

like syrens. By Jove," he added, waxing quite enthusiastic, "I could listen for ever to Paulina's voice."

"Are these young ladies Terpsichores as well as Entepres?" I asked sententiously.

"What the deuce do you mean?" said Robin, who was not well up in his classics, not having had the advantage of a college education. (?)

"Well, in plain English, are they dancers as well as musicians? And are they coming to our ball?"

"Decidedly. I have promised to dine there and escort them thither; and I have an invitation for you to do the same."

I was about to express my approval of the arrangement, for I had long wished to make the Miss Fanshaws' acquaintance, when my appointment with Marguerite flashed to my recollection, and I hesitated.

"I should like to go with you, of all things, Robin; but won't it make us late at our ball? For the Colonel expressed a hope we should all be there to receive our guests."

"Is that your only reason for wishing to be early? But I won't chaff you, my dear Charlie," replied Robin. "To relieve your mind, let me assure you you will be in ample time for the first dance. The Fanshaw girls have each a promising flirtation on hand, and are not likely to be late. So you come with me to Nethercotes; we'll drive out about 4 o'clock, and I promise you a very agreeable afternoon."

I consented, but not without some fears, for one well knows how difficult it is to start from a country-house eight miles off so as to be in anything like time. The next day at 4 o'clock found me driving with Robin through Mr. Fanshaw's pretty pleasure-ground, and approaching the large white veranda-guarded house. My friend was right; we had a very pleasant afternoon; the girls were large-eyed, large-limbed and large-voiced, and sang to perfection. The dinner, also, when it arrived, was perfection; but it was unpunctual, and my fears were realized when, on the ladies leaving us, I looked at the clock and saw the hand fast approaching 9. The ladies had to dress, and I saw the gentlemen of the party intended to fortify themselves against the fatigues of the coming evening by a "big drink," and I reflected with the calm agony of despair, that if I were able to keep my appointment it must be by a miracle. However, I determined upon making an attempt, and leaning across the table, I said to Hood, "I must be off. Will you let me order the dogcart at once?"

"Couldn't be done, dear boy," he said with provoking calmness; "I should have to pay a doctor's bill either for your neck or my horse's knees, to a dead certainty. No one but myself shall drive Semiramis; she takes after her beautiful namesake, who, by all accounts, was a rum one. Besides, I have promised to take Fanshaw over, and you are to cavalier the ladies."

There was nothing more to be said, and I wisely gave up the idea of being in time, and trusted to the chapter of accidents, and a very long chapter it was. It was exactly half-past ten when we got under way, and it was not by any means plain sailing after that. What with a gibbing horse, a broken bolt, and something wrong with Hood's turn-out—he insisted on our waiting while he remedied it, it being, he said, so unseemly to divide parties—it was twelve o'clock before we reached Aylmer's Hall, and by that time the fun was raging fast and furious. Of course I was bound to dance with Miss Fanshaws directly we got into the ball-room, and I did so with as good a grace as was compatible with the fact that the whole time I was eagerly looking about me for Marguerite. She was nowhere to be seen. There were gardens at the back of the hall, and these were lit up for the occasion with colored lamps, and there were seats placed at intervals for the comfort of exhausted dancers. Immediately on obtaining my release from the second Miss Fanshaw, I went off on a systematic search for Marguerite, and this I prosecuted with unflinching perseverance, but with no success, for a quarter of an hour.

On my return to the hall, and just as I entered an ante-room, almost dazzled with the full blaze of light, I saw my lost love approaching me; I did not notice her partner, who immediately disappeared to get her some tea; but greeting her eagerly, and pouring out apologies for my non-appearance before, I solicited the honor of a dance. To my astonishment she received me as if she had never seen me before, and regretted in the orthodox young lady style her inability to confer on me the desired favor, as she was unfortunately engaged for the rest of the evening. Just then her partner returned, bearing a cup of tea, and to my further astonishment accosted me with a "Hello! Charlie, how are you?" and there was my twin brother, whom I thought safe at Montreal, dressed in the Rifle Brigade uniform, and evidently carrying on a flirtation with my love.

"Why, when did you come, and why thum got up?" I questioned, having returned his greeting with brotherly affection.

