omen perch on their

standard, or fly over or near their army, it was esteemed favourable. On the contrary, if a crow or a raven was seen, it was deemed unlucky, and they would not venture to do battle that day. Cæsar believed that he should die on the day on which, in fact, his end came; but, to come nearer home, we shall discover that forebodings and omens were believed by heroes and philosophers, poets and divines. The illustrious Nelson had a strange presentiment of his death on the day of the Battle of Trafalgar. Napoleon believed in the propitiousness of his star; and at the period of his dissolution, on the fourth of the month in which he expired, the Island of St. Helena was swept by a tremendous storm, which tore up almost all the trees about Longwood by the roots. The eighth was another day of tempests, and about six o'clock in the evening, Napoleon expired.

When our first Norman King landed on the shores of Britain, he slipped and fell; but being of a superstitious turn of mind, was careful to turn the accident into an auspicious omen, by declaring it to be symbolic of his seizure of the land.

Sheridan had an aversion to begin anything on a Friday; Mozart imagined that he was composing his own requiem (which was the case) when he was composing one, at the request of a stranger, for a lady; Dryden predicted the accident which befel his son, and the year of his death. When Henrietta Maria was but an infant, Barbarino, then Nuncio in France, paid a visit of congratulation to the Queen Mother. He found the lady despondent, and regretful of the fact that the royal child was not a boy. The gallant, equal to the occasion, said:

"Madam, I hope to see this, though your youngest daughter, a great Queen before I die."

"And I hope," replied the Queen, "to see you Pope."

It was only in after years, within a short time of each other, that the two events, the marriage of an English Queen and the elevation to the Popedom of Urban the Eighth, fulfilled the prophecies that had been so complimentarily spoken. Byron believed in the unpropitiousness of Friday. Henry the Fourth several times remarked to his friends the day before his death: "I think I shall die soon." Swift foretold that he should die insane.

Sir Matthew Hale also predicted the day of his death, which was verified. The ominous presage of his fortunes to Bruce

is too well known to be related here. Bacon, Johnson, Walton, and many others, believed in such things; and, although out of place, it may not be amiss to mention that as Cooke, the Solicitor-General, was beginning to open the pleadings at the trial of Charles the First, the King gently tapped him on the shoulder with his cane, crying, "Hold! hold!" At the same time the silver head of the cane fell off and rolled on the floor.

A gipsy told the King, "A dog will one day howl at Hampton Court, and then the kingdom will want a King;" and she added: "a dog will die in this palace one day, then the kingdom shall be restored again." The dog that howled was a favourite of King Charles; the dog that died belonged to Cromwell. On hearing of the death of his dog, Cromwell, who had heard of the prophecy, said: "The kingdom has departed," and the next morning died.

When George the Third was crowned a large emerald fell from his crown; during his reign America was lost to us.

CRANNOGES.

WHAT is a Crannog? The word is documentary; in a State paper, dated 1608, about the surrender of certain rebel clans, we read, in the strange spelling which, for some occult reason, was always used by Scotch officials: "the hail houssis of defence, strongholdis and cranokis in the yllis pertaining to thame and their foirsaidis sal be delyveret to his Maiestie."

These cranokis were the Irish crannoges, islands mostly artificial in lakes or lochs, with fortified dwellings upon them. One reads in the "Lady of the Lake," how one of these was saved from capture by the energy of "Duncraggan's widowed dame." The whole passage in Canto vi. is in Scott's best style. Moray and his "Saxons" have driven the Highlanders through the Trosachs to the shore of Loch Katrine. There Moray spies out the crannog:

See! none are left to guard its strand
But women weak that wring the hand.

My purse, with bonnet-pieces store,
To him who'll swim a bowshot o'er,
And loose a shallop from the shore.
Lightly we'll tame the war-wolf then,
Lords of his mate and brood and den.

A spearman at once throws off his armour and swims across, amid the cheers of his friends and the raging yells of the mountaineers; but, just as he has touched the

bow of one of the boats, the widow stabs him. A note tells us that such an event did take place in that very spot, not indeed at the time when Scott describes it, but when Cromwell was invading the country. A party of his troops were in that same way foiled in their attempt on Loch Katrine Isle, and, losing heart, went off without another effort. When the same Cromwell was in Ireland, crannoges made a better stand against him than most castles. Thus the O'Hagans held out two years in Inis O'Linn (the Isle of the Pool). The English (say the Annals of the Four Masters) dammed up the lake and turned another stream into it, so as to flood the isle; but the garrison lived in their upper rooms, though some of them were killed by cannon. One man, attempting to swim over, had his legs broken. At last the enemy departed; but their provisions failing, the garrison soon after burned the place and went off. Where it was worth while, Cromwell's people had better ways of attacking an island fortress than by swimming over. Ross Castle, in Middle Lake, Killarney, the stronghold of the O'Donoghues, made a desperate stand against General Ludlow; and was deemed so important that the English actually managed to get gunboats up from Dingle Bay, along the unnavigable River Laune, and to frighten it into surrender by thus fulfilling an old prophecy.

The most detailed account of a siege of one of these crannoges occurs in Sir Henry Sydney's letter to Elizabeth, dated Drogheda (or Tredagh, as it was then spelt), 1566, nearly a century before Cromwell's war. Sydney was fighting the O'Neil, and he heard from a spy, one T. Pettipiece, that, "for castles he trusteth no points thereunto for his safety, as appeareth by the razing of the strongest castles of all his countries, and that fortification that he only dependeth upon is in sartin ffrshwater loghes in his country, which from the sea there come neither ship nor boat to approach them. It is thought that in ye said fortified islands lyeth all his plate which is much, and money, prisoners, and gages." Sydney, therefore, "with the Marshal Francis Agarnde, Jaques Wingfield, and the rest of the captains and soldiers, each man in his calling as willing to serve your Majesty as ever I saw men, issued out of Drogheda, and, marching towards Ardmach (Armagh), camped by a logh, in which was an island, and in the same, by universal opinion and report, a great quantity of the rebels' goods

and victuals kept, only without guns, not greatly strong as it seemed, but hedged about, and the distance from the main not being passed five score yards." The soldiers, and the gentlemen adventurers from the Welsh marches, "being none of the army, but come over to serve this journey," were very eager for the plunder, "which was granted to them"—on the principle of selling the bear's skin before he was taken—"I the Deputy making choice only of such as could swim. Nevertheless, there was prepared for them a bridge which floated upon barrels, whereupon they went but disorderly, for many more went than were appointed." This extra weight half sank their "bridge" or raft, in such sort that the fireworks they carried with them miscarried, and they were unable to burn the stockade. This, "being bearded with stakes and other sharp wood, was not, without extreme difficulty, scaleable," and just as several of the gentlemen had gained the top, one of them, Edward Vaughan, was pushed back with a pike, and, "falling between hedge and bridge, being heavily armed, was drowned, albeit he could swim perfect." Two others were likewise drowned and three shot; and the unexpected resistance so daunted Sydney's men that "unhurt they returned upon the bridge to the land."

The closing words of the letter throw light on the relations between Elizabeth and her servants. Her "statecraft" was carried to such a point, that even her Deputy was not free from surveillance. He knew that spies were about him, ready to practise for their own advantage and his hurt on the Queen's jealous disposition, and so the poor man wrote: "We treat of this trifle thus largely to your Most Excellent Majesty, least some malice or ignorance might inform the same contrary to the truth; and as many of us as were at the journey by these our letters affirm this to be the truth, and the whole truth, of that fact."

Poor Sydney! How disgusted Lord Wolsley would have been had dispatches of that kind, backed up by all his subordinates, been required of him! That, indeed, is one reason why "good Queen Bess" was so badly served; and why all her Irish wars, after bringing indescribable desolation on the island, and disappointment to each successive Deputy, ended in failure; and why, in the same way, she let half the Low Countries slip back into the grasp of Spain. She never wholly trusted

anyone. Poor woman! her early life was not calculated to make her trustful; its hardships, also, no doubt, tended to make her niggardly—another reason for her ill-success.

Leicester—ruining himself in Holland, in the effort to keep in soldierly trim the ragged regiment of “paddy persons,” at whom the Dutch laughed so unmercifully—was matched by Deputy after Deputy in Ireland, paying the troops out of his own purse, and hoping to recoup himself by a grant of Ulster or Munster land.

But I must come back to my crannoges. Of these the Desmonds had a notable one in Lough Gur, County Limerick, which was often captured and recaptured by the “Queen’s people” and the Earl. The last time, when the Geraldines’ fortunes were on the wane, the President of Munster, after much parade of ordnance for its reduction, purchased it for sixty pounds of Owen Grome, who had been intrusted with its defence. It was a crannog, and something more, a strong castle being added to the stockade; and of this castle the peasantry think they can still catch glimpses beneath the water. There it stands, sunk by a spell; and inside are the great Earl and his lovely Countess, and all the retinue that surrounded him in the days of his splendour. Such another crannog with castle was that built by De Lacy, in 1223, on Lough Oughter, in Cavan. It was a crannog of the O’Reillys, who, in spite of the castle which the Norman added to it, recaptured it shortly after, and, with a chivalry seldom imitated by the invaders, “let out on parole the people who were in it.”

One great use of crannoges was to hide important prisoners. Every now and then, in the “Annals of the Four Masters,” as well as in other Chronicles, one reads of somebody being invited to a banquet, seized, and “put in a lake to conceal him.” Elizabeth’s captains often used the same plan, as far as the banquets and the seizures went; but having no crannoges to hide them in, they usually got rid of their prisoners by hanging and poison. Crannoges were also used by wounded chieftains as refuges in which to be healed, even as Arthur was in Avallon. Here and there they continued in use till quite recently; MacNairn’s crannog, near Ballinlough, in Galway, was inhabited within the memory of man. But in the old disturbed times they were naturally very numerous, more so even than the mainland castles, of which one

sees a far larger number in most parts of Ireland than even along the wild Scottish borders. The “Annals of Lough Cé” tell of a tempest which swept over Ireland in 1477, “doing great damage, especially to crannogea.” They must have been quite a feature of the country to get special notice in one of the old meagre Chronicles. Their danger from tempests would be twofold: a crannog might be submerged by a heavy flood, as, indeed, it might sometimes be by cutting the dyke that kept back or diverted most of the head-waters of the lake. Hence the grim entry in the “Four Masters,” under 1560: “O’Rourke drowned while asleep on a low, lonely crannog in Leitrim.” Or, if the piles which often formed the foundation were rotten, the storm might make the whole island sink like Atlantis of old or the islets round Santorin the other day. This happened, we read, in 990, when “the Island of Lough Cimbe went down suddenly thirty feet, flooring and rampart.” Against Danes they were a poor protection. These determined plunderers used to drag their war boats great distances overland. In Scotland, for instance, they made a regular portage across the Mull of Cantire. In Ireland the Chronicles tell how, having plundered the monasteries, they set to work upon the islands. The “great crannog of Lagore,” in Meath, the “finds” at which first led Sir W. Wilde to study the subject, was twice plundered and burnt between 848 and 933; and the worst of it was that the Irish began to imitate the evil ways of the invaders, taking to church-plundering and island-stronghold burning, “after the manner of the Gentiles.” Before the Danes were crushed by Brian Borumha, at the battle of Clontarf, in 1016, that Irish Alfred had recognised the military value of crannoges, restoring not only mainland castles, but also four great island forts, among them that on Lough Gur above-named. Indeed, their importance as shelter-places was proverbial; in a poem attributed to St. Columbkille or Columba, the saint, expressing his trust in divine protection, says:

Though in a church, the reprobates are slain
Though in an island in the middle of a lake;
While in the very front of battle
No one can slay me.

As a last historical note I may mention that Sir Phelim O’Neil, whose part in the troubles of 1641 is so differently estimated by writers of different sympathies, took refuge in a crannog on Lough Rughan,

near Dungannon, and was only captured after boats had been brought over from Charlemont.

Ireland and Scotland were by no means the only places where crannoges were in use. Such a mode of building was not only useful for protection, but was also tempting in days when nearly all the world was covered with forest. They say that Ireland, now so treeless, had in early days only one treeless plain, the sandy level between Dublin and Howth.

It was the same with Britain: read in Green's History how the impentable "bush" baffled the English invaders, forcing them to follow the river lines, and breaking them up into separate kingdoms. It was the same in Switzerland, where these lake-dwellings were first studied: read in Dr. Keller, how after a long drought and subsequent frost (1853-4), the level of Zurich Lake sank so low that, at Ober Meilen, were noticed the foundations of a pile village, while a number of "finds" fished up close by gave an insight into the habits and states of civilisation of those who had occupied it. When once the eyes of the scientists had thus got turned to the subject, lake-dwellings began to be noticed all over Europe—in the little lakes of Upper Austria, in France, in England.

The East Anglian Britons—improved off, Mr. Rye thinks, by Danes long before the Romans came—have left traces of their crannoges in Barton Mere, by Bury, and Wretham Mere, near Thetford. Holder-ness was quite a land of lake-dwellings; while General Lane Fox thinks he can trace a series of water-towns along the Thames—at Kew, at Barnes, etc., London itself being a group of such towns, beginning, in fact, as Venice did, and as did Venezuela—"Little Venice" the Spaniards called it. Holland should be, par excellence, the land of crannoges, as it still is of pile-dwellings. But in Holland the face of the country is changed almost past recognition. The great inundations of the twelfth century altered the course of the rivers, and covered the swamps in which the Batavians held out against Rome with the waters of the Zuyder Zee. When that comes to be drained (i.e., when farming gets to be less of a losing game, and America consumes her own cheese) we shall, no doubt, be able to trace the old Dutch lake-dwellings, and—if we go deep enough, for silt accumulates fast where the tide can get in—to collect "finds" like those those which have enabled the Swiss scientists

to set before us the whole daily life of the first inhabitants of their country. In other quarters of the world we can still see the crannog in use, just as some tribes in Polynesia and America are still living in "the stone age;" at Rangoon; on Lake Realmah in Central Africa, as described by Captain Cameron; in New Guinea, where every day the fisherman lets his basket down through a trap-door and hauls it up again with a good supply of food, just as Herodotus says the Pæonians did on Lake Prasias, now Lake Takinos, in Roumelia.

This easy way of getting one's dinner reminds us that lake-dwellings were and are of two kinds. You may either make an islet by driving down a double ring of piles and dovetailing into them a massive framework on which to lay your pavement of earth and stones and to rear your superstructure of huts; or you may, like the aforesaid Pæonians, perch your huts on a set of props, with nothing between you and the water but a flooring of boards and reeds. In Switzerland both methods were in use. At Nidau, in the Lake of Bienna, there is an artificial island encircled with piles, beams being laid horizontally across to keep in place the stones of which it is composed. That is just what is meant by a crannog, and such islands are found in several of the smaller Swiss lakes. Another kind of Swiss lake-dwelling, also found in our islands, and suited for a soft, muddy bottom, in which piles could find no firm footing, was raised on layers of faggots, alternating with brushwood, clay, and stones. When this had reached the surface, piles were driven down all round, and the whole covered with a wooden floor. This, however, would not answer in the deep water of the big lakes. Here the waves are so violent that they would soon tear up a faggot platform; the only way, therefore, was to choose a good bottom and drive in piles, between which the water could pass as it does between the supports of a wooden pier. Some of these poles were thirty feet long, and the platforms which they supported were sometimes big enough to house a whole village; that at Morges, on the Lake of Geneva, is calculated to have been one thousand two hundred feet long by one hundred and twenty feet wide. Of this kind there are no known instances in Great Britain.

