

tion to make themselves merry at the expense of his chivalry. But when we consider all the particulars of the case, we can hardly fail to perceive that he ran no risk whatever; for even if the debt had not legally lapsed, the people who had retained it in their memory through three generations—who had from father to son practised strict economy in order to relieve themselves from the burden—who had with much difficulty and some expense, sought out the heirs of their creditor in a distant country, could scarcely be suspected of any inclination to finish off with a fraud at last.

Still if there was honour on one side, there was enlarged confidence on the other; and in the course of a few months, the American mail brought to London the famous £600 due since before the War of Independence. The business now was to divide and distribute it. Of course, each of the creditors was loud in expressions of admiration of the honour of the B. family, whose representative, while forwarding the money, asked with much simplicity to have a few old English newspapers sent out to him by way of acknowledgment. For his own part, however, he experienced a strong desire to behold some of the persons to whom he had thus paid a debt of the last century; and he gave a warm and pressing invitation to any of them to come out and stay as long as they thought proper at his house in Philadelphia. Had the invitation been accepted, we cannot doubt that Brother Jonathan would have acted as hospitably in the character of host as he behaved honorably in that of debtor. It would have been a pleasure, we might indeed say a distinction, to live under the same roof with such a man, whose very name carries us back to the primitive times of the colony, when Philadelphia was a city of the British Empire, and English laws, manners, habits, and feelings regulated the proceedings and relations of its inhabitants. It is to be hoped, therefore, that the London solicitor will some day drop in quietly upon his friend in Philadelphia, to smoke a cigar, and discuss old times with him. He will in that case probably fancy himself chatting with a contemporary of Rip Van Winkle. Doubtless there are thousands of such men in the States, where frequently everything that is estimable in the English character is cultivated with assiduity.

How the property was distributed among the S. family in England, we need not say. Each surviving individual had his or her share. The solicitor was only connected with them by marriage; but with good old English ideas of uprightness and integrity, he was fully able to appreciate the Philadelphia lawyer's sentiments. He would have done exactly the same himself under similar circumstances; and therefore, had the sum been tens of thousands instead of hundreds, it could not be said to have fallen into bad hands. Whether the transaction above noticed has led or not to a continued correspondence between the families, we are unable to say; but we think the creditors in England would naturally have felt a pleasure in exchanging intelligence from time to time with their worthy debtors in Philadelphia. These things, however, are private, and, therefore, we do not intend to trench upon them.

LEAVES FROM THE DIARY OF A LAW-CLERK.

BROTHER AND SISTER.

THE leaf which I am about to transcribe will be found only, in a slight degree, the record of my own personal observation; but I do not the less feel confident in its general accuracy, inasmuch, as my informants could have had no motive for mystifying or misleading me,—a postulate of great importance in estimating the credibility of the most trustworthy persons. There are one or two blanks in the narrative which I might indeed inferentially fill up, but this I have no doubt the reader will do quite as well for him or herself.

Mr. and Mrs. Reeves, were I believe, both natives of Clifton, Bristol. Certainly the husband was the son and sole offspring of a wealthy, but somewhat feeble-minded gentleman, who had long resided there. Edward Reeves was the issue of a second marriage, and his father was again a widower at the age of sixty-three: in less than two years afterwards—having been, I suppose wonderfully happy in his choice of previous partners—the old gentleman ventured—rash gamester!—for a third prize in the connubial lottery, and drew—a widow, one Mrs. Halliday, the handsomest, cleverest and poorest of two sisters; her sole wealth, her brilliant eyes, her silver tongue, her Houri smile, and two fine children—boys. Alas! the brilliant eyes, the silver tongue, the Houri smile, seen by the light of common day, which in this instance, dawned upon the matrimonial horizon, in something less than a fortnight after the “happy” one, proved to be mere shams—surface lacquer—elaborate deceit. A disastrous union it was soon found to be for Edward Reeves, his young, gently-nurtured wife, and their children, Jonathan and Mabel. The orange blossoms of the bride, were cypress wreaths to them,—funereal emblems of departing peace and competence. The old story, in such cases, quickly developed itself. The senile bridegroom lapsed into a nonentity without a serious struggle; and little Jonathan, happening one day to thrash Master Halliday, a boy of about his own age (seven years), for spiteful usage to his sister, Mabel, accelerated the catastrophe. The antagonistic parties could no longer inhabit the same house; Edward Reeves and family removed to a cottage in the vicinity, and the son was thenceforth a stranger to his father's dwelling, till he received a formal invitation to attend his funeral, and the reading of his will. “In the name of God, Amen!” gasped out the shaky voice of Randall, the attorney,—a worthy man though a lawyer. “I, Jonathan Reeves being of sound mind, and in full possession of all my faculties, hereby give and bequeath to Maria, my beloved wife, all and sundry the estate, real and personal, of which I may die seised and possessed: to wit—” A fierce outcry, natural, if unseemly, under such circumstances, interrupted the reader. It came from the beggared son who had leaped to his feet in wild dismay as the lawyer's words of doom—for such they truly were—fell upon his ear. But the bitter consternation and despair of the revived man were too terrible and giant-like for articulate utterance; and after one or two abortive efforts at speech, he sank on the floor in