"Too long a story to tell you now, old fellow," he replied, and murmuring something about "lost my luggage—borrowed your coat—rather a lark," rushed forward to relieve Miss Duval of her emptied cup, and taking her upon his arm again in another minute had disappeared from the room, leaving me in a state of mind in which mystification, anger and astonishment struggled for the mastery. Indeed, I began to fancy that the fumes of Mr. Fanshaw's claret had turned my brain, and I betook myself to a distant part of the garden to collect my scattered senses. The fresh night air had the desired

effect, and all became as clear as day. My brother, who was always up to some lark or another, and took especial delight in mystifying people with our extraordinary resemblance, had borrowed my uniform for that purpose, and had certainly succeeded with poor Marguerite. It was not a pleasant idea to think of the mistakes she might be guilty of in taking him for me. It was evidently possible to enlighten her respecting the delusion she was under, and with a laugh at so ridiculous a dilemma I determined to go to her parents and explain the matter to them. I found my little friend Eunice doing wallflower between her father and mother, looking rather disconsolate, and being received with one of her prettiest smiles, I carried her off, nothing loth, to dance a quadrille, which was just being formed near us. As luck would have it, her sister and my brother were vis-à-vis, and Marguerite, when she saw us, colored up to the roots of her hair. Eunice looked puzzled, and kept on glancing from one to the other.

"That's my twin brother, Miss Eunice," I said at last, "isn't he like me?"

"Oh!" she exclaimed. "I never!"—her astonishment drawing forth her most nasal pronunciation. "Why did you never tell us. And he is in the brigade too?"

"No, he is not; he is in the Guards; but lost his clothes and borrowed my uniform."

"But does Marguerite know? She takes him for you, I really do believe, for that gentleman met us at the door and she laughed and said, 'Punctual, I do really declare.'"

"And what did he say," I asked, beginning to smell a rat.

"Oh, something smart about 'such an inducement, you know,' and then Marguerite thanked him for her flowers, and, oh! what a deceiver he must be! He said, 'They were the best he could get.'"

I saw it all now, and I was furious; when the dance was over, which I walked through like one in a dream, for I was almost motionless with anger, I took Eunice for a little walk and told her what I suspected; then, scrawling a note to Marguerite on a piece of old letter, explaining the trick of which she and I had been the victims, I gave it to the little sister to give her. This she promised, and having restored her to her parents, I went off to the barracks to prepare a tremendous burst of wrath against my brother and his colleagues, Johnstone and Hood, who were evidently both in the plot. I had been caught in a trap, purposely detained from keeping my appointment by Hood, and purposely personated by my brother. I need not trouble my readers with my note to Marguerite in detail; it was merely exposing the trick, and I concluded by offering her my heart, which I assured her had been her exclusive property for any number of weeks and months.

When I woke from my troubled sleep the following morning, I found a note awaiting me, not from Marguerite, and it was as follows:

"Respected Sir: My daughter desires me to express the deep sense she has of the extreme and unmerited honor you have done her in offering her your hand, but she feels that with your habits of unpunctuality she could never be happy with you, and though far from being mercenary, she feels that she is not one who could exist without the amenities of life—that is to say, on love alone. She confesses that she allowed herself to become temporarily attached to you, sir, believing you to be one who could confer on her the position her beauty should gain for her. She finds she has been deceived, and that your brother is the future possessor of the title she had reason to fancy would have been yours. Sir, she feels sure that such being the case, you will resign all pretensions to her hand. I entirely endorse my daughter's sentiments, and beg to subscribe myself,

"Your obedient servant,

"ALFONSO DUVAL."

My brother was most agreeably astonished at his hearty welcome, when he appeared, in the course of the morning, looking, to do him justice, extremely like a naughty boy. I handed him the elegant effusion above transcribed, and on mastering its contents he laughed till I was fearful of the consequences. He then, by my request, told me the whole story—how he had received a frantic note from Johnstone relative to my fool-hardy determination to fall into the trap laid for me, how he had run down to Agnesville, and he, Hood and Johnstone had laid their heads together to save me.

Knowing that I was supposed by the Duval family to be the eldest son and heir, they arranged that he should personate me until he had become sufficiently acquainted with Marguerite to find out which way the land lay. In the course of the evening he had quietly told her that I was the younger son, and that he had personated me in order to make the acquaintance of one whose beauty was of world-wide renown. So well did he do this, and with such extraordinary tact, that he was immediately forgiven, and Mademoiselle Duval turned the whole battery of her charms on him, as representing the elder son. She flattered herself she had succeeded so well that, without hesitation, she gave me my congé. I need hardly say that it was a case of the bitter bit, and that my brother departed and was never more seen by the lovely eyes of *la belle* Marguerite; and when, after some months, I heard of the fickle beauty's marriage to a rich merchant, it was without a regret, and with devout thankfulness

that my dreadful habit of unpunctuality had for once saved me from a terrible error, and with the conviction that a man may do far worse things than commit the crime of being ten minutes late.