Scotland and Ireland have plenty of shallow lakes just in the districts where crannoges were most wanted, so it was only necessary to drive in the piles: lav

down the beams; and fill up with stones, gravel, bracken, and the boughs of trees. Next came one, or perhaps two layers of oak logs, mortised into the upright piles, the area thus formed being filled in with brushwood (generally hazel) covered with fine sand. On this were laid the hearth-stones, and the paved causeways, and the huts, some of which were scarcely four feet high, and rather sleeping-lars than houses in our sense of the word. Many of them have been found—at Kilnamaddo in Fermanagh, at Drumkelin in Inver parish, Donegal, etc.—under some seventeen feet of peat, as perfect as when they were put together, solid rough timber boxes open at one end, and strongly mortised at the angles. Sometimes there is a dividing-floor, so that the hut looks like a couple of the old-fashioned Scotch box-beds taken out of the wall and fixed into a heavy framework. The door was probably a hurdle—hence the Irish proverb for a narrow escape: “he got off ’twixt hurdle and door-post,”—and where there were larger houses they were wattled, i.e., two hurdle walls were raised, and the space within filled in with clay and small stones. A barbarous way of building, says the man who is accustomed to London brick, but at least as solid as the Devon “cob” (unburnt clay) walls, or the big cakes of yellow earth, of which even farm-houses are made in parts of West Norfolk.

Draining in Ireland (even the little of it that has as yet been done) has enabled the archaeologists to find out all this. There are the logs still mortised to their supporting piles; the brushwood kept sound by the peat-water; the very hurdles still unrotten; the hearth-stones still fire-stained; the kitchen middens (as Danish scientists have taught us to call old-world dust-heaps); the traces of cattle; and often the record of successive burnings and re-erectments, as plain as that which Dr. Schliemann found written on the successive layers of the mounds which once were Troy.

And now for the “finds,” which in Switzerland are so various that they mark quite an epoch in ethnology, enabling us to determine with tolerable certainty what plants and animals the “bronze-age man” (for the Swiss Pfahlbauten seem to have been abandoned when the “iron age” began) had brought with him in his migration westward, and what arts of life he had mastered when he chose his home on the top of the waters of the Helvetian lakes. In Ireland the range is wider, for,

as I said, the crannoges continued in use till almost yesterday. Dug-out canoes, therefore, bone and flint arrow-heads (some with shaft and thong still adhering, so antiseptic is the peat in which they must have lain for ages), and other memorials of the “stone age” are found along with gold ornaments, the beautiful leaf-shaped bronze swords peculiar to Ireland (and, I believe, also to Japan), querns, stone moulds for casting arrow-heads, iron weapons of all kinds, beautifully embossed and enamelled bronze sheaths containing iron swords, big bronze cauldrons, wooden yokes for cattle, methers (wooden mead-goblets), pottery of all sizes, harps, bronze trumpets, fish spears; and, along with these records of the far-off past, pieces of sixteenth-century armour, and pistols and guns belonging to a yet later time.

I have said nothing about ornaments, though these are, of course, the most numerous of all. From notices in the old poems, the oldest Irish art seems to have been largely employed upon personal ornament; and what a careless set they must have been to lose by the hundred their brooches, and bronze shawl-pins (some of the elaborate type known to jewellers as the “Tara brooch”), and even their gold torques, in such quantities! We might understand their frequency if there had ever been burials in these lake-dwellings, but “the Celt” seems to have had regard enough for sanitary considerations to make him carry his dead across to the mainland. The few human remains are clearly those of people who were killed when the place was captured. No; all this Old-World jewellery must have been lost; and the wonder is, that very little coined money is found in any of the crannoges; being so careless, the lake-dwellers would have lost that, too, if they had had any of it. The beauty of many of the brooches makes us wish that Birmingham would take a lesson from the samples in the Royal Irish Academy’s Museum. Some of the stone amulets are exactly like our big pendent silver lockets, but are worked all over with the interlaced designs which are peculiar to Irish art. Among the finds are tobacco pipes, very small, like what in Scotland are called “elfin pipes;” and as they are associated with bronze pins, beads of amber and of enamel, Kimmage coal-rings, and other antiques, the question is, did the Irish smoke before tobacco was known? Scotch archaeologists have asked the same question, but have confessed that

the very variable rate of growth of peat, and the possibility that small things might sink a long way in semi-fluid bog, makes the answer uncertain. A common find is butter, which the Irish used to bury, partly for fear of plunderers, partly for the reason for which the Maories buried their fish—to give it a rich flavour, like that of cheese, which has never been an Irish article of food. Thomas Dinely, writing in Charles the Second's reign, says: "They lay it up in wicker baskets, mixed with store of a sort of garlick;" and the Irish Hudibras speaks of

Butter to eat with their hog,
Was seven years buried in bog.

An Irish crannog, then, is an interesting hunting-ground for an archæologist. It must be pleasant to bring up bronze spear-heads and gun-barrels—note the range, from the "bronze age" till two centuries ago—in the prongs of your eel-spear; though you cannot hope for such a mine of wealth as was at Lagore, which had for years supplied the curiosity dealers before Dr. Petrie and Sir W. Wilde found it out, by tracing to their source some antiques which they had bought in Dublin. If you are in at the draining of a bog you may come upon the mummy of an "old Celt." Such have been found, clad in deer-skin stitched with fine gut, each stitch being knotted in loop-stitch style so as to prevent unripping. This shows that these early men were no fools; the same is shown by the size of their skulls, of those larger than the average of "the masses" nowadays; and no wonder, for life then meant really the survival of the fittest; and a savage child has to be observant, and that sharpens his wits in a way not at all necessary for the spoon-fed children of our great cities. The perfect rivetting of the bronze trumpets ("the admiration of the curious," says Lieutenant-Colonel Wood-Martin, in his book on Irish lake-dwellings) shows skill that a modern whitesmith might envy; and the frequent crucibles show that the ornaments of precious metal were often made on the spot. Dyes are found wrapped in birch bark. (The dyes still in use in the far parts of Galway are exactly what we call art-colours). Spindle-whorls—"fairy mill-stones," the people call them—are, of course, very numerous; and so are the throw-weights used in weaving. Touchstones, too, could only be needed among a people much conversant with gold and silver ornaments. By the way, though I have talked of stone, and bronze, and iron

ages, I need scarcely say the three overlap each other. Stone implements were used in the British Isles till quite lately: and on the other hand, iron was in use much earlier than we fancy. Archæologists of the last generation thought a find of iron at once stamped a place with modernness, forgetting that the carefully made charcoal-smelted iron of early days decays far less rapidly than the poor stuff that our foundries turn out.

Such are crannoges, and such are some of the objects found in them. How many of these have been dispersed and melted down, and otherwise lost, who knows? If only every Irish landlord would be as wise as a neighbour of mine in Norfolk, who, having a Roman camp on his farm, offered a reward to his labourers for whatever they might bring, and who, in consequence, has a first-rate collection of coins (some unique), and also a Romano-British necklace of gold beads, worn, doubtless, by the native charmer of some Roman officer. The amendment of the Treasure Trove Laws gives the archæologist a better chance; but little local museums, and a local interest in the finds, is what one would like to see. Why should a Donegal man have to go all the way to Dublin to see a model of the hut discovered in, perhaps, the next parish to his own?

Among historic notices I omitted one of the most interesting. Good Bishop Bedell, so beloved, Protestant though he was, by the Catholic Irish, that they gave him a grand funeral and wrote a panegyric on him, was, for some time during the troubles of 1641, placed for protection in the crannog of Lough Oughter, in Cavan. He was kept there by his Catholic friends, to be out of harm's way. But crannoges were also used as prisons. Among the finds are fetters and handcuffs, both of bronze and iron. Some are said to show traces of gilding; perhaps they were made of the fine "golden bronze," so lustrous that where it has been rubbed it looks exactly as if it had been gilded.

CHRONICLES OF SCOTTISH COUNTIES.

PERTH AND CLACKMANNAN.

ACCORDING to tradition, the Tower of Clackmannan was a favourite residence of Robert Bruce; and, one day, the hero, issuing forth on some expedition, found that he had left his glove behind him on

a stone, or, in the Gaelic tongue of his native Galloway, he had left his "mannan" upon the "clach." Hence tower and town forthwith became known as Clackmannan. More serious historians trace the name to the little independent principality, called by the Welsh Mannan Gododin, embracing the levels about the Firth of Forth, and sandwiched in between the Lothians and Strathclyde. At all events, some difference in customs and jurisdiction kept Clackmannan apart from the ancient divisions that are bound up together in the County of Perth. And thus Clackmannan remains with the distinction of being the smallest county in Scotland—its forty-six square miles contrasting vividly with the four thousand odd contained in Inverness, for instance—and, with a mere village for a chief town, it has nothing to bring to notice except the pleasant scenery along the banks of Devon—

Clear, winding Devon,
With green spreading bushes, and flowers blooming
fair!

But Perth is characteristically Scotch. Subtract Perth from the sum of Scotland, and the remainder would be wanting in much that gives the land its especial flavour and character. And Perth includes some of the most important provinces of old Pictland. Monteith, with Strathearn, and Athole, and Gowrie, formed two out of the seven reputed provinces of that misty and doubtful kingdom. And the district of Perth itself, the Stormont, Breadalbane, Rannock, Balquhidar, have had their own powerful chiefs and belted Earls.

The green slopes of the Ochills cut off Perth from its sister county of Fife, and the little river Devon, rising among the southern spurs of these hills, forms a pleasant, romantic valley, with the Hill of Alva at its opening, and a tall pinnacle, called Craigeith, noted for its falcons, in the days when no nobleman's outfit was complete without a hawk upon his fist. The falcons of Craigeith were specially reserved for the use of the King. Higher up the valley are the noble ruins of Castle Campbell, the early seat of the chiefs of that wide-spreading name. Something grave and melancholy about the chiefs of the Campbells, and the isolation and reserve of their policy among their Highland neighbours, seemed to have impressed the popular imagination, which found expression in the description of the Castle. It was the Castle of Gloom with the Vale of

Care on the one side, and the Stream of Sorrow on the other, and it looked down upon the Village of Dolour. The Castle was pillaged and burnt by Montrose, the great enemy of the Lords of Argyle, during his brilliant career of victory, so sadly ended, in the Civil Wars.

The valley of the Devon now becomes wild and romantic with the Cauldron Linn, a series of falls into a grand and gloomy rocky basin, about which the report comes that it has suffered grievous damage in the floods of 1886. If the Devil's Mill has ceased to grind, and the Rumbling Brig rumbles no more, there will be sorrow in the Vale of Devon. But the Crook will be left, anyhow—the famous Crook of Devon, surrounding the Barony of Tulliebole, whose lord had privilege of pit and gallows; a privilege exercised as recently as the early part of the eighteenth century.

Not far from the source of the Devon is the dreary Sherriffmuir rising all round to a desolate table-land, at the highest point of which is the Carlin Stone, where the Highlanders sharpened their swords before the battle. This was the stoutest fight of all during the rising of 1715, for the Earl of Mar had some of the best of the clansmen with him—the Macdonalds, the Macleans, the Camerons, the Stewarts, the Gordons, and some three hundred of the Breadalbane Highlanders, although of these last the chief hung back and chattered about terms. The Duke of Argyle, as the ballad has it, led on his files from Stirling, and marched up the hill to attack the Highlanders, who occupied the summit. As usual, the raw Hanoverian cavalry behaved badly. Perhaps it was not in man or horse to withstand the fierce rush of the mountaineers. Sundry regiments of infantry stood their ground, and, indeed, dispersed the Highlanders opposed to them, so that the extraordinary sight was witnessed of a headlong flight, on either side, from the field of battle. Whether victor or vanquished, the Earl of Mar retired northwards, and thus the practical result of the fight was to the advantage of the established Government.

The dragoons, in their flight towards Stirling, thundered over the bridge of Dunblane, and created a panic in that quiet old town. There is something unusually ecclesiastical, almost episcopal, about the appearance of Dunblane. The hoary old Minster holds its ground, and more kindly memories of its former Bishops are sug-

gested by the still-existing library which was founded by the last Bishop of the see, while the Bishop's Walk is a reminiscence of his favourite footpath. The window tracery of the Cathedral excited Mr. Ruskin's admiration, and he has paid an especial compliment to the architect, who broke through the conventional mouldings of his age, and sought inspiration direct from Nature.

An old story records the recompense of this faithful servant of his art. When the Abbey church of Dunblane was finished, and the architect or master mason took his wages and departed, certain evil-disposed caterans determined to waylay him. For such a work as this grand building no doubt he had received a noble recompense, and it would be a patriotic and profitable undertaking to prevent the money from being carried out of the country. The poor architect was attacked on his way, and, after making a sturdy resistance, was slain. Great was the disappointment of the assassins, when on searching the body it was found that threepence halfpenny was all the poor man possessed; in fact, he was not worth a groat after all his toil.

We are now upon the regular tourist track to the Trosachs. As we pass the village of Doune—a village once noted for its gun or rather pistol smiths, who supplied their Highland neighbours with those highly ornamented pistols which, with the dirk and sporran, were the indispensable equipments of the full-dressed mountaineer—the Castle of Doune, solid, square, and not much dilapidated, rises conspicuously over the village. The Castle, as it now stands, was built by the Regent Murdac, Duke of Albany, who governed Scotland during the captivity of his cousin, James the First. The Duke was ill-advised enough to bargain with the English for the release of the King, one of whose first acts was to bring about the execution of Murdac and his two sons on the heading hill of Stirling, and within sight of his own towers of Doune. The Castle was then forfeited to the Crown, and afterwards granted to another branch of Stewarts, afterwards Earls of Moray. In their hands the Castle was useful for bridling the Highlanders, standing as it did in the path of one of their favourite forays; and thus, in "The Lady of the Lake," Roderic's scout reports:

At Doune, o'er many a spear and glaive,
Two barons proud their banners wave.
I saw the Moray's silver star,
And marked the sable pale of Mar.

It is not far now to Callander, the Bridge of Turk, Loch Katrine, and all those scenes which Walter Scott has made familiar. But the regular tourist track exhausts much of the beauties of the district. Except for the favoured glens, the country is wild, dreary, and almost without inhabitants. The district is the ancient Earldom of Menteith, with the lake of Menteith, a somewhat gloomy water, lying to the southwards—a lake with sundry islets, that show traces of primeval settlements as well as of the more modern Priory, where Queen Mary found refuge when five years of age, and whence she was taken over the hills to Dumbarton, and then away to the care of the Guises in fair France. On one of the smaller islands the Earls of Menteith had their mansion, on the site probably of some earlier lake settlement.

We are now fairly in the country of the Macgregors, with Rob Roy as their favourite hero, who may form a type of the scattered and broken clans who occupied the eastern slopes of the Grampians, and the mountain chains that branch off in the same direction from that great backbone of hills. With these the former tribal organisation had been broken and demolished; and, while some of them owned as chiefs the Norman barons whom the earlier Scottish Kings had invited and encouraged to settle in their dominions, others retained a wild independence among the fastnesses of the hills inaccessible to the Norman cavalry. But the different races exercised upon each other a mutual influence; sometimes the Norman seigneur became almost indistinguishable from the Highland chief, while the Gaelic chief, among the influences of the superficial Norman culture, learned to look upon his brothers in arms as vassals, and upon his kinsmen, his children, so to speak, as so many tenants under his lordship. And thus, wherever we trace the borders of the Perthshire Highlands, we shall find the more accessible glens occupied by the castles and towers of the Lindsays, the Ogilvies, the Ruthvens, the Lyons, the Maules, and the Gordons, all with their following of Highlanders as well as their Lowland vassals. The wilder Gaels were caterans, robbers, cattle stealers, for whom waited the dungeon, the pit, and the gallows.

High in the land of the caterans lies Loch Erne, from which flows the river of the same name down the romantic Strathearn. In this valley we have another highway to the Highlands, of which the key is Crieff,

a hill town on a fair sunny slope, formerly the seat of the Earl Palatine, and the centre of the Seneschal's jurisdiction. The gallows of Crieff occupied a conspicuous position as a warning to Highland caterans who might come that way. Here is the ancient home of the Drummonds, titular Dukes of Perth—house and lands all forfeited in the '45, but restored some forty years later on to one of the race. Within the glen is Ochtertyre :

By Ochtertyre grows the aik.

