

here, say a boy and girl spooning? 'Uman interest, that's what the public likes in a picture.'

"My dear sir," said O'Mara, with the air of one who unbends to make his meaning plain to an inferior intelligence which must needs be conciliated, "it is the *absence* of human interest which makes the preciousness of art. The intrusion of a boy and girl 'spooning' (he seemed to speak the word under protest, and proceeded to clear his palate of its slangy offensiveness by a mouthful of polysyllables) would annihilate the æsthetic value of the composition. The interview of anything so vulgar on that majestic solitude of nature would be an outrage, my dear sir, a positive outrage."

"Don't see it," said the dealer, shortly.

O'Mara had spoken with less than his ordinary tact. Nobody likes to be told that a suggestion which he thinks clever is an outrage. Sincerity was not O'Mara's strong point, but if he had any touch of it in his nature, it was on questions in which art was concerned. He had his own conception of what pictures should be, and had painted this one in accordance with it. It was hard to receive lessons from a vulgarian who talked about "uman interest," and in his artistic heat O'Mara temporarily forgot that the vulgarian, though artistically contemptible, was financially worthy of respect.

"You work in them two figgers," said the dealer, with the air of a man who speaks his last word, "and I'll call it 'In the Gloaming,' and give you a tanner for it."

Had this been put a little more in the form of a request and a little less directly as an order, O'Mara might have yielded. As it was, he felt compelled to resent the outrage on art and on his own superior social status. He was an aristocratic amateur who condescended to sell, not a beggarly dauber who kept the pot boiling with the labour of his hands.

"I am afraid that, even when improved by the figures 'spooning'—that I think was your expression—my humble effort would hardly be worth your offering for it. I wish you good morning."

"Morning," said the man of business, rattling his money in his pockets, and permitted the nephew of Sir Charles Vandeleur to open the door for himself.

He drove to two or three other places with no better luck. He had to avoid most of the dealers he knew, being in their debt. The rebuffs dashed his courage, and he was sensible that after each his manner was less easy and engaging, and he did not drop in the name of his titled relatives in Surrey quite so naturally as he could have wished.

The lack of human interest was so strongly insisted on that at last he suggested to a dealer who seemed inclined to buy that he should work in the "spooning" couple. He also suggested, as a happy thought which had just struck him, that the picture should be christened "In the Gloaming," and dwelt on the popularity of the air of that name. The dealer assented, and promised to give him ten pounds for the picture, so altered.

O'Mara bade his cabman drive him to the Temple, where he had an acquaintance named Seyton, who dabbled in the arts, and who placed his tools at his disposal, and posed for the masculine member of the interpolated group, pressing the laundress into his service to represent his innamorata.

Seyton was a light-hearted youth, and did not greatly sympathize with O'Mara in his mournings over his degradation of art, seeming to see the humorous side of the situation more clearly. His impromptu fellow model, it may be observed, was younger and comelier than most of her kind.

The early spring evening was beginning to fall when O'Mara had completed his task. He had eaten nothing all day, and, when Seyton proposed that they should dine together, readily assented. He took the picture to the dealer, received his ten pounds, and discharged his cabman, whose fare had been accumulating all this time.

At the restaurant to which they repaired for dinner Seyton found two of his acquaintances, and an hour passed rapidly enough at table. O'Mara dined with what he felt to be a commendable modesty for a man with over nine pounds in his pocket; a little clear soup, a bit of fish, a bottle

of Beaune, a cup of coffee, and a liqueur, are not unjustifiable extravagances for a man so famished.

Dinner over, Seyton proposed an adjournment to his rooms for a quiet round at nap. If that patient figure of his wife sitting at home with their sick child upon her knee had troubled O'Mara much during the day, the genial influences of the dinner and his confreres had quite expelled the vision from his mind.

They went to the Temple together, and Seyton hospitably produced liquors and cigars, of which he and his two acquaintances liberally partook, with a proportionate access of geniality. They were all three younger in the ways of the world than they would like to have been thought, or they would have noticed that though O'Mara was as free in talk and laughter as they, he was by far the soberest member of the party, and though his glass went as often to his lips as the best of good fellowship required, it required filling much more seldom than theirs.

He won steadily for half an hour, and as they were playing a ready-money game had pretty nearly doubled his capital in that time. Then one of his companions began to get restive.

"I say, Mr. O'Mara," he asked, "isn't it a bit odd that when you deal you're the only one who ever gets an ace?"

A question of that kind would disconcert most people, but O'Mara showed no sign of understanding its obvious meaning.

"Is that so?" he asked. "I had not noticed it." "Jimmy always gets rusty if the luck goes against him," remarked Seyton.

"Very natural," said O'Mara, with good-natured forbearance. "Nobody likes losing, I don't, I know."

As Jimmy happened to get a fairly good hand next time O'Mara dealt, he made no remark for a time. But his next was even more startling than his first.

"You low cad!" he exclaimed, "you've got the ace of hearts and the ace of clubs between your knees and the table."