SWEET ARAMINTA.

BY JACK ROBINSON.

Araminta Johnson is, without question, a lovely creature. She is just twenty, of the middle height, and a blonde; she has a profusion of fair hair worn in coils, and thrown back to show to its fullest extent her broad high forehead; her nose is aquiline; a rich natural color glows upon her cheek, and her blue eyes seem to possess the peculiar faculty of being able to penetrate into one's innermost thoughts. At least such was the opinion I formed of Araminta when she came with her mamma for the first time to the fashionable church of St. Magnus-cum-Little-Benjamin, and the pew-opener (we being "high" call him a "verger") ushered them to the pew immediately in front of that in which I sat. In our church we are not yet sufficiently advanced to separate the sexes; hence, on the particular evening when the sweet Araminta burst upon my sight like a fairy vision, I had full opportunity of noting her beauty. Some people have since told me—doubtless they are envious, because I know her and they do not—that her features are by no means so perfect as I describe, and that she is far from being a beauty; still her influence is as great over me now as when I first fixed my gaze upon her, and I can say, too, that I regard her with as much silent admiration. Araminta—dear Araminta I may call her today—will ever be to me the same lovely light-hearted creature.

They were new-comers to the neighborhood, and being, on their first visit to the church, unprovided with the proper hymn-books (a matter not to be wondered at when we consider that every church seems to have its special psalter), it was my supreme felicity to hand Araminta and her mamma those I possessed. Never shall I forget the glance with which my divinity favored me when, the service being over, she returned me the books. I fell desperately in love with the fair creature, and mentally vowed that the remainder of my life should be dedicated to her.

As fortune (good or ill the sequel of my narrative will show) would have it, Araminta and her mamma decided upon occupying the pew into which they had at first been shown and Sunday after Sunday my eyes drank of my beloved's beauty, whilst my ears were strained to catch the sound of that sweet voice, which joined in all the responses and with religious fervor carolled forth its songs of praise.

Araminta and her mamma being uppermost in my thoughts, I felt compelled to speak of them ere introducing myself. As the reader's intelligence will have noted, the writer of this narrative is at heart and by nature a poet—a lover of the beautiful and true; but a relentless fate has made him clerk to a stock-broker, and as though that were not sufficient to drown the minstrel's song, he has been dubbed by his godfathers and godmothers Uriah.

Yes, Uriah Quick—such is the name I bear among my fellows; but neither they nor the world in general estimate the poetic ardor and lofty aspirations which lift me, eagle-like, above the common herd. Morning and mid-day I am a grub delving among Consols, New Threes, Turks, Reduced, Italians, Peruvians, and other sordid substantialities; but with the closing of the office door behind me, and the echo of my footsteps upon the pavement outside, I divest myself of worldly associations, and, extending my broad pinions, take my flight. Higher and higher soars my soul, as though 'twould reach the other pole; then, with a sigh that shows my dearth, it sinks again to vulgar earth. For a time I am lost to all that is passing around me, and not until I enter my humble lodging do I become aware that a scanty and hurried dinner necessitates my lingering over the fragrant Bohemian.

Proud am I to say that the heavenly music which has swept my lyre has not been withheld from the breathing, struggling mass around me. To my credit be it said, that I have afforded the public an opportunity of listening to the sweetest harmonies mind ever conceived. Yes! I have been in print. Like all unknown men, I experienced disappointment at first. I found the great publishers as unappreciative of poetry possessing the true ring of genius as they are fabled to be; but I scorned, I defied such petty obstacles. I was equal to the occasion. If no one would publish for me, I would publish for myself. I was recommended to a printer, and entrusted my precious MS. into his hands. A superior man was that printer; yes, than he exclaimed, "These poems, sir, is first-rate." Upon the strength of this true critical judgment—all the more precious as coming from such a disinterested source—I at once ordered an edition of 500 copies, to be printed in the clearest of type, upon the thickest of paper—large octavo size—with an emerald green cloth binding, and gilt edges.