And here once flourished a branch of the great house of Lindsay ; but later on the estate came to the Murrays, as when poet Burns was hospitably entertained at the mansion there. And here he met "the well-known toast," Miss Euphemia Murray of Lintross,

The blithest lass
That ever trod the dewy green,

a lass who was also known as the Flower of Strathmore, and who inspired the song,

Blithe, blithe and merry was she,
Blithe was she, but and ben ;
Blithe by the banks of Ern,
But blither in Glenturit Glen.

Below Crieff, and nearly opposite Dupplin, the rivulet May joins the Erne, where stands Invermay, and about two miles up the May is Forteviot, which, according to tradition, was once the capital of the Pictish kingdom. Dupplin itself was the site of a fierce battle between the disinherited Barons whom the late King, Robert Bruce, had driven from the kingdom, or had compelled to elect under which King they would serve ; between these Barons—with Edward Balliol at their head—and the Regent of the Kingdom, the Earl of Mar. The Barons had brought with them five hundred horse and three thousand foot, raised among the English knights and men-at-arms, and their discipline and valour won the day.

To return to the Highlands of Perth, and the sources of the rivers that divide the county into so many separate districts, we find right among the spurs of the Grampians, Loch Dochart, from which through a wild glen a stream flows into Loch Tay, a long and winding lake, the slopes and pastures about which formed the chief part of the ancient district and Earldom of Breadalbane. At the foot of the loch lies Kenmore, and close by is the noble residence of Taymouth.

The homely dignity of the earlier Lords of Breadalbane may be recalled in the story of the Earl who married Lady Mary Rich—

an heiress with ten thousand pounds to her fortune—and who, after the wedding, took home his wife from London. Two shaggy ponies constituted the whole cavalcade, the Earl upon one, while his wife rode behind upon a pillion ; the other pony was loaded with the lady's dower—ten thousand pounds in gold pieces ; two Highland gillies, as rough and shaggy as the ponies, were the only attendants.

Lower down the river are the famous braes and falls of Aberfeldy, described by Burns :

The braes ascend like lofty wa's,
The foaming stream deep roaring fa's,
O'erhung wi' fragrant spreading shaws,
The birks of Aberfeldy !

Below Aberfeldy, by the junction of the Highland Railway, the Tay is joined by a powerful stream, contributed by many waters rising and flowing from the rocks about Rannoch and Athole ; and among these recesses of the hills lies the Pass of Killiecrankie, the scene of the battle when "bonnie Dundee" met his death at the moment of victory.

Killiecrankie is an impressive mountain gorge where the river Garry, foaming downwards, seems to occupy the whole floor of the glen, while on either side rise rude precipitous rocks and wild shaggy woods. Beyond, the mountains seem to close in all round in their loneliness and gloom. Some way above the Pass, indeed, the valley expands, and there stands the Castle of Blair, with its magnificent surroundings.

Blair, at the time of the battle, was holding out for King James, manned by the gallant men of Athole—for in those days there were men in Athole—in spite of the orders of their feudal superior, the Marquis of Athole, who had then declared for King William. To put the Marquis in possession of his Castle and punish the men of Athole for their disobedience, the Orange General, Mackay, marched up the vale through Perth and Dunkeld—while Dundee, well informed of his enemies' movements, marched rapidly over the hills with some two thousand Highlanders, and posted his force at the northern extremity of the Pass of Killiecrankie.

A less skillful commander than Dundee would have lined the Pass with his mountaineers, and thus sealed it to the enemy, and Mackay would have been glad, no doubt, of the opportunity of abandoning a rash enterprise, dictated rather by personal than military considerations.

But the Pass was left entirely free, and the Southern army filed through unmolested, but oppressed by the awe and fear inspired by their gloomy surroundings. As fast as the redcoats cleared the head of the glen they were drawn up into one long line three deep, while they were watched by Dundee and his Highland chiefs from the other side of the narrow valley. There, the clansmen were drawn up under their hereditary leaders, and at the sight of the Royal army they raised a shout which, echoing from the heights, gave the impression that the hills were lined with fierce mountaineers. The enemy shouted in reply, but their voices seemed thin and weak in contrast with the slogan of the Highlanders.

It was mid-day before Mackay's troops had cleared the glen, and evening had come before Dundee had completed his preparations for the attack. With something of the old chivalrous spirit he despatched an orderly to notify to Mackay that he was ready to begin, and then he let loose the impatient clansmen, who had stripped themselves for the fight, while, with a handful of horsemen, he made a desperate rush for the enemy's guns. The Highland rush, as usual, proved irresistible, although three well-directed volleys from the regulars laid low nearly a third of their number. But once at close quarters, the cramped and pipe-clayed soldier—with his clumsy firelock and bayonet, which he could only handle at the word of command—had little chance against the wiry, athletic clansmen, who wielded the trenchant claymore with the vigour of those bred to war from their youth. The thin red line was broken and the battle lost in a few moments—only a couple of regiments, which, from the looseness of the Highland army, had escaped attack, still retained their formation. It was in rallying his men to attack these last, and complete the victory, that Dundee received his death wound, being shot beneath the armpit as he waved his sword for the advance; shot with a silver button, according to Lowland tradition, which had it that the Evil One had charmed him against the ordinary dangers of battle.

The bauld Pitcur fell in a furr
An' Clavers got a clankie O,
Or I had fed an Athole gland
On the braes o' Killiecrankie O.

Below Killiecrankie the river vale opens into the district of Stormont, with Dunkeld as the chief town, lying at the entrance to this great pass to the Highlands surrounded

by woods, precipices, rocks, and waterfalls, and all the charm of Highland scenery. The old Cathedral is now the parish kirk, and, with the house and grounds of the Duke of Athole close adjoining, was successfully held by the Cameronian Regiment against a desperate attack by a superior force of clansmen soon after Killiecrankie, a feat of arms that somewhat allayed the panic caused by that notable victory.

Over the hills to the left lies Blairgowrie, and nearer at hand Cupar Angus, on the Isla River, close to which is Meigle, where tradition has it that Queen Vanora was buried, in whom we may recognise the Guinevere of Arthur's story. Here, too, was the seat of the old Bishops of Dunkeld, which may help to show that some religious settlement existed from early times in this secluded spot. But we have passed Birnam Wood, on the right bank of the Tay, without recognition, for, as Mr. Pennant aptly remarks in his "Tour in Scotland," it seems never to have recovered its march to Dunsinane. Dunsinane Hill lies right across the valley, an outlying summit of the Sidlaw Hills, over a thousand feet high, and verdant to the summit, with a flat top, and remains of great earthworks—without doubt, the veritable Castle of Macbeth.

To view the town of Perth aright it should be approached from Strathearn on the south, where the lovely fertile plain, with the silvery folds of the river, and the roofs and towers of old Perth, its waterways, and noble bridge, excite a feeling of enthusiasm in every son of Saint Johnston. Some such an enthusiasm felt the Roman legionaries, who, according to tradition, hailed the scene as equalling the sight of Rome and the Tiber, upon which says Walter Scott:

Behold the Tiber! the vain Roman cried,
Viewing the ample Tay from Baiglies side,
But where the Scot that would the vaunt repay,
And hail the puny Tiber for the Tay?

But the new and handsome town of Perth has little to show in the way of antiquities that might recall the old Scottish story, or its condition as the former capital of the kingdom. The old church of St. John still remains, with the tomb of King James the First.

King James the First, of everlasting name,
Kill'd by that mischant traitour, Robert Graham,
Intending of his crown for to have rob'd him,
With twenty-eight wounds in the breast he stob'd him.

The old Blackfriars monastery is gone, where the tragic deed was perpe-

trated; gone, too, is Gowrie House, the scene of the so-called Gowrie conspiracy. The old bridge is gone, replaced by Smeaton's handsome structure; and thus, if one set to work on the lines laid down by honest Drummond of Hawthornden, to describe "the ancient town of Perth setting down her situation, founders, her huge colosse or bridge, walls, fousies, aqueducts, fortifications, temples, monasteries, and many other singularities," the matter would be of antiquarian interest only.

The choice of Perth as the seat of royalty, at all events during the winter months, was probably due to its being one of the sunniest and warmest places in the King's dominions, with abundance of pasturage and forage, including bannocks and brose for all the King's horses and all the King's men. But it was a dangerous position, within striking distance from those turbulent Highlands; and, if all the passes were held by the King's own nobles, yet who was to guard the guardians?—and these last proved often the most dangerous enemies of the monarchy. A descendant of one of these great feudal families, the Earl of Crawford and Balcarres, in his lives of the Lindsays, published less than thirty years ago, speaks doubtfully of King James's assassination. One is not quite sure whether his verdict would not have been, "served him right," for the King had given unjust judgements from his Royal seat, and had interfered with the rights of noble landowners.

It is quite evident that most of those about the Royal person were in the secret of the conspiracy. On that February day, A. D. 1437, while the King had been feasting and making merry, every preparation had been made for his undoing: bolts, bars, and locks had been removed from every door in the King's apartments, and those whose duty it was to guard him had taken care to be out of the way. Everyone knows the story of Catherine Douglas, who thrust her arm through the staples of the great door to hold it against the rush of armed men: and the fate of the King, who had crept into the common sewer of the building, and was there hacked to death with sword and dagger, gives a vivid impression of the rudeness and ferocity of the time, and the miserable surroundings of the outward pomp and show of Royalty. We wonder less at the savage tortures inflicted upon the assassins by the widowed Queen, that Joan of Somerset who formerly in

the gardens of Windsor Castle had inspired her Royal lover with his first poetic impulse.

The Inches of Perth still remain; the North and South Inch, as the public gardens and playground of the inhabitants. Tradition says that these were acquired by the town from the Earl of Kinnoul in exchange for a vault in the old Church of St. John, a transaction giving rise to the ancient joke that the townsmen had made a bad bargain in giving six feet of ground for two inches. But the bargain on the Earl's part was not so extravagant as it seems, for the Scotch have always attached great importance to kirk burial—and when the kirk sessions began to lay down regulations against the practice of breaking up the kirk floor for new interments, large sums were often given for a relaxation of the rule.

The North Inch is particularly memorable as the scene of the quasi-judicial combat between thirty champions on either side of the clans Chattan and Kay, as Walter Scott relates in his "Fair Maid of Perth." Of Henry of the Wynd, the bandy-legged smith who had been engaged as substitute on one side or the other, and his reluctance to slay more than one man for the half-crown that had been promised him, the accounts are only traditional; and, indeed, the whole story is not supported by any contemporary evidence, and it would be difficult to assign any precise date to the occurrence.

The mention of the valiant smith and harness-maker recalls the ancient fame of the artisans of Perth. When coats of mail and horse armour went out of fashion, Perth took to leather-work, to tanning and glove-making. She was noted for linen in the eighteenth century, and seems to have taken to dyeing naturally from some quality in the waters of Strath-Tay. And thus, whenever a new quarter springs up in the London suburbs, almost before the butcher and baker have established themselves, you will see the blue and white ensign of the Perth dyers.

Like most industrial communities in Scotland, Perth was one of the most ardent in dinging down the emblems of the old faith. Indeed, the Reformation—the practical part of it, anyhow—is said to have begun in Perth; and in that same old church of Saint John's, where, on the eleventh of May, A. D. 1559, John Knox preached a stirring sermon against the devices of superstition. The church was

at that time decorated with all the emblems and ornaments of the Romish ritual, and still served by its priests. Thus, soon after the sermon, a priest appeared to conclude the office before the altar, rich in its gilded tabernacle work and carved images, when an urchin, incited, perhaps, by those who ought to have known better, threw a stone at the officiating priest, who most righteously boxed his ears. Upon that a brawl arose, the townsmen attacked and defaced the altars, images, and every beautiful thing about the place. Then came the turn of the friaries, which were speedily gutted or altogether demolished.

The burghers of Perth might have suffered military execution for their exploit, for Mary of Guise was still Regent of the kingdom, and was much incensed at this sacrilegious zeal; but they were well supported by the great lords, and escaped any molestation. It was the policy of the townspeople to choose some great noble as their protector, and the Earls of Gowrie, who had a fine mansion in the town, with gardens sloping down to the River Tay, seem to have been Provosts of the town almost of hereditary right. The Ruthvens were not unacquainted with conspiracy—they shared in the murder of Rizzio, and in the raid of Ruthven, for which the head of the family was executed and attainted. But the young Earl had been restored to title and estates, and his brother Alexander stood high in the estimation of the King and, as scandal whispered, still higher in the favour of the Queen.

Hence, when the report ran through the town that their Provost and his brother had been murdered, and were weltering in their blood on their own hearth, the tocsin rang out, and there was a general cry, among all the townfolk, to arms. But when the pale and trembling assassins, whom they surrounded, were discovered to be the King himself and his personal attendants who shouted eagerly, "Treason, treason, murder, conspiracy," the matter assumed a different aspect. But nobody knew then, and nobody knows to this day, what were the real facts of the case.

Few at the time believed in the King's rigmale account of the affair. The probability is that the two young men were sacrificed to the King's unreasoning cowardice. He was continually bellowing treason, and fancying himself attacked—and there was little more than fancy in the Gowrie conspiracy. But, to soothe the irritation of the men of the town, the

King offered, himself, to become Provost of Perth, and was sworn in with much ceremony.

What will you say if this shall come to hand,
Perth's Provost London's Maior shall command?

Thus it came to hand soon after, when the Provost of Perth became King of England.

The above rhymes are gathered from the "Muses Threnodie" of 1638, which gives us a quaint picture of the burgher of that date, a citizen much given to pastimes, as "golf, archerie, curling, and joviall companie," with his comfortable house, his curiosities and his trophies about his snugery:

His hats, his hoods, his bells, his bones,
His allay bowles and curling stones.

A picture not much out of date even at the present time, and which might be matched in many a quiet Scottish town, although not now, perhaps, in busy Perth.

ALL ON ONE SIDE.

A STORY IN FIVE CHAPTERS.

CHAPTER III.

THE solemn public betrothal of Hermann Holzinger and Hedwig Thorbecke took place in due course, and congratulations came in from every side, for both the schoolmaster and the forester were men of mark in Battingen. Even Herr Dr. Sartorius sent his good wishes, with a splendid bouquet to the goddaughter of his old friend.

The wedding could not be till after Christmas, but Hermann was so happy that he was content to wait.

When he was all alone among the aromatic pines, he used to look at the broad gold ring on his right hand until tears of joy came into his honest eyes. He was an undemonstrative man, so he was always ashamed of himself when this mist of happiness blotted out the green trees and the blue sky—everything but the shimmer of that ring, which was the sign and pledge of his bliss. He could not have spoken, even to Hedwig, of these bursts of emotion.

She, too, wore a broad gold ring, which she turned round and round between her fingers, while her small pupils stumbled heavily over the subtle distinctions between "amo" and "amor."

Herr Dr. Sartorius had been a frequent visitor at the Pastor's since his return. He generally came in the afternoon, Hedwig's

scholars had grown quite familiar with him. He patted their fat, round heads so kindly, had such comical jokes for them, and such unfailling supplies of groschen, that he had won all their hearts.

"I wonder if the man with the pennies will be outside to-day," one little man would speculate to his neighbour as the school clock pointed to four.

"I expect he will," the other would answer, "because he wasn't there yesterday. Let us ask Fräulein Hedwig what she thinks."

Perhaps it was because the children so often asked her this question that Hedwig's eyes always turned to the bench outside her godfather's door as she came out of school, and could it have only been sympathy with the children's disappointment that made her feel so dull if the bench were empty, or if the Herr Pastor sat there alone? She did not cross-examine herself on this matter, nor did she analyse the peculiar thrill that rushed round her heart on the days when she was not disappointed.

"Fräulein Hedwig," said Sartorius on one of these occasions, "Herr Menzel tells me your holidays are coming; I have been trying to persuade him to come over to Horst, and bring you to spend a day there. Will you help me? I find him either indolent or obdurate, and I have set my heart on the pleasure I had planned."