He dragged the table away, and the cards fell to the ground.

O'Mara raised his hand to dash the pack in his face, but Seyton caught his arm.

"None of that," he said sternly but quietly. "I think you'd better go, O'Mara. I beg your pardon, you fellows."

O'Mara, white as death, took up his hat and stick and left the room, the others making way for him. The flush of rage which had followed Jimmy's denunciation of him had passed, and he felt sick and shaken. Seyton's tone of quiet scorn rang in his ears, the apology he had made for intruding upon his friends the society of a detected card-sharper, was bitter to remember.

He had reached the Strand before he remembered that he had left Seyton's rooms not only without the money he had won, which he certainly would not have been allowed to take, but without the bulk of his own money.

For a moment the discovery had stripped him of the icy veneer of affectation which long use had made second nature to him, and he stood still in the street, shaking his fist and sputtering curses until the passers-by paused and stared at him.

He walked on, drunk and blind with rage.

The idea crossed his mind that he might go back to the Temple and claim his money, but even his cynicism quailed at the thought of facing those who had so recently expelled him from their society as a convicted swindler. The figure of Jimmy, who was muscular and obviously had a nasty temper, finally appeared in his mind's eye to put the idea to flight.

He passed under a gas lamp and counted the coins remaining to him. They amounted in all to a few shillings.

"Was ever such damnable luck!" he groaned. "To be detected by a pack of boobies like that. I can never show my face again. I must get out of this. London is played out for me. I'll go home and work for a day or two, make a little money, and go. Gillian and the child must shift for themselves."

He steadied his shaking nerves with a glass of

brandy at a bar near Charing Cross, and doggedly started for home. It was raining, and before he arrived in Peter street he was wet to the skin.

He let himself in with his latch-key, and mounted the stairs.

The door of his room was ajar, and he heard voices within—his wife, and the deeper tones of a man. He crept softly up the final flight and listened.

(To be continued.)

Personal and Literary Notes.

Lord and Lady Carrington, the most popular pair who have ever inhabited Government House, Sydney, Australia, left for England on November 1st. Great sorrow was shown by the citizens at their departure, and every possible mark of esteem and respect was showered upon the retiring Governor and his charming wife. The streets were lined with troops, and his Excellency's carriage, as it stood waiting, was piled high with bouquets of Australia's choicest flowers; and as the vehicle passed through the streets, towards the railway station, it was literally bombarded with floral tributes. Lord Carrington is to be succeeded by the Earl of Jersey, who left London for his new residence on 5th December. A large party of friends assembled to wish him "God-speed," and cheers were given as the train moved out.

An honourable career in journalism has closed with the retirement of Mr. J. Lash Latey from the editorship of the *Illustrated London News* at the ripe age of eighty-two. Mr. Latey has been connected with the paper from its foundation in 1842, and was appointed editor in 1858. A Devonshire man by birth, he was destined for the Church, but preferred a literary career. Mr. Latey for many years contributed the Christmas poems which have formed a feature of the Christmas numbers of his paper. His successor is Mr. Clement King Shorter, who has been for some time a member of his staff.

At auction recently a copy of Milton's Poems, dated 1645, containing a scarce portrait of him, realized £65 10s.

The desk in which the manuscript of "Waverley" lay neglected and almost forgotten, till Scott came upon it in looking for some tackle, has lately come into the possession of Mr. John Murray, jr. It was given by Scott to Daniel Terry, and its history since that time is quite clear.

It is pleasant to know that a good proportion of the school sketches and manuscripts by Thackeray sold recently have found their way back to Charterhouse. There are already some interesting relics of Thackeray to keep them company at his old school. Besides a few of his sketches, Mrs. Thackeray Ritchie many years ago gave to Charterhouse the original manuscript of "The Newcomes," and there is also preserved at the school the bedstead on which he slept during the last few years of his life.

The Very Reverend Richard William Church, Dean of St. Paul's, who died at Dover on 9th December, was one of the most scholarly men in England. Although comparatively few works from his pen were issued in book form, they bore evidence of a thorough mastery of his subjects, were written in a charming style and were most refined in tone. His contributions to periodical literature were numerous and always in great demand. His leading works were: "Essays and Reviews;" "Life of St. Anselm;" "The Beginning of the Middle Ages," and volumes on "Spencer," "Bacon" and "Dante."

On Monday, 5th January, Mr. Henry Irving and Miss Ellen Terry will reproduce in London "Much Ado About Nothing," with an unusually strong caste.

Scribner's Magazine will begin an Australian edition with the January number, and a group of articles on that country will appear during the coming year. Josiah Royce, of Harvard, writes his "Impressions of Australia" in the January issue.

Mr. Herbert Herkomer has given an interesting account of his early struggles as an artist. Twenty-one years ago he was working for ninepence an hour on decorative work at South Kensington. With a capital of £2 he started in business as wood engraver. His first block cost him £1, and this, when finished, he took to Mr. Thomas, at the *Graphic* office, who at once accepted it, and paid him £8 for it.