Was I rash? Was I wrong? No; a thousand times no! I showed the world that I possessed a spirit not to be crushed by the prejudices of publishers, or their lack of enterprise. I was no

Chatterton, no Otway, to waste my sweetness on the desert air—to remain unestimated at my full value until my heart should be still, and the hand that penned my glorious lines should lie stiffened in the tomb. It was wise of me to publish; an inner consciousness tells me so. The little bill, forwarded with the worthy printer's respects, amounted to more than I had expected, and indeed absorbed nearly my year's salary from the stockbroker's office. But what of that? Had I not the sweet consolation that I had done humanity a service? My work had for its title "Mute Heart-burnings," which was at once catching and appropriate to the matter of the poems. With respect to the sale I was somewhat disappointed. Though more than two years have elapsed since the public outpouring of my muse, not more than twenty copies have been sold. One hundred copies were sent to the newspapers to be reviewed, and received but scant recognition; and nearly another hundred were presented to expectant friends, who seemed to think that I was in duty bound to provide them with the volume, and who afterwards amused themselves by passing upon it all sorts of absurd and adverse criticisms. Peculiarly the labor of my teeming brain has proved a failure, but the time will come, and is perhaps not far distant, when each of my little volumes will sell for its weight in gold, and be worth it too. Hurt at the neglect which had attended the first-born of my muse, I resolved that a great portion of the surplus stock should be presented to some of our national institutions. I forwarded copies to the principal hospitals in London, and despatched specimen volumes to each of the county lunatic asylums, where I am told the "Heart-burnings" are in great demand and are much appreciated.

Enough has now been said upon this subject. I am neither vain nor egotistic, and I shrink from the task of further personal description of myself and my attributes. To posterity I leave a legacy that some day or other will be considered priceless; and to that pleasant happy time, when my soul—But to resume.

The reader will already have observed my energy of character. Having fallen madly in love with Araminta, it was not long before I found an opportunity of being introduced to her and her mamma. By what shifts and contrivances I secured the aid of a mutual friend, and by him was made known to the object of my adoration, need not here be stated. Enough that before three months passed I became an occasional caller, and then a frequent visitor at the residence of the fairest dweller in Canonbury.

I found that Mrs. Johnson was a widow who had moved in a far superior circle to that she now occupied, and that Araminta, her only child, was, through the eccentricity of a deceased uncle, the happy possessor of £300 per annum, which, however, was to be taken from her and given, half to her mother and half to an asylum for disabled and homeless cats, should she wed without Mrs. J's consent. Oh! how I loved the fair heiress! How I sympathized with her under the trying circumstances in which she was placed! Naturally Mrs. Johnson would look with distaste upon every suitor. To inherit a fortune than to lose it by the caprice of a mother! No, this must not be. Araminta should not risk such disappointment. I was the gallant knight to rescue her from thralldom; Araminta and her £300 per annum should be mine. The worldly wisdom under whose influence I was a slave from nine till four every day except Sunday, told me that first of all I ought to conciliate the mamma. My soul despised artifice, but it was for her—for Araminta's sake. And the poor girl was grateful. I knew that she saw in me a gallant deliverer, although no word of love had ever passed my lips. In the presence of Mrs. Johnson I was indeed cold and distant to my beloved, but I felt sure that Araminta saw through the ruse. Indeed, she rewarded me with so many beaming smiles that I was fully repaid for the unwilling attentions I bestowed upon her maternal guardian. But I had not long become a frequent visitor at the little Canonbury villa ere I began to fear that in the pursuit of Araminta's affection I had a rival.

At first I only heard of Mr. John Smith through Mrs. Johnson, who informed me that he was a most desirable young man to know, and that she hoped we would shortly become acquainted. Smith, it was said, was a handsome young fellow; Smith was an accomplished man, his vocal ability being something marvellous; Smith was well-to-do; Smith was of good family—in short, Smith was everything desirable, and my ears tired of his name ere I once set my eyes upon him. He accompanied my friends one night to church, and with disgusting impertinence (as I thought) placed himself next to Araminta. They shared the same hymn-book, and seemed to be on the most agreeable terms. In listening for the lovely Araminta's voice my ears caught the sound of his. And they called him a singer! It is perhaps well for the happiness of the world in general that the superior taste and lofty intellect of Uriah Quick are possessed by few.

Handsome, forsooth! In what did his beauty consist? Was it his Roman nose, thick moustache, curly hair and lofty stature that gave him an advantage over me? Pshaw! 'tis the mind, and not the outward appearance that should command respect. As is beautifully expressed in the "Mute Heart-burnings":—

What lifts thee o'er all common kind,
Surely 'tis the beauty of thy mind:
In thee I see no vulgar dross,
Nothing mean, nor weak, nor gross.
I could have struck my rival to the earth