He had risen to meet her. He stood beside her as he spoke, looking down on her.

Hedwig felt a hot flush spread over her face, and a sudden shyness took possession of her so that she could not speak.

His eyes were very near hers. What beautiful, tranquil eyes they were! She longed to see down into their inmost depths; for the moment she forgot every thing else in the world.

"Would you care to come?" he asked.

"To come where?" she repeated absently, "to come to Horst? Oh, very much!"

The blush had toned down, and her words sounded anything but eager. There was a peculiar expression on Sartorius's face as he laid his hand on her wrist, and said:

"Come, then, let us persuade the Herr godfather."

Across Hedwig's mind flashed a sudden remembrance of a day not many weeks since, when she and Hermann had stood hand in hand before the white-haired Pastor for his blessing. It was an incomprehen-

sible comparison. Perhaps it occurred to her godfather too, for he gently parted them, and drew them to sit beside him one on either side.

The invitation was accepted after all, and on the first day of Hedwig's holidays Sartorius's carriage came clattering over the bridge and up the long stony street, then in and out among the tall slated houses, till it reached the passage leading to the Martinplatz. It had come to fetch the Pastor, his wife, and Hedwig to Horst. The old people took the distinction very quietly, and Hedwig tried to look composed as she took her place with her back to the horses, but her cheeks were all aglow, and her lips trembled oddly.

"It is very polite of Herr Doctor," said Frau Menzel, "very polite, Menzel; it is much more convenient than going on foot through the heat."

"Besides," said her husband, "we are now sure that we shall arrive neither too soon nor too late, but just when we are expected."

"It is a beautiful house, Hedwig," went on the old lady; "I have never seen anything finer, except the Prince's Schloss, at Detmold; and then naturally one expects a Prince's residence to be fine. As to gardens, Horst surpasses everything I can imagine. It is a pity he is not married. The table-linen and plate are splendid—most splendid. The housekeeper has shown me all. I went three years ago, while you were away at school at Cologne. I will ask her to show you everything too. It is a thousand pities that the Herr Doctor has never brought home a wife."

"It is," rejoined her husband, "a thousand, thousand pities, eh, Hedwig?"

Hedwig said nothing, in point of fact she did not hear; she was trying to imagine how they would spend the day; if Sartorius would talk to her godfather all the time; and if she and her godmother would wander among pickle-barrels in the store-rooms, and turn over piles of linen in the presses under the escort of an old woman with a bunch of keys.

Sartorius stood at the door to receive his guests. He looked extremely handsome, and had evidently dressed himself with care.

"Welcome to Horst!" he said, as he helped them out of the carriage.

Hedwig's hand was in his as he spoke, and his look met hers. It might have been unintentional, yet both words and look gave her a wonderful thrill as if they were

especially meant for her. She barely noticed that the house was square and massive, with many windows and balconies. She saw a general effect of sunshine and bright flowers, of broad lawns and pleasant trees, and, of course, she knew she was at Horst with her godfather and god-mother; otherwise she would have found it easy to believe that a strong arm had carried her away to a land of joy where she was a stranger, but which she would know better by-and-by.

Meanwhile their host had led them through the house, and out on to a terrace on the west side, where luncheon was laid in the shade of a canopy of Virginian creepers. From the terrace the hill sank sharply down to the river below, and from it they could look far along the valley and among the hills to an immeasurable blue distance. Beyond the river lay Battingen, its spire curving with patient diffidence against the cloudless sky.

"Look, Hedwig," said her godfather; "this is a view which is quite unequalled in the whole valley of the Ruhr."

The assertion was no exaggeration, the windings of the placid stream carried the spectator's eye along broad, shining meadows, and among red-roofed homesteads nestling amid trees. The many curving lines of the wooded hills wandered away in a labyrinth of soft beauty, and the summer haze hung over it all, mellowing the colours to wonderful tenderness.

"Ah, Herr Doctor!" exclaimed Hedwig, "what a delicious thing to come here day after day, and look at the broad manifold landscape, and know that, whatever changes come about, it will always be the same!"

"Yes, it is very delicious," he replied. "I am really very much attached to this outlook. Sometimes, when I have been in far-off lands, the thought of it has come back suddenly to me; how it lay stretched out before the spot we are standing on, and that the terrace was empty, and the windows were all closed."

"A little attack of home-sickness, I should say," suggested the Pastor.

"I scarcely think so," replied the other; "only I know too little of home-sickness to be a judge of its symptoms. People like me, who are easy to transplant, don't suffer from such a complaint."

"You must not slander yourself," said Frau Menzel gravely. "You would not really like us to believe that you are incapable of being home-sick?"

Sartorius laughed.

"All things are possible," he said. "However, at present I do not in the least know what home-sickness feels like."

"It would be quite another matter," smiled back the old lady, "if you were not a bachelor; wouldn't it, Hedwig?"

"We are getting sentimental too early in the day," said Sartorius. "Let us have luncheon now, and keep sentiment for the twilight or the starlight."

Hedwig quite forgot how, on the way from Battingen, she had wondered if Dr. Sartorius would talk to her at all. As they sat at table he seemed to talk to her only; or, at least, to her chiefly. Her godfather did not seem to be in a talkative mood, and she fancied he looked very grave once or twice. Suddenly he said:

"I am going to take the liberty of proposing the health of some one who is not here. Let us drink long life and prosperity to Hermann Holzinger, Hedwig's betrothed."

They raised their glasses and drank. Hedwig felt her cheeks glow.

"And I," said Sartorius, "should like to drink a toast which we always drank in the student days. I don't know why it recurs to me now.—'To the one we love best.' You, Fräulein Hedwig, need not take your glass from your lips; and you, Herr Pastor, will just nod across the table, while I——" He smiled at Hedwig as he spoke.

"You, I suppose," said the Pastor, "drink to an ideal or a conjecture."

"Even so," returned Max; "it sounds odd to you, doesn't it, Fräulein? You can scarcely realise such a state of mind."

Hedwig's blush deepened considerably.

"I think I can," she replied, scarcely knowing what she was saying. "I mean—it may be quite possible to hesitate."

"Only I don't even hesitate," he replied, still laughing. "You need not make excuses for me; I am afraid I am incorrigible. I gave my heart away a long time ago. I will introduce you to my telescope before you go away. She does not allow of any rival in my affections. You will understand more about me when you have looked at the stars from my observatory."

"Looked at the stars!" ejaculated Frau Menzel. "The stars! My dear Herr Doctor, that will keep us here dreadfully late."

However, despite Frau Menzel's protest, it took so much of the afternoon to wander all over the garden; and they lingered so long on the terrace counting the far-off villages and naming the hills; and the old

lady herself was so fascinated by the poultry-yard and the bees; that twilight came and brought the stars before anyone knew how late it was getting.

"Now, my dear Frau Pastorin," said Max coaxingly, "you have seen all my domain except my observatory. I am so proud of my great telescope; you really must come and have a look at it."

He looked at Hedwig as he spoke. She felt as if there must be some understanding between herself and him.

"You will gratify my vanity, Fräulein Hedwig, I'm sure," he went on. "You will come and assure me you have never seen such a wonderful instrument before."

"I will come with pleasure," replied Hedwig. "I have never seen a large telescope in my life."

"I will stay here, I think," said the old lady, settling herself in an armchair. "I daresay you will not be long."

"This reminds me, Max," said the Pastor, "of the night you showed me your first telescope; it was the year you got into the sixth form."

But Sartorius did not seem inclined for retrospect just then. He was busy wrapping a shawl round Hedwig, for the dew was falling, and the observatory was on the brow of the hill.

"I know absolutely nothing about the stars," said Hedwig, as they went out, "except that they shine. I think I could find the Great Bear, and sometimes I can recognise Jupiter, though I am not very clear about him."

"You might easily increase your stock of knowledge then," said Sartorius. He was walking beside her, and as he spoke he took her hand and laid it on his arm. "Not that astronomy is quickly learnt, but that it is a pity you should be in total ignorance of so much that is beautiful."

"It is," assented Hedwig. She was feeling so unlike her every-day self, that she wasn't quite sure whether or not she had always had an insatiable craving for skill in star-lore.

"You would appreciate it so thoroughly," Sartorius went on. "I wish you would let me give you some lessons."

"You, Herr Doctor! give me some lessons?"

"Yes, some lessons in astronomy, just the outlines, you know. Would you like to try?"

"Would you really take the trouble to teach me?" she said. Involuntarily she drew nearer to him.

"It is settled, then," he said; she felt him press her arm to his side, and that he bent towards her. There was something inexpressibly tender in the action. Hedwig forgot all about the stars; she had forgotten everything. It seemed as if her present, actual self was unfettered by any past and irresponsible to any future; as if something had arisen within her which was independent of all the ties her life had hitherto recognised. She did her best in the observatory to listen to Sartorius' explanations of his instruments and their uses. It all sounded marvellously hard, but it did not weary her. She felt almost angry with her godfather when he said, "Come, Hedwig, we must gird up our loins to get back to Battingen, it is already late."

"One minute more," pleaded Sartorius, "we have not yet had a peep at the moon. We must turn the telescope this way. She is young at present, and very low down in the sky. Now, Fräulein Hedwig."

Hedwig looked obediently. "Ach Himmel!" she exclaimed, drawing back hastily, "I forgot I had not yet seen the new moon."

"Well," questioned Sartorius, "and does the new moon burn?"

"No," replied Hedwig, naïvely, "but I am superstitious about my first look at the new moon."

"But you don't mean that superstition mentions telescopes?"

"Hedwig," said her godfather gravely, "I am astonished at you."

"I am astonished at myself," replied the girl simply, "but I cannot help always feeling I shall have ill-luck if I do not see the new moon for the first time in the open air."

"How truly absurd of you!" laughed Sartorius.

"I know it is," said Hedwig meekly, "still, I wish I had not looked through the telescope that last time."

"So do I," returned Sartorius. "Let us hope it bodes no ill for our astronomy lessons."

That night when, instead of undressing and getting into bed, Hedwig stood by her window and looked at the stars, she did not in the least try to recall any of the explanations she had been listening to. No thought of azimuth or right ascension crossed her mind, but she walked again in imagination along the garden-paths, while her hand trembled on the arm of Doctor Max Sartorius.

THE STORY OF OUR LIVES FROM YEAR TO YEAR

ALL THE YEAR ROUND

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PRICE TWOPENCE.

A DATELESS BARGAIN.

By C. L. PIRKIS,
Author of "Lady Lovelace," etc.

CHAPTER LI.

It was just about the time that Uncle Archie and Joyce, looking into each other's blank faces, confessed themselves to be at their wits' end, that Frank received his first message from Ned.

Frank might have confessed himself in much the same predicament as Uncle Archie, for he had been putting to himself one or two uncomfortable questions, to which his wits were incapable of supplying adequate answers. Such for instance as, "Supposing mischance of some sort has overtaken Ned, and he is dead, without revealing my hiding-place, how on earth am I to become aware of the fact? How long, in common reason, may it be expected of me to remain here waiting for some sign of his existence?"

It was easy enough to recall Ned's vehement promise that he would provide effectually for such an emergency; it was a more difficult task to feel the matter set at rest by it. Even Ned's hurried line only succeeded for a time in allaying apprehension. The note was brought by the little fishing-boat, which, in fair weather, coasted between the islands, bringing from Thorshavn cheeses and tinned meats in return for the sheep's-wool stockings knitted by old Christian's daughters.

Frank, with eager fingers, tore open the envelope. Perhaps it might contain a line from Joyce, he thought. A chill of disappointment fell upon him when he saw only the few following lines from Ned:

"Am hard pressed, dogged, and watched night and day—dare not attempt flight. Give me time."

Second thoughts, however, told him it was better than no message at all, and he tried to get his utmost of hope out of the few brief words.

It may be conjectured, nevertheless, that he would have read the lines with other eyes could he have known how Ned had failed in his share of the compact; how Joyce's terrible suspense remained unlifted; how his own brief note to her, instead of finding its way to her hand, had been held in the flame of a candle till it was burnt to ashes, and the ashes even carefully scattered to the four winds of heaven.

Of all this, however, he was necessarily ignorant, and his trust in the Irishman's sense of honour remained unshaken. It seemed to him an altogether unworthy thing to harbour a suspicion against a man who had saved his life at the risk of his own, without exacting so much as bond or promise in return.

Old Christian's eldest son, who had acted as messenger, eyed him as he read the letter.

"Your friend stays long," he said in his composite idiom.

Frank put as cheerful a look on his face as he could command; and tried to make the man understand that everything was all right, and that people could not always keep their appointments to the day and hour.

The man trailed his fowler's net along the rock, and, on the strength of the cheerful look on Frank's face, forthwith invited him to join in a fowling expedition.

"The wind was favourable—a little sport would make the time pass more swiftly," he intimated.

So Frank threw himself heartily on the man for companionship that day, and in his newly-recovered buoyancy of spirit he equalled everyone of the well-

seasoned fowler's daring exploits over crag and chasm, in the teeth of a strong gale which, blowing shorewards, swept in the sea-fowl by dozens into the net. The exercise heightened his spirits. He began to read a world of meaning in Ned's few hurried lines.

"The man was heartily sick of his slavery," he said to himself, "not a doubt he would soon make a desperate effort and gain his freedom." Then what a hey-day of gladness he and Joyce would keep together—why, the happy festival on the eve of what was to have been his wedding-day would be a funeral feast by comparison!

But this buoyancy of spirit was after all of short duration. A few days of sea-fowling, alternated with cod-fishing, saw the end of it. Back to the solitude of the lighthouse tower, and the weary gazing through the telescope, Frank betook himself once more.

"It's more than flesh and blood can bear," he would groan sometimes, feeling the young eager life within him well-nigh annihilated by the silence, the immensity of outside creation; of the vast rolling ocean, the empty sky, the bare, brown, awful rocks.

A solitude can be a prison or a paradise, according to the point of view from which it is regarded. To Ned, hunted, harassed with limited ambitions, keen young love for life, above all, for a life of purely physical freedom, it doubtless would have figured in the latter guise. He would have gloried in the reckless daring of rough seas and rougher winds which the life of the Faroese whale-fisher involved. He would have outdone the boldest of the fowlers in their desperate clambering adown tremendous precipices in the teeth of a driving gale. If he could have reached this haven, the chances were he would have settled down a veritable Viking among Vikings, and, in the smiles of some yellow-haired, blue-eyed maiden have learnt to forget his first ill-starred passion.

Frank's notion of a paradise necessarily included higher ideals. Judged by these the island solitude took but low rank. Quite apart from the special circumstances of his life at that period, there was in his nature but little that was congenial to solitude and inaction.

He had said to Ned, and had meant it, that if circumstances had not made him a lawyer, he would have chosen to be a sailor. That might be true, but the chances were that, if he could not have seen straight

ahead of him a prospect of stepping on board a flagship, he and salt water would speedily have parted company. Quite apart from his true, passionate love for Joyce, and his bitter disappointment at the postponement of his happiness, the very energy with which he had worked the lines of his life, rendered him intolerant of any interruption to it. A pause in his career at any moment would have been an agony to him. Silence, solitude, were for him synonyms for vacuity and extinction.

So, gloomy and despondent, he set himself to bear his banishment as best he could, drawing largely upon his stores of fortitude to keep up even the appearance of equanimity before his kindly entertainers.

Old Christian's son tried in vain to tempt him on a second fowling expedition.

Frank looked down the black chasm of shelving rocks, shook his head, and turned his back on it. In the gloomy despondency which had succeeded the transient buoyancy caused by Ned's letter, he did not dare to test the strength of his grip upon good luck. He shrank from physical danger in a way he had never in his whole life known himself to shrink before.

"Everything was against him; good luck was a thing of the past," he said to himself now, as day after day went by and there came not another word from Ned.

Once in the old happy time gone by, he had dared, as only the young and happy can dare, to trifle with and defer his happiness. Now Fate, in her irony, had turned the tables on him; had brought his cup of happiness close to his lips, only to snatch it away again.

It seemed to him that he and Joyce in this world were never to meet again.

It was scarcely to be wondered at if, in the extremity of his misery, he asked himself a few more questions—such as: "Supposing, through this enforced inaction of his, Buckingham and a few other scoundrels contrived to elude justice, might he not be held morally responsible for the fact?" Or to put it another way: "Would not the guilt of a broken implied promise be less than that involved in leaving at large acknowledged traitors and criminals?"

Then when his conscience gave a sturdy "no" to sophistry, it shifted its ground and put its questions in another form, thus: "Would it of necessity be a breach of his

implied word of honour to communicate with the police at London in some round-about fashion, putting them on the scent of the timeless League? Would Ned's chances of escape of necessity be endangered? Could not the police be made to understand that Buckingham and the O'Sheas were first to be secured, that Ned was in no sort a willing accomplice in their plots?"

But to these queries his legal knowledge, aided by his practical common-sense, gave a succession of most decisive negatives. What evidence had he to offer that would inculpate the three other criminals, and leave Donovan unimpeached? Did they not all four, so far as regarded treasonable conspiracy, stand upon the same footing? What right had he to suppose that Ned, no matter how hard pressed he might be, would turn informer, and save his life to the hazard of his comrades' lives? Did not his previous knowledge of the man point to a diametrically opposite conclusion? Much as Donovan had owned he loved his own life, he had been willing to put it in jeopardy for one to whom he was in no sense bound by ties either of kindred or friendship.

And when Frank had reached this point in his self cross-questioning he started aghast at himself, and the sorry figure he had showed beneath it. He felt forced to admit that the seamy side of his nature had indeed come uppermost, when he allowed himself to balance questions of a purely personal nature, under the guise of impersonal benevolence, against his freely volunteered promise, "I shall be simply a dead man, Ned, till you give the word."

So the dark days of the Northern winter went slowly by, at such a snail's pace indeed that Frank began to lose count of them, and would say to himself, as he got up from his straw mattress in the morning, or threw himself wearily upon it at night, "Now where are we? In the middle of January, February, or March? Great Heavens, was ever winter so interminably eked out as this?"

It was not until its very last hour was counted out, not until the fogs had begun to lessen visibly, the real breath of spring to make itself felt in the salt breeze, that another brief message came from Ned. It ran thus:

"Give me a little longer. For the love of Heaven, remember your share of the bargain."

That must have been written and despatched about the time that Uncle

Archie, wincing under Morton's suggestion that Frank was in voluntary hiding, had bidden Joyce take up the cudgels she scorned in defence of her lover.

A little later on, just when Joyce, despairing of her own strength, was taking refuge in flight from Captain Buckingham's persecution, Donovan was despatching a third letter to Frank, brief like the others, but a little more desperate, as follows:

"Hunted almost to death. Don't forget I lie at your mercy now."

After this there came another long silence, which Frank made busy with the wildest hopes, fears, conjectures, despairs. Then just about the time when Joyce, broken-hearted, was straining her ears to catch Mab's last words, "Always the sound of the sea, Joyce," Frank, on his ocean-washed rock, was reading, with dimmed eyes and bounding pulses, Donovan's final message. It was dated from Greenock, and contained only five words:

"Thank Heaven, free at last!"

Words which might aptly have been written on the Irishman's coffin-plate. Elsewhere they lacked meaning.

CHAPTER LII.

THE brief, sunless Northern summer had come to an end. The islanders had cut their rye and garnered it, dug their last crop of potatoes and stored them. The women were busy carding their wool for their winter knitting, the men were organising a cod-fishing expedition on a larger scale than usual. There had chanced to be that year a failure in the catches on their own coast, so this expedition was planned to go a little farther a-field in hopes of a better find. It took all the men from Light Island save and except only old Christian, the deaf-mute. Frank had of late again thrown himself—somewhat fitfully it must be owned—into the daily pursuits of these worthy simple-minded folk. One cannot live out one's life at agony point. An active, healthy man, under thirty years of age, must of necessity find an outlet for muscular vigour. So he had helped the men in turns to catch their fish or their fowl, or to farm their land.

As the little fleet of cod-fishing boats put off from the shore, he stood on a ledge of rock waving a hearty farewell to the men.

"Now," he said to himself, with the ring of Ned's final message still in his ears, "this is the last I shall see of these men. When they come back, not a doubt I shall be half way home."

It was a pleasant thought. It deepened the blue in the sky and the waters, turned the autumn haze into a summer's glory, put a tone of melody even into the harsh cries of the puffin and gull; in a word, set the whole fair picture of land and ocean smiling as though with a hidden joy.

Long after the boats had exchanged the waters of the Sound for the open sea he stood there, indulging in a variety of pleasant speculations. He could picture Joyce's wild intensity of joy; Mab's tender, troubled eyes, looking a greeting her lips had no power to speak; Mrs. Shenstone's possible rush of pretty speeches, to be succeeded no doubt by all sorts of ingenuous exclamations upon the sorry figure he cut in her drawing-room, with his quaintly-made garments and untrimmed hair; Uncle Archie grumbling [a cynical yet hearty welcome; and Joyce making peace all round with her bright little speeches and happy smiles.

But alas for his expectations! The boats went out and the boats came in, but there came never a sign of Ned nor message from him.

Rough weather set in. Strong gales blew persistently from the north-east; the good wives on Light Island began to speculate on the chances of a whaling expedition, which had started from a neighbouring island in the spring and had not yet returned. This, and the possible hazard the incoming mail steamer to Thorshavn might run, were the staple topic of talk among the islanders.

Frank's fears, though they lay all in another direction, were not one whit less gloomy. He naturally enough concluded that Ned, on the eve of sailing from Greenock, had, through untoward circumstances, been compelled to delay his departure. It was therefore more than likely that he was on the ocean highway now. It was highly improbable that he would be able to secure a passage in a well-built, seaworthy steamer; now what might be the fate of a small fishing-smack or trading vessel in the sea that was running then?

A whole train of gloomy possibilities suggested themselves. Back again trooped the string of uncomfortable questions he thought he had set at rest for ever by the sturdy negatives he had dealt them. The ignobleness of the whole thing seemed to stifle him. He to be waiting quietly and patiently on this barren ridge of rock, with the best days of his life slipping past, when, perhaps, if the real cir-

cumstances of the case were laid bare to him, he would see that quietness and patience savoured less of the heroic than of the despicable! The mere thought was torture to him.

Then the fog set in. Light Island became once more roofed and walled with the dense ocean mist. Old Christian began wheezing and coughing a good deal, his eldest son took to sharing the lighthouse duties with him, turn and turn about.

Frank volunteered his services. He had naturally acquired some Danish idioms during his long stay on the island; the younger Christian had picked up some of his English. Their talk consequently was fairly intelligible to each other.

"I have been with you some time now; you know me and know you can trust me," Frank said. "Occupation is the first of blessings to me. I've caught your fish for you, and caught your fowl too; let me now go shares with you in the lighthouse work."

So it came about that Frank was admitted to a third share in the dreary responsibilities of lighthouse keeping. Perhaps it would be more correct to say to a half, at any rate while the rough weather prevailed, for old Christian gratefully fell in with the younger men's suggestion that, while the fog and wind lasted, he should remain quietly indoors, mend the fishing-nets, and nurse his asthma.

With nights broken in this fashion, it might be supposed that Frank had a welcome to give to a whole night's rest whenever he had a chance of it. Not so, however. A great restlessness had fallen upon him. Anything in the shape of quiet or repose was an impossibility to him. Sleep shunned him at night; his days were passed in incessant wanderings from coast to headland, from headland to Light Tower.

He made desperate efforts at reconnoitring, through field-glass and telescope. They were all fruitless efforts. Not once, while those equinoctial gales lasted, did the fog lift sufficiently to show a patch of blue sky, much less a square mile of blue ocean. His brain began to feel sick and giddy with the perpetual repetition of the one thought.

"Where under Heaven is Ned now? Of what sort or strength is the boat that is bringing him?"

The torture of those hours would have been beyond even his tough powers of endurance, could he have known who was at that moment defying wind and wave for his sake.

SOME NARROW ESCAPES.

DURING THE FRANCO-GERMAN WAR.

WHEN war was declared between France and Germany in the early summer of 1870, I was sent by a London paper to act as special correspondent with MacMahon's corps d'armes, and, leaving town at twenty-four hours' notice, arrived at Strasburg with by no means too much time to spare. On arriving at Strasburg, I managed to be introduced, in an informal manner, to the gallant officer who commanded the army there assembled, and was not a little pleased when the Marshal recognised me, as having met me in Algeria some years before. Frenchmen, and more particularly French military men, are somewhat backward, or shy, of fraternising with new acquaintances; but when the latter show any desire to know them, and, more particularly as was the case with me, they show anything like a genuine admiration of the many soldier-like qualities which are to be found amongst those who compose their armies, they will always come more than half way to meet foreigners in the bond of good fellowship.

Having been ten or twelve years in the English army, added to the fact that I had not only seen a good deal of active service in India, but had also been witness of how the French troops fought in Algeria, served as a kind of bond between me and those whose future victories, as I then firmly believed, I had come to chronicle. Not only was I never allowed to breakfast or dine at my own expense, but, had I been able to consume a dozen or more meals every day, they would all, and more too, have been provided for me. In a word I was as thoroughly at home with my French hosts—for such they certainly made themselves—as if I had been on a campaign with an English force, and, perhaps, even more so. And after we marched from Strasburg, nothing could be more pleasant than the camp and 'all belonging to it. French officers have nothing that corresponds with our English regimental mess. In quarters the different ranks of a corps generally dine together; but on a campaign, or when marching, the three or four officers of each company join, and with an old soldier to cook and cater for them, take their meals at the same table. It was only after we got to Wissemburg, and the results of the war seemed to be more dubious than before, that stern

reality took the place of what had hitherto been a period of enjoyment.

When we reached Worth, it was evident that something very like a decisive engagement would take place, and that either the French or the German army would be badly beaten before many hours were over. I got away from the lines, and with the help of a little of that gold which is a key to most doors, managed to get up to the flat top of the tower which forms part of the village church, and there witnessed what proved to be the beginning of the end of the war, so far as the French army and nation were concerned. To me, as well as to my friends, the day proved most unfortunate. I felt so certain that MacMahon's troops would rally and eventually beat their enemy, that I delayed coming down from the tower until it was too late. By the time I got back to where I had left an old britschka with two screws of horses that I owned, the French army was in full retreat for the Vosges, the Germans were in possession of the village, and my conveyance, together with my servant who drove it, and all the clothes I had in the world, had vanished. As a matter of course, not being able to speak German, I was made a prisoner, and taken before the officer commanding the brigade that held the place. Of the treatment I received from them I had nothing whatever to complain. An officer who could speak English was sent for, and when he had read my Foreign Office passport, as well as my credentials for the paper I represented, I was at once released, on the condition of giving my parole that I would not rejoin the French army for at least seven days. I was then given a free pass, which would prevent my being made prisoner by any of the German troops, and was told I might go where I liked.

But where to go, and how to do so, was now the question. My carriage and all my kit having been looted, as I afterwards found out by the German camp followers, I had, in the way of clothes, what I stood in. Most fortunately my circular letter of credit had not shared the fate of the rest of my property. I had kept it in my breast pocket and was not a little glad that I had done so. If I could only reach Carlsruhe, I should be able to get whatever money I wanted. But how to get there was the question. It was some thirty or more English miles from Worth; there was no conveyance of any sort to be had; and even if the latter had been favourable, my whole worldly wealth

consisted, with the exception of the letter of credit, of something less than twenty francs. If I could manage to walk all the way, that very modest sum would suffice me for a very humble lodging each night, and for a moderate amount of indifferent food. I had, however, no choice. Walk I must, if I did not want to be left to starve at Worth. The journey to Carlsruhe would help to pass away the seven days, or, at any rate, a large portion of them, during which I was under parole not to rejoin the French army. To remain where I was, or to follow the French through the Vosges, was equally impossible. So I made up my mind, and started upon what promised to be, and what certainly proved, a journey that was anything but pleasant.

Whatever other drawbacks the road between Worth and Carlsruhe had, it was by no means a solitary or lonely route. It would be difficult to say whether the waggons and other conveyances going towards Germany, or those coming into France, were most numerous. The former were filled with French prisoners and wounded soldiers; the latter with fresh German troops en route for the seat of war, doctors and sisters of charity on their way to tend the sick of the German army, and every sort of war stores and supplies it is possible to imagine. There were three villages in the thirty miles of road, where I found it possible to rest at night. There was nothing in the shape of a bed-room, or even of a bed, to be had, except at prices which my very limited amount of cash rendered impossible for me. I was obliged to make the best of things, and to sleep, as well as eat, as I best could. Under such circumstances personal cleanliness was almost impossible. When I arrived, on the morning of the fourth day, at Carlsruhe, I was very far from being respectable in appearance. At Gröse's Hotel the clerk in the bureau evidently did not like to admit me, and it was only after I had shown him my passport, that he ordered a room to be got ready for me. I went at once to the bank named in my letter of credit; got what money I required; bought a suit of ready-made clothes; and after a hot bath, and using plenty of soap, began to feel as if it were possible to be clean and comfortable again; although it took two or three days before I could realise that I had got rid of the dirt and discomfort brought about by my vagabond-like pedestrian journey. On the third day after my arrival

at Carlsruhe I started for Baden, thence went over the Swiss frontier to Basle; and by that time the seven days having elapsed, I crossed the French frontier, and made my way to Laon, following, as well as I could, the direction in which public report gave out that the army under MacMahon was marching.

No one who was not a witness of what was going on in this part of France at the time of which I write, could possibly realise the immense change that had been wrought in the people since the defeat of the army at Worth. Before it took place not only the army, but all sorts and conditions of Frenchmen, looked upon the victory of their troops, and the driving out of the Germans as a mere question of time, and believed that, before many days were over, not only would the enemy be ignominiously expelled from French soil, but the French army would be marching towards Berlin. But now all this had changed. In the short period, not more than eight or nine days, that elapsed between my leaving France at Worth, and my return to it at Laon, the very nature of the people seemed to have altered, and certainly not for the better. The whole talk was about the national defeat, which they seemed to think could not be avoided after what had happened; and seemed to believe most firmly, not only that their army had not fought well, but that its chiefs had, in several instances, betrayed the forces they commanded, and had passively, if not actually, assisted the Germans to gain their victory. The army, had also changed greatly. The men of every rank, from the privates up to the Generals of Brigades, seemed taken up in discussing what their superiors did, or ordered to be done. That implicit, unquestioning obedience, which is so conspicuous in our own service, appeared to have no existence whatever amongst the French troops after their defeat at Worth. But what was, if possible, worse—worse as an augury of the future fate of the country—was the distrust which the people seemed to have of the army. Those amongst the middle classes and the peasantry, who less than a fortnight ago always showed themselves to be proud of their national troops, were now almost unanimous in declaring them to be, not only cowards, but traitors to their country; and not a few of the leading officers, MacMahon amongst the number, were said to be playing into the hands of Bismarck and

the Germans. That such accusations were not only utterly false, but were beneath contempt, goes without saying. Nor would I have referred to them in this paper, were it not to show how the French nation had, so to speak, in a great measure, prepared and trained itself for its own defeat.

At Laon I learnt that Marshal MacMahon had, with the army he commanded, made his way to Rheims, whence he intended to try and afford assistance to Bazaine, who was already surrounded at Metz. The rail from Laon towards Rheims had been cut by order of the French military authorities, so that I had no means whatever of pushing on, except by purchasing an old rattle-trap of a carriage to supply the place of the one that had been taken by the German camp followers at Worth. I was, however, fortunate enough to procure two active and fast horses, which, as will be seen presently, proved, in a great measure, the means by which I afterwards was able to effect the very narrow escape that saved my life.

Between Laon and Rheims, I passed through Chalons and Epernay, at which places I saw, for the first time, the Francs Tireurs, or free-shooters, a corps to which I must devote a few lines by way of description.

The corps was, in the most comprehensive possible meaning of the word, irregular. The men who composed it were not only irregular in every thing they did; but appeared to glory in their irregularity. They seemed to have very few officers, and the few they had were seldom, if ever, to be seen on duty with the men. The latter had evidently souls above obedience, for they did very much what they liked, and in the manner they liked. They evidently hated the regular army, and the latter returned the compliment with interest. When at Epernay I witnessed a skirmish between a battalion of regular infantry and a small party of German Uhlans, who were evidently feeling their way, and trying to find out what was the strength of the French troops there. The officer commanding the French outpost behaved with great judgement, trying, by retiring his men, to draw on the Uhlans, and find out their numbers. He had almost succeeded in enticing the enemy to advance, and had managed to hide the strength of his detachment, when all at once a body of Francs Tireurs came up, and without waiting, or even asking for orders, they began at once to blaze

away at the Germans, causing the latter to retreat. The officer commanding was very angry, and sent orders to the irregulars that they were to cease firing forthwith; but they took no notice of what was said, many of them declaring in a loud voice that the regulars were playing the game of the enemy, and did not want any of the latter to be defeated or killed. When an attempt was made to find out who was in command of the Francs Tireurs no such person could be found; and on an order being given that the commanding officer would cause an official enquiry to be made into the conduct of the irregulars, the whole corps, not less than five hundred strong, vanished and dispersed, so that they could no more be found.

A war correspondent has not only to observe and note what the troops do in the field, but he must also be careful not to miss an opportunity of sending off his letters to the paper he represents. In such a campaign as that which took place when the Germans invaded France, this was often very difficult to do. There were always German spies in the French camp, and it was considered very essential that these persons should not know how or when despatches to the Emperor were sent off; otherwise, as happened more than once, the future intentions, as well as other secrets of the French, would become known to the enemy. I can safely say that so far as the Staff officers of MacMahon's army were concerned, I never experienced the slightest difficulty in getting my letters off; but I had often considerable trouble in finding out when and by whom the despatches were to be sent away.

I was very anxious to let my employers in London know the exact state of affairs as regards the intended advance of MacMahon towards Metz, and how the attempt to relieve Bazaine had utterly failed. To telegraph the news was impossible, as all the wires had been cut by the enemy. I had prepared a long letter, which gave many details that had not yet been published in England, and I felt sure that if I could only manage to get what I had written to London, it would do me no little credit. As yet Sedan was not even threatened by the Germans. I knew the officer who commanded there very well, and I resolved to push on by myself, and see what could be done in the way of forwarding my letter thence over the Belgian frontier, whence it would be safe to reach London in twenty-four hours. It

took the best part of three days to reach Sedan. At Sedan I was able to procure a horse, and rode some ten miles over the Belgian frontier to Buiony, where there were neither wars nor rumours of wars. Here my letter was posted, registered, and sent off to London. I then returned to Sedan, and having the horses harnessed to the wretched old conveyance of which I was the owner, set off on my return to the headquarters of MacMahon's army, wherever they might be.

The Colonel in command at Sedan was very kind to me, gave me the best of food, and the most reliable of information, advising me, if I wanted to rejoin MacMahon's army, to make the best of my way to a small town called Mouson, some fifteen or twenty miles off, situated in the valley of the Meuse, whence, as he said, I should be pretty certain of finding the headquarters of the army. My coachman, a Swiss whom I had engaged when I bought the trap at Laon, told me that the drive from Sedan to Mouson would occupy about four hours, going at a comparatively slow pace which could not knock up the horses. It was agreed that we were to halt for an hour or so, after we had been a couple of hours on the road. I was very tired and sleepy when we left, and therefore made myself comfortable to enjoy a good sleep, thinking I should have at least two hours in which I could do so.

To my amazement, we had not gone more than a couple or three miles from Sedan, when the carriage came to a sudden halt, and I heard more than one rough voice ordering the driver not to move, unless he wished to be shot there and then. I drew back the leather curtains and looked out, when I found that some thirty or more armed men had surrounded the vehicle, and two of them opening the door, ordered me in the most brutal manner to get out. At first I thought they were soldiers, and that they were labouring under some mistake, having taken me to be somebody else. But I soon discovered that they belonged to the *Francs Tireurs*; and that they fully intended to make me a prisoner. I still thought there must be some mistake, and asked them what they wanted, telling them that I was an English newspaper correspondent, who had accompanied MacMahon all through the campaign, and was now on my way to rejoin him. "*Vous mentez*" (you lie), was the polite answer I got; and, as one of them cocked his rifle and swore he would shoot

me dead if I did not get out, I thought that discretion was the better part of valour, and got out upon the dusty road. I asked where their officers were; but they replied that there were none present, and that Frenchmen knew how to deal with Prussian spies, without being controlled by officers. I asked them what I had done that I should be made a prisoner of! They answered that I was a Prussian spy, and that they intended to try me by court-martial and shoot me. I told them that if they would only come back to Sedan with me, the Commandant of the garrison would satisfy them that I was not a Prussian, still less a spy; but an Englishman who was going about his lawful work. They said that the Commandant at Sedan was, like most of the French army, a traitor to his country; that they would not believe a word he said, but had determined to make me a prisoner and kill me. Anything so brutal as they were in their words and manner, it has never been my lot to witness in any part of the world.

At last they decided to begin what they were pleased to call a "*conseil de guerre*," or court-martial, in order that they might try me for being, as they asserted, a Prussian spy on French soil.

I question whether, in the history of the world, a greater farce or a more entirely one-sided affair was ever enacted than on this occasion. I was accused, as I said before, of being a Prussian spy; but what I came to spy upon, or in whose employment I was, my accusers, who were also my judges, did not say. A couple of dozen times at least I was told that I was what they said; and when I denied it, and said I was an Englishman, I was told "*vous mentez*" (you lie). Of the twenty-five or thirty men present, twelve resolved themselves into what they called a Court, a thirteenth individual acting as President. I offered to show them—in fact held out for their inspection—my Foreign Office passport, as well as a pass I had received from MacMahon's chief of the Staff, when I joined the army at Strasburg. But the first they would not even look at; and the second they said was given by a man—Marshal MacMahon—who was himself a traitor to France. They did not seem to think it requisite that I should be put upon my defence. One of them was called forward by the rest, asked whether he could speak English, and whether he would know an Englishman by sight when he saw him. To both questions he replied in the affir-

native. He was then told to speak to me in English, and to look at me, and say if I was an Englishman. He came up to me and muttered some gibberish, which contained a few words that might, by persons of a very strong imagination, be called English. I endeavoured to say a few words to him in my own tongue; but he stopped me by shouting out that I was a Prussian, that I spoke German, and did not understand a word of English.

This seemed quite enough for those who were trying me. After consulting together for a few minutes, one of them announced in a loud voice that I had been found guilty of being a Prussian spy, and that as such I was condemned to be shot. He then told me—looking at his watch and letting me look at mine—that I had a quarter of an hour given me to live, and, as a proof that he meant what he said, orders were given to twelve of the party to load their rifles, and two others were told off to give me the coup de grâce, in the event of my not being killed by the firing party. In a word, my lease of life seemed to be very near its termination, and I felt very certain that I had not more than the fifteen minutes the fellow named in which to live.

To analyse one's feelings or thoughts under such circumstances is impossible. For about five minutes, a third of the time that was left me, I felt utterly stunned, and kept wondering whether those I had left behind in England would ever learn what my fate had been. At last an idea, a sort of forlorn hope, came to me, and I lost no time before trying whether or not I could put it in execution. I called to one of the men, who seemed to be a leader amongst his fellows, and told him that I wished, before being shot, to see a priest, which was a privilege invariably granted to even the greatest culprits in France, and asked him to find out the curé, or parish priest, of the nearest village, and bring him to me. My idea was that by making this request, I should at any rate gain a little time, and that, if this priest did come to see me, it was possible, although I feared not very probable, he might have some influence with these men, and might get them to send me to some military post, where I should have justice done me. My request did not seem to annoy my judges in the least. On the contrary, they approved of it, and at once sent off a couple of messengers in different directions to look for this curé.

In the meantime my feelings and surroundings were by no means happy. It is true that since they had sentenced me to be shot, the men had—most fortunately, as it afterwards turned out—unbound my hands and feet. I was allowed to sit on the ground, close to a wall, a sentry with a loaded rifle being within a dozen yards of me, and due notice was given that if I attempted to get away this man had orders to shoot me at once. I was covered with dirt and dust, the result of having been knocked down more than once when I was made a prisoner. What the ultimate result of my reprieve might be, or what the priest could do if they found him, which seemed far from likely, was, I need hardly say, utterly uncertain. I kept on hoping for the very improbable best, but fearing in my heart that the more than probable worst would be my fate.

At last what turned out to be my guardian angel appeared. The messengers who had gone in search of the priest had been absent some little time, and my captors were beginning to grumble and say that it was time to finish the business, and shoot me off-hand, when all at once an old man, "a garde champêtre," appeared on the scene, his fowling-piece over his shoulder, and the red ribbon in the button-hole of his blouse, showing that he had served, and served with honour, in the French army. He asked what was the matter, and turning to me, enquired whether I really was an Englishman. I told him my story, and showed him the different documents I had by me, commencing with the pass given me by the chief of MacMahon's Staff. He read it carefully, and I could see by his face that he was convinced I was telling the truth. He then looked at my Foreign Office passport, but did not seem able to make out what it meant. All at once he left me, and I saw him go to where my carriage was, and whilst examining the vehicle and horses—the latter, most providentially, as it turned out, having never been unharnessed—he spoke a few words to the coachman. He then came back to where I was, asked me to show him again my different papers, and then, turning to some of the *Francs Tireurs* who were standing near, said in a loud voice, "Messieurs, you have made a great mistake. This person, pointing to me, is not a Prussian. He is an English officer of rank, who has come to France in order that he may see and admire how Frenchmen defend their country. Even now French officers are expecting him at

the headquarters of the army." And then, turning to me, he said, "Allons, Monsieur, en route; ne perdez pas un moment." With that he caught hold of my arm, hurried me away, and before my enemies had time, or anything like time, to realise what he was doing, we were not only inside the carriage, but were tearing along at a smart hand-gallop, on the road to Mouson. The anger and vexation of my captors may be imagined. They had not the means of pursuing us; but they fired several shots after us, one of which went through the crown of my billycock hat. However, I was saved; and if ever one man saved the life of another, that old garde-champêtre saved mine. When we arrived at Mouson I got five hundred francs (twenty pounds) on my letter of credit, and made it a present to the old fellow, who had behaved with such pluck, and who had certainly risked his life to save me. Had we been caught before we could reach the carriage, nothing could have saved him from suffering with me the death to which I had been condemned. And I may say with truth, that rarely, if ever, has a man had a more narrow escape from death than was my fate in this instance.

MEDIÆVAL CHRISTMAS.

"IN 1440," writes Master Stubbs, the Puritan, "one Captain John Gladman, a man ever true and faithful to God and the King, and constantly sportive, made public disport with his neighbours at Christmas. He traversed the town on a horse as gaily caparisoned as himself, preceded by the Twelve Months, each dressed in character. After him crept the pale, attenuated figure of Lent, clothed in herring-skins, and mounted on a sorry horse, whose harness was covered with oyster-shells. A train fantastically garbed followed. Some were clothed as bears, apes, and wolves; others were tricked out in armour; a number appeared as harridans, with blackened faces and tattered clothes, and all kept up a promiscuous fight. Last of all marched several carts, whereon a number of fellows, dressed as old fools, sat upon nests, and pretended to hatch young fools."

Devout as our ancestors doubtless were, it is clear that they were at the same time very partial to some pretty robust fooling, and fooling of a sort which hardly matches with our modern ideas of propriety. But

the diversions of worthy Captain John Gladman, as thus described by good Master Stubbs, were mildness and propriety themselves when contrasted with other Christmas pastimes, of which we find full descriptions in the writings of Stubbs and other old writers. Outrageous, indeed, were some of the Christmas revels, as may be supposed when we learn that Henry the Third found it necessary to assent to a statute forbidding clergymen to play at dice in church on Christmas Day.

At that time, and for many years after, the Abbot of Unreason was the chief personage at Yule-tide sports: a permanent officer, bearing that title, being attached to the Court, to every cathedral and monastery, and to every baronial hall, and every municipality. Previous to the statute just alluded to, this individual was usually a monk, but afterwards seldom or never. At the Court, some knight or gentleman with a taste for writing very indifferent poetry, would be nominated by the monarch to fill the post. At baronial castles and gentlemen's halls it would be filled by some poor relation or other hanger-on; at the Universities a Master of Arts would be appointed by the heads of the colleges to regulate the games, and at the monasteries a lay brother would officiate. Among the common people it was different, and we cannot do better than let Master Stubbs speak for himself.

"All the wild heads of the parish flocking together, choose them a grand Captain of Mischief, whom they ennoble with the title of Lord of Misrule, and him they crown with great solemnity, and adopt for their King. This King, anointed, chooseth four-and-twenty, forty, three score, or a hundred like himself, to wait upon his lordly Majesty, and to guard his noble person. Then every one of these men he investeth with his liveries of green or yellow, or some other light, wanton colour; and, as though they were not gaudy enough, they bedeck themselves with scarves, ribbons, and laces, hung all over with gold rings, precious stones, and other jewels. This done, they tie about either leg twenty or forty bells, hold rich handkerchiefs in their hands, the same being sometimes laid across their shoulders and necks. Then have they their hobby-horses, their dragons, and other antics, together with their pipes, and thundering drummers to strike the devil's dance withal. Then march this heathenish company towards the church, their pipes piping, their

drums thundering, their bells jangling, their handkerchiefs fluttering about their heads like mad men, their hobby-horses and other monsters skirmishing among the throng; and in this sort they go to the church—though the minister be at prayer or preaching—dancing and singing with such a confused noise that no man can hear his own voice. And thus these terrestrial Furies spend the day. Then they have certain papers, wherein is painted some babelerie or other of imagery work, and these they call my Lord of Mirule's badges or cognisances. These they give to everyone that will give them money to maintain them in their heathenish devilry; and who will not show himself buxon to them and give them money, he shall be mocked and flouted shamefully; yea, and many times carried on a cowstaff and dived over head and ears in water, or otherwise most horribly abused."

That the revellers did not show much mercy to those whose behaviour did not meet with their approbation, we know from other sources besides Stubbs. And in Scotland it was just the same. On Christmas an apparitor attached to the Archiepiscopal Court of St. Andrew's, ventured with more pluck than prudence into the Castle of the Lord of Borthwick, for the purpose of serving that puissant but recusant noble with letters of excommunication. He suffered dearly for his folly. When he had discharged his duty, the apparitor was seized by the Abbot of Unreason and his crew, taken to the mill-stream, and thoroughly well ducked. He was then compelled to eat his letters of excommunication to the last shred, and dismissed with the warning that all similar documents "should gang the same gata."

Among other ceremonies and revels were those connected with the annual election of boy-bishops. Wherever there happened to be a choir it was requisite to have a school for the instruction and maintenance of the choristers, the more promising of whom were drafted off to the Universities to be prepared for the Church. With the hope of encouraging the lads in their studies the festival of the boy-bishop was promoted. On the Eve of Saint Nicholas—patron of schoolboys—the election took place, according to Strype, in much the same way as the election of a real Bishop. The boy-bishop then was pretty sure to be the good boy of the school; that is, if he were handsome and well shaped—qualifications even more essential than merit—as appears

from the registers of York Cathedral. Every choir was provided with robes for its use, which, as shown by the list preserved in the Northumberland Household Book, were hardly less magnificent than those of the Diocesan himself. They were provided by the founders and patrons, kept in repair at the expense of the parish, and renewed by donation and legacy.

Among the records of the churchwardens of Lambeth there are various entries concerning the repair of the boy-bishop's vestments; and Archbishop Rotherham bequeathed his mitre to the college which he founded at Rotherham in 1481. On Saint Nicholas Day the boy-bishop went to church in great state. In London he appears to have been mounted, for a statute of Old Saint Paul's directs one of the Canons of that Cathedral to provide him with a quiet horse. Due care, too, was taken to secure him an adequate following. The statutes of Old Saint Paul's School (1518) directs that every Childmas the pupils shall go to Saint Paul's to hear the "Childe" bishop's sermons. They add that, "after he be at high mass, each of them shall offer a penny to the 'childe' bishop." The boy-bishop went through all the ceremonies of the day, and even sang the Mass. This is denied, but there is abundance of proof. The records of Noyon say that he went through the whole service; the proclamation of Henry the Eighth, suppressing the boy-bishop, states that he said Mass; he was permitted to do so by the statutes of Winchester College; and he was ordered to do so by those of Eton.

Nobody, however, denies the fact of his preaching. "Suffer little children to come unto Me" was invariably the text; and the discourse—evidently as much a portion of the properties as the crozier or mitre—was repeated year after year, and was just a moral lecture to the children, and nothing more. After service, the boy-bishop and his followers, assisted by a hired train of mountebanks and minstrels, promenaded the district in search of contributions. They sang gay songs, and indulged in laughter-moving antics, and returned to a feast provided by the churchwardens.

Royal Christmas revels were got up on a very large scale, especially at the French Court. They were directed by an officer of the Court, entitled the King of the Ribalds, the same individual usually occupying also the very different position of executioner of Paris, and the two

offices being hereditary. Writes an old chronicler, describing one of these Christmas revels: "In one corner of the Palace (yard) there was a group of savage men, who made hideous grimaces, and combated comically. Beside them were three beautiful girls playing the part of sirens, which was a pretty sight, and singing songs and anthems." And not far off was a scaffold, whereon was built a mimic castle. This was assailed by one party, representing gallant Frenchmen, and defended by another arrayed—how may be conjectured—as stupid Englishmen. The former charged to the cry of "Montjoie Saint Denis!" and the latter shrieked their national slogan: "Rosbif! Goddam!" with all their might. The "God-dams," of course, were vanquished, and, to the delight of the spectators, "had all their throats cut"—in appearance only, we presume.

As men became more refined, so the Christmas spectacles improved in character. At the banquets it became the fashion to introduce "entremets," in the shape of spectacles, between the courses. Numerous and glowing are the accounts given of these by the old Chroniclers. At a royal banquet at Paris one of these entremets was a ship in full sail, which was drawn into the banquet hall. In the ship stood a knight in armour, leading a monstrous swan by a golden chain. There was a man inside the swan, and a "salvage" at each wing, whilst the knight himself was attended by pages, feathered like eagles.

Another entremet was a room that vented a procession among the guests. First trooped a crowd bearing torches; then followed a herald and two knights, laden with wreaths of flowers; and in the rear, on a white palfrey, trotted "Joy," a beautiful girl, with her hair hanging loose. The herald pronounced a speech; the knights distributed their wreaths; and Joy, climbing the table with her steed, rode up to the King and presented him with a kiss.

A third of these spectacles was a mountain bearing a castle. At the windows appeared the Four Seasons—young beauties scattering flowers—and, on the towers, singing an ode composed for the occasion, stood four youths habited as the Winds. The song ceased, the rock opened, and out sprang a griffin, shooting flames from his mouth and nostrils. He was followed by his keepers—six savage men—who danced a morrice. The Seasons and the Winds

then descended and danced another; afterwards all danced together. Finally, the actors resumed their places, and the mountain was rolled out. Another of these mountains bore a garden of wax flowers, tended by a poet, who gathered roses and presented them to the ladies with suitable rhymes. A third mountain had a fountain of scented water at each corner. Beside these fountains reclined four picturesque savages, and on the mountain top stood a pretty girl in the guise of a Fairy Queen. These characters descended, danced, and resumed their places; the fairy then raised her wand and struck the hill. Scores of little doors opened all over it, and out flew a multitude of sparrows. A second stroke released a crowd of rabbits, whose scurrying among the guests occasioned much laughter. A third brought forth a company of singing damsels; and a fourth let loose a troop of howling demons, who executed a number of acrobatic feats, and then ran off with the nymphs.

To the feast, with its intervals of entremets, would succeed the ballets. These were not merely a series of picturesque attitudes and graceful evolutions; they always told a story. One of them, performed by six ladies and twelve gentlemen, represented the carrying off of nymphs by satyrs.

"The fable was so admirably expressed," says an old writer who describes it, "that everyone could recognise by their gestures the feelings of the actors. Passion spoke in the movements of the satyrs, and embarrassment and terror in those of the nymphs. Strength and boldness characterised the former, shame and grief the latter. Nothing could be more vivid than the figures of this marvellous pantomime."

After the pantomime followed the masque. A group of gentlemen, in various grotesque disguises, would burst in amongst the guests, and cause universal uproar. Some of the scenes on these occasions are indescribable. The masquers rushed about, yelled, romped, annoyed the ladies, and made full use of the privilege of kissing under the mistletoe. There was much coarse fun, and plenty of drunkenness.

In provincial France, Christmas was celebrated more after the fashion of our Christmas mummers, with a mere shadow of whose performances we sometimes are favoured to-day in some out-of-the-way places. A procession would start from the door of the village church, would go round the village, and wind up where it started from. "In

front marched 'the curés and choristers—bearing crosses, banners, and relics, and occasionally singing anthems. After them came a young girl representing the Virgin, and a young man, rather lightly clad, and ornamented with a pair of wings, as the Angel Gabriel. Then followed a cardboard cock with a child inside. This was succeeded by a cow, a goat, four sheep, and an ass—or rather by models of these animals—each containing a boy. A fool mounted on a hobby-horse, and provided with bells and baubles, closed the array. Every now and then the procession halted. The angel recited the salutation, and kissed his companion, who said 'Fiat'—'So be it.' Then, after one another, the cock crew the words, 'Puer natus est nobis'—'Unto us a child is born;' the cow lowed 'Ubi? (Where?);' the sheep baaed—'Bethlem;' the ass brayed 'He-haw-mus'—to signify 'Eamus' (Let us go thither); and then the goat and the fool having nothing particular to add, the procession moved on, until the next halting-place was reached, when the performance was repeated."

Space will not allow us to describe many of the other feasts and observances which were held in various parts of Europe, all of which exhibit traces of being of Pagan origin. There was the Feast of Fools, for example. In this the clergy were the chief performers.

Then there was the Feast of the Ass, in honour of the animal which carried Balaam; and at Milan was annually observed the Feast of the Wise Men. On Twelfth Day, in the foremost of the ordinary Twelfth Day procession, marched three Kings, mounted on fine horses and most gorgeously robed. Numerous pages attended on them, and they were escorted by a large guard. A tall mast, supporting a golden star, was borne before them to the pillars of San Lorenzo—sixteen scathed and shattered columns, now supporting nothing, which greatly puzzle the antiquary. Here Herod, with his scribe and his wise men, awaited them, and the scene described by the Evangelists—with sundry adjuncts not noted in Scripture—was enacted. From the columns, still being preceded by the star, they adjourned to the ancient church of Eustorgia. There, in the neighbourhood of the sarcophagus which once contained the relics that Frederic Barbarossa carried off to bestow on Cologne, they found what they sought in the manger, and duly presented their gifts.

LIVING OUT OF TINS.

WHEN the first timid ventures in the way of tinned provisions were made, and a few grocers' windows displayed to an incredulous world cheap boxes of Rock Island lobster, U.S. British salmon, and Canadian corned beef, little good was augured of the experiments. The English public mind, it was thought, was fastidious, and perhaps supercilious, as to innovations on the dietary of the nation. The very rich, or the very fashionable, must be supplied, of course, by talented purveyors, with every conceivable luxury in, or out, of season. But the comfortable classes, more numerous and more subdivided in England than elsewhere, were not so easily suited. Their incomes sufficed for a moderate, sometimes a liberal outlay. But game, poultry, and fish, in the hands of those closest of all corporations, our fishmongers and poulterers, are artificially dear. The prohibitive prices enforced for almost everything beyond the monotony of beef and mutton, led, in the course of time, to more or less laudable attempts to tickle the public palate at a cheaper rate. It was soon possible to buy things of expensive repute in small quantities, in shilling or eighteenpenny tins. A competitive contest ensued, in which, as often occurs, the battle was to the strong—in assertion. Persistent advertising, like the pounding of heavy artillery, produced its effect, and trash, with a tempting picture on the outside of the canister, drove out of the market wholesome comestibles less pushed and puffed.

It is due to the practical development of modern science that provisions can be tinned at all. But for the all but perfect success with which atmospheric air, teeming with the minute germs and spores of animal and vegetable parasitic life, is excluded, we should be driven back to the rude salt junk of our forefathers. As it is, sea-fish, shrimps, and oysters get spoiled, nine times out of ten, in the process, and when extracted from their receptacles, prove fitter for the semi-putrid ngapé of the Burmese than for the taste of civilised man. And all substances, whether fish, flesh, or fowl, lose a percentage of their nutritive qualities in confinement, while acquiring, at the same time, an unusual degree of tenderness. Still, the need for food that can be long stored without perceptible decay is a real need, in these days

of sudden expeditions, civil and military, of colonising enterprise, and of frequent travel. Even in autumn manoeuvres, when troops are hastily collected and encamped, it is found easier to provide every soldier's mess with four-pound tins of rough Australian mutton, than to enter into impromptu contracts with salesmen for the delivery of fresh meat. And on the march, or on a tropical shore, the convenience of an article of diet which defies any climate is sure to assert itself.

Tins are essentially in the grocer's department, and it is startling to note the strides, seven-leagued for the most part, that grocerdom has made in the direction of universal empire. Recent legislation has enabled the grocer to invade, on one hand, the dominions of the wine merchant and the licensed victualler, and, on the other, to harry the butcher, and to poach upon the poulterer. A very bitter feeling is believed to exist in the minds of some publicans, so-called, against the once harmless vendor of Smyrna figs and loaf sugar. Old Mr. Logwood, who has been in the wine trade, with him hereditary, for fifty-three years, can hardly restrain his temper as he passes the garish windows where preserved fruit, candies, ardent spirits, reputed champagne, and low-priced claret, offer themselves in tempting profusion. "Drugged rubbish," growls the angry old man, unjustly oblivious for the moment of what secrets of the prison-house his own trusted cellarman might tell, as to loading, and colouring, and fining, and mixing, as he glares at the hated shop-front of his despised rival. So does burly Mr. Bung, of the Anchor, or the Cordwainers' Arms, cast an evil eye at the fluids exposed for sale by the once respected cheesemonger at the corner shop. Giblets, the poulterer, is sardonic as to the merits of fifteenpenny chicken or turkey from Yankeeland; and sturdy Mr. Silverside scoffs contemptuously, as he converses with sympathetic cooks, at the tinned beef of America, and the "cagmag" mutton of our Australian fellow subjects.

The truth is, that the trade in tinned provisions, already a very extensive one, is a sort of cradled Hercules, trying with his baby hands to strangle the serpents of monopoly and routine. A somewhat fractious babe, and of a disposition slightly perverse, the giant infant may occasionally prove, but the uneasy alarm of his enemies, our domestic tradespeople, testifies to his potential merits. And we need his services,

for his foes are, unfortunately, our own. Brisk competition is the only argument to which our purveyors are accessible. It is asking too much to expect that these necessary but expensive persons should themselves apply the wholesome stimulus. Dog will not eat dog. Silverside, the butcher, cherishes no animosity against his brother of the steel and of the scales, rough and tough old Brisket. Brisket is the blue butcher, while, at election time, every round of beef and saddle of mutton in the better-stocked Silverside emporium gets garlanded with yellow ribbon, best sarsanet, from Snip and Taggart's round the corner. But the two worthies, though of hostile politics, have a mutual respect, and would scorn the untradesmanlike practice of underselling one another by a halfpenny a pound. But tinner, residing at a distance, have no corporate feeling of this kind. They can afford to be mean enough to beat the butcher hollow as to cost, and to press hard on his heels as regards quality.

A rough and ready substitute for the principle of natural selection does seem to rule the tinned provision mart. Dear goods are driven out by cheap ones. Modest excellence, now and then, is extinguished by the baleful glare of persistent puffery. Thus British salmon, lake trout, and burn trout, delicate and delicious to the taste, have had to succumb to their coarsest transatlantic cousins of the Salmonidæ, hooked or speared by Red Indians in some turbid river of the far West, and chopped up, to all appearance, with a tomahawk and scalping-knife. But then, to be sure, the tins are adorned with a gorgeous pictorial representation of the silvery salmon within, and are offered "with unusual advantages" to the retail trade. Labour is, indeed, too valuable an article in the wilder portions of America, and even in the rural parts of the Eastern States, for much care to be bestowed on cooking and packing. Hence poultry and turkeys, old and young, are roasted, cut up, and packed indiscriminately, in Maine, Pennsylvania, or New York, so that a pleasing uncertainty prevails as to the contents of any particular tin, howsoever labelled. Our American providers really have not time, or think they have not, to classify what they send us, just as in Cincinnati a hog is a hog, to be rapidly converted into bacon and pickled pork, with no regard to feeding or antecedents.

It is to be regretted that some especial productions of the New World should have

escaped the exporter; and among these may be mentioned the canvas-backed duck, now growing scarcer than of old; the large crayfish; and the almost unrivalled white-fish and noble bass of the Northern lakes. The so-called buffalo beef, too, has ceased to find its place in the market.

Some three years ago there was a constant demand among American invalids for the tinned bison-beef, more tender and more appetising, if less nourishing, than the flesh of domesticated animals will ever prove. There is a game flavour about this wild beef, while the hump in especial is in the very highest gastronomic repute. A difference of opinion, or a divergence of interests, between the jobbers who tinned the meat and the hunters who shot the animals, proved fatal. For six cents, or threepence a pound, it was worth while to convey the primest portions of the slain beasts on pack-horses to a distant railway station. But when a powerful corporation of middlemen determined to cut down the price to four cents a pound, the resentful hunter declined the twopence, shot down the buffalo herds for their hides alone, and left thousands of tons of good meat to rot on the prairies.

One of the earliest, as of the most successful, experiments ever made in potting or in tinning, was that which is for ever to be associated with the name of Baron Liebig. To wish to utilise the vast herds of cattle that live by browsing the tall grasses of the boundless Pampas was, of course, natural; and commendable, if not marvellous, was the skill with which the so-called Essence of Meat was manufactured amongst the wild Saladas of the Argentine States, to the amazement of the gaping Gauchos, who, for the first time, realised that it was not necessary to eat their staple beef, either in sun-dried strips or scorched before a gipsy fire of thorns. The oddest thing about the undertaking was the rapidity of its commercial success. The Baron's name is, indeed, a household word with myriads of cooks who never breathed a German word except his easily learned patronymic. Even the thrifty middle-class French, who cannot dine without soup, and with whom it is an article of faith to eat the meat of which their "potage" has been made, quickly became alive to the convenience of a stock that spared them the domestic duty of devouring insipid, greyish bouilli, garnished with carrots. New companies were formed, as a matter of course, to have a

finger in so profitable a pie, and to work patents fringing the rights of the Christopher Columbus of gravy. But the plains watered by the vast congeries of broad streams, which our ancestors knew as the Plata River, are still the El-Dorado of those who would enrich themselves by transferring the extract of South American meat to European sauce-boats and soupturens.

The first and most systematic plan of tinning soups was, of course, English. Strictly speaking, soup, like salad, is one of our national institutions. Foreign "potages" and "consommés" are apt, even on gala occasions, and when decorated by high-sounding diplomatic names, to be mere broth, flavoured with crayfish or herbs, and mushrooms and burnt butter. And it is odd to note, considering our own meek habit of self-depreciation in culinary matters, how respectfully the most renowned of French cookery books speak of our English cuisine, of our rich soups and piquant sauces and elaborate entrées. Their tinner have done us the more dubious honour of imitating our productions, and there are pale copies sold everywhere, from Marseilles to Antwerp, of wholesome exports bearing the stamp of famous British firms.

In original enterprise, as regards this department of trade, the French have done but little, and the Germans less. In these days of trichinosis it needs a bold man to venture upon a German sausage. Hamburg, like Cherbourg, offers a few lobsters potted whole, and some beef as doubtful in parentage as its fiery sherry. French sardines, like French oysters, have declined in quality; their preserved peas might be pellets of shot; their conserved mushrooms pickled leather; and only in tinned tunny do they remain unapproachable. But the tunny of the Mediterranean, though good of its kind, is too oily a fish to please our palates as it did those of the Athenians of the time of Aristophanes.

Canada is far from being backward in the race of commercial competition. She sends us ox tongues of unsurpassed excellence, capital corned beef, and hams of sterling quality. If her republican neighbours outstrip her as to tomatoes and peaches, she is at least conscientious with respect to her streaky bacon and her lobsters. As for exports of tinned oysters and shrimps, they may be classed with the razors rhymingly chronicled by Gay, as made to sell and not to shave. And, indeed, sea-

fish, as well as the minor crustaceans, lend themselves very ill to any attempt at preservation. The salmon tribe can bear what cod, turbot, sole, and haddock, appear unable to endure.

Singularly enough, the smallest and most relatively populous of West European countries comes prominently to the front when it is a question of tinned provisions. There are so many mouths to feed in busy, frugal Belgium—the land in which, as we are authoritatively told in Government reports, the labourer works and fares harder than anywhere else in Christendom—that it might seem impossible to find spare food to pack away in tins. Yet a glance at the long catalogues of the Brussels purveyors of such commodities gives ample proof to the contrary. The raw material is dear with them, of course. They cannot afford, as American shippers can, to sell a preserved chicken (which may possibly turn out to be the fourth of a turkey), at a price which N. P. Willis would certainly have described as “ridiculously trifling.” But, then, their chicken will be whole, a rice-fattened Antwerp fowl, cooked to a turn. Their calf’s head “en tortue” is no mere mock-turtle soup, but an admirable counterfeited of the old calipash and calipee, once dear to civic epicures. Their tinned sweet-breads are a little below the London standard in price, but they are capitally cooked, and in fine condition. Wild fowl and partridges; woodcock and snipe; the rabbit dressed in all manner of ways; truffles; galantines; the hare, variously presented; the thrush and the roebuck; swell their bill of fare. What these Flemish folks have to sell is not dear, but neither is it cheap enough to tempt the anxious-eyed mother of a household where there are hungry boys to feed, and a small income to be eked out. The Belgian merchandise, when it is not a mere plagiarism on something that is better in England, is apt to be dainty of its kind, but to partake of the nature of a luxury.

What is evidently wanted, for the due development of the tinning trade, and for the benefit of customers, is a proper adjustment between the vast supplies of food in distant parts of the world, and the many hungry mouths that must be supplied nearer home. That the butcher and the poulterer will become obsolete, and all mankind live out of tins, is, of course, a sheer impossibility. The rich, and the actual poor, will always depend on local middlemen who understand their

requirements. Tripe, and trotters, and fried fish, and saveloys, will continue to please Mr. Whelks, whose only difficulty is to find the coin wherewith to pay for these creature-comforts. And Lord Octavius Tomnoddy will always be satisfied with Scilly peas, Jersey butter, and Sussex spring chickens, with Dartmoor mutton and Leicester beef. It is for middling incomes, for those who are neither of the class of Mr. Whelks, nor are wafted by fortune, as by Aladdin’s Slave of the Lamp, high above mundane considerations of common-place pounds, shillings, and pence, that the provider of tinned provisions ought to work. There is endless beef in the southernmost part of the Atlantic side of the South American Continent. Australia still musters many sheep. The United States, or, at least, their Western components and territorial hem, could feed more cattle and turkeys than swarming Europe can consume. But the distances are great, the meat often lean and stringy, the “gobblers” the worse for lack of care and maize-flour, and nothing prospering as it ought to do, for want of skilled superintendence. What is really wanted is a grasp of the situation, to bring cheap nutriment and eager purchasers together, for the benefit of both.

ALL ON ONE SIDE.

A STORY IN FIVE CHAPTERS.

CHAPTER IV.

THE astronomy lessons came to pass despite the ill omen. The old Pastor certainly gave them no encouragement; but, on the other hand, the schoolmaster was pleased at the distinction bestowed on his clever daughter. Hermann Holzinger was not so sure that he appreciated this honour for his future wife. If she had been going to remain a teacher, well and good; but since she was not, since they were to be married in March, he felt dimly that astronomy was a little irrelevant. Once or twice Hedwig asked him if he would not join her in her new study, and once he actually did make the effort to appear at four o’clock in the Pastor’s little sitting-room, where, two or three times a week, Sartorius used to bring his books and diagrams. But Hermann did not get interested. Hedwig had already learnt something, and the lecturer did not bring

his explanations down to the level of the blank ignorance of his second hearer.

"We must not bore your good Hermann, Fräulein Hedwig," Sartorius said afterwards; "I am sure he doesn't care a pin for astronomy. He only came for your sake; and, you see, personal feelings are not the least help towards understanding scientific subjects."

"I suppose not," said Hedwig.

"I should fancy it all depends," said the old Pastor.

"Depends on what?" asked Max.

"On where the personal feeling came in," said the Pastor.

To which the other vouchsafed no reply.

Of course astronomy could not be studied without a telescope; and, as Hedwig could not constantly make use of the observatory at Horst, her teacher arranged a smaller telescope in the belfry of the crooked steeple, up which every now and then they climbed to use it, under the escort of the schoolmaster, though once it happened that they went alone.

It was on a certain November evening—when the lessons had already lasted a couple of months, and when Hedwig had begun scarcely to remember a time when she did not reckon her days by the coming and going of these pleasant hours whose secret she had not yet guessed—that the schoolmaster chanced to be busy, therefore Hedwig and Sartorius had gone into their improvised observatory without him.

"We must make the best possible use of to-night," said Max, as he adjusted the telescope, "for I have been called suddenly away. This will be our last lesson in astronomy."

"What do you say?" asked Hedwig, feeling as if her very heart had turned pale.

"I said that unfortunately this must be our last lesson," he answered, "for I am called away to New York. I have got this thing fixed on the right star now. What a nuisance a makeshift is when time presses! However, this has done us very good service."

"To New York!" repeated Hedwig.

"And when shall you come back?"

"I have no idea; my absences are always of uncertain length, but this must not put an end to your studies. I shall leave you the telescope, and all the books and things we have used to keep you from forgetting."

"Forgetting!" exclaimed Hedwig.

"What do you take me for? How could

I forget? You don't know how sorry I am you are going away."

Was that queer muffled sound her own voice, or were some cruel fingers on her throat choking her? Was the crooked steeple swaying to and fro? Were all the bright stars rushing in wild confusion of burning lines across the sky? Was the whole world come to an end, and had she to live on alone in chaos? What had she learnt besides astronomy in the last few months, that made her feel so unlike herself now?

"I'm glad you're sorry," Sartorius said quietly, "it is the best assurance you have really enjoyed what you have been learning."

"Glad I am sorry!" cried the girl; "oh, don't—don't say you are glad I'm sorry!"

"You don't understand me," returned Sartorius; "you see we men are weak-minded enough to be open to flattery. It flatters me to hear that my absence can cause a regret, however slight. I should not have presumed to hope for so much. Now, will you take a look at Saturn and his rings?"

He laid his hand on her arm as he spoke, to draw her forward. His touch thrilled through her as it had never done before. He placed her before the telescope carefully.

"Now tell me what you see?" he asked.

The spell of his touch was still on her. She could not have told whether she was looking at stars through a telescope, or whether she had floated away to starland itself.

"Tell me what you see," he repeated.

"I can see nothing at all," she answered tremulously.

"How is that?" he asked, bending down beside her till she felt his breath on her hands, "it was all right a minute ago."

"It is my fault," she replied hastily. "My eyes ache to-night."

She turned from the telescope towards him. A wild temptation came over her to throw herself into his arms; to beg him not to go away; to see if he would press her to him, in just one passionate embrace.

By the light of the little lamp they had brought she looked into his eyes; there was no response there to her unspoken appeal; for answer she seemed to catch a glimpse of a long cheerless future close upon her. Poor Hedwig! the moment of her awakening had come; she knew in what one thing her happiness was bound

up. She knew, too, that her whole duty would be the struggle to do without it; that she had nothing more to look forward to hopefully when she should have gone down the winding belfry-stairs.

"You don't know when you are coming back?" she said. She fancied she had only thought the words she uttered.

"Not till the spring; then I shall come and pay you your wedding visit. I hope you will be very happy. Do you think I had better put the telescope away?" he went on quietly after a pause, "or will you have another try before we go?"

The calm of his manner stung Hedwig like a scourge. If he would only have said that he was sorry to leave her!

"I think I will not try again," she said. "Let us go."

"Mind the stairs," he said. "Lay your hand on my shoulder, as I go first."

So they went down.

"I am going to say good-bye to the Menzels," said Sartorius, as he reached the door. "Are you coming there also?"

"No," answered Hedwig tremulously, "I am going home at once."

She held out her hand to him.

"How cold you are!" he said, as he took it; then he took the other, and held them both in a gentle clasp. "I suppose this is the last time I shall see you as Hedwig Thorbecke. If I am back in time, you must let me send you some flowers for your wedding."

She did not speak, and he put her silence down to maidenly shyness.

"Herr Menzel will let me know when you want them, and then you can remember me on your wedding-day."

"I shall remember you without the help of flowers," said Hedwig; again she had only meant to think the words.

"Thank you," he replied; but he, on his part, made no promise, and gave no assurance. "Good-bye."

Once more the terrible impulse came to Hedwig to throw her arms around him, and to defy the whole world.

For a moment her fingers tightened convulsively round his, then she said:

"Leben Sie wohl, Herr Doctor," and turned away.

Hermann was sitting with her father when she came in. She could feel that she was pale to the lips, but the little room was not very brightly lighted.

"The star-gazing is soon over this evening," said the schoolmaster. "I expect you found it cold in the belfry."

"Very cold," said Hedwig.

Hermann crossed the room and sat down beside her. "You are shivering, my darling," he said. "You must not go up the tower again when it is so cold. At least, I hope you won't."

"No," replied the girl wearily, "I shan't go again. Dr. Sartorius is going away to-morrow."

"Going away?" echoed Hermann; his voice sounded as if the news were no blow to him.

"Well, he has been here nearly half a year," said the schoolmaster. "He never stops longer. If he married, perhaps he might settle at Horst. It would be a good thing for him and for Battingen."

"Ah! he doesn't know how to be happy, does he, Hedwig?" whispered Hermann softly, and he laid his hand on Hedwig's as he spoke.

Her first impulse was to draw it away, his touch seemed a mockery. "It is not so easy to judge of other people's happiness, Hermann. I don't know why you fancy that Dr. Sartorius is unhappy."

"I don't say he is unhappy, my sweet; I only say he has missed the best happiness of life." And Hermann, regardless of the old schoolmaster, drew Hedwig to him and pressed a kiss on her cheek.

CHAPTER V.

CHRISTMAS came and went, and the new year began. Hedwig had been remarkably pale and quiet for some time; she said she had caught a chill, which Hermann laid to the charge of her last astronomy lesson. She did not contradict him; she did not care to what her languor was attributed, so long as it availed to delay her wedding. Since Sartorius's departure she had thought of little else but of him; she had patiently recalled every word he had spoken to her—every look of his eyes, every touch of his hand, every little tenderness of his manner; her only pleasure was in living over again the time they had spent together. "Did he try to make me love him?" she asked herself continually, "or did I love him unwooded? Ah, he must have loved me a little—just a little, or I could never love him so very, very greatly."

When she thought of Hermann, it was with a pity as deep as that which she felt for herself. Of the future she did not dare to think at all. That her engagement must be broken off she did not doubt, and yet it was terrible to

think of breaking it. Delay was just one degree less horrible than to take the decisive step. And so Hedwig's new year had begun while the snow lay thick and white, frozen hard over the hills and along the forest paths.

One day, early in January, Hedwig was sitting with her godmother, sewing.

"Fancy," said the old lady. "Fancy, Hedwig, Dr. Sartorius is coming back again. My husband heard from him this morning."

"Coming back!" exclaimed Hedwig; "to Horst?"

"Yes, to Horst. It is a much shorter absence than he intended; there must be some important reason for his return."

Coming back! The thought sent the blood dancing through the girl's veins as it had not done for weeks. Could it be that he wanted to see her?

"He writes in the best of spirits," continued the old lady; "so it is nothing disagreeable which is hurrying him back; and, by-the-way, he sends you a greeting."

Hedwig got up; the room seemed too small for her feelings.

"Thank you, godmother," she said. "Talking of letters reminds me of one I must write. I must run away home."

The letter took a long time. She tore it up many times before it was written to her satisfaction. When it was at last finished, she read it aloud to herself to judge of the full effect of the words.

"Dear Hermann," it ran, "I have known now, for some time, that I must tell you what has been troubling me lately, and making me look ill. It is, that I find I do not love you in the way I thought I did; not enough to make you happy. Our marriage is, therefore, impossible. Forgive me for the pain this will cause you. I would so gladly have spared it you if I could. You must forget me, Hermann; only, I beg of you, do not think I have changed. I have not. I made a dreadful mistake last summer when I promised to marry you.

"Yours sincerely,

"HEDWIG."

She folded and addressed it, and went out to put it in the post; but the walk through the snowy streets chilled her resolution.

"I dare not," she thought; "it will break his heart. He will feel as I have felt all these weeks. I will go on to the hills and think it all over once again."

So she passed by the post, and went on until the red-roofed town lay behind and

below her. The snow was crisp beneath her feet, and the sky was clear above her head. It seemed to her the crispest, brightest winter day she had ever known. The solitude of the hills had never seemed more delicious; nor had the fine, sharp crests of the pines against the pale sky ever struck her as so beautiful. When she paused to look behind her, the purple slates and scarlet tiles of the old town stood out in gorgeous contrast with the snow that partially hid them. Round the crooked steeple the jackdaws wheeled in merry circles. Beyond the town, beyond the frozen river, rose the dark rocks, and the dark pines, bearing white wreaths on their long, outstretched limbs; and there stood Horst, with the sunlight flashing back from the windows that looked on to the terrace. Everything was touched with glory; the brightness and transparency overpowered her. It was useless for her to try and fix her thoughts on Hermann. In the exultation of hope that forced itself upon her, she could not face the perplexity of reasoning out again the full consequences of her sad mistake. She began to regret that she had not posted her letter at once. She tried to feel sad for his sake, but she could not. Even the bitterness of her parting with Sartorius, and all she had suffered since, was like a dream from which she was now awakening. She could remember nothing so clearly as the tenderness of his manner to her, and the fact that he had thought of her in his absence.

"I don't care how it ends," she thought; "it must end some day—somehow. I love him, that is enough;" and then, loud and clear under the lonely evening sky she said, "My darling Max, I love you."

Then, with drooping eyes and a crimson blush on her cheeks and brow, as if she feared the very silence would betray her secret, she turned again, and walked on swiftly uphill towards the forest.

How would it be when they met again? Her whole being thrilled, as she thought that once more her hand would lie in the clasp of his, that once more his eyes would look down into hers. Life, so dim only yesterday, seemed to contain an endless vista of hope—hope that she dared not formulate, and yet which insisted on taking definite form, until, in fancy, she heard his voice speaking words of passion, and felt his arms round her, his lips pressed to hers. Faster and faster the blood coursed through her veins, faster and faster came the breath from her parted lips. Her heart

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