The Season of Showers.

Barefooted boys scud up the street,
Or scurry under sheltering sheds;
And school-girl faces pale and sweet
Gleam from the sashes about their heads.
Doors bang; and mother voices call
From alien houses; and rusty gutter
Are slammed; and high above it all
The thunder grim reverberates.
And then abrupt, the rain, the rain!
The earth lies gasping; and the eyes
Behind the streaming window panes
Smile at the trouble of the skies.
The high hay smokes, sharp echoes ring;
The cattle bawl and cow bells clank;
And into town comes galloping
The farmer's horse with steaming flank.
The swallow dips beneath the eaves,
And flirts his plumes and folds his wings
And under the catawba leaves
The caterpillar curls and clings.
The bumblebee is pelted down
The wet stem of the hollyhock;
And sullenly in spattered brown
The cricket leaps the garden walk.
Within, the baby claps his hands
And crows with rapture strange and vague
Without, beneath the rose bush stands
A dripping rooster on one leg.

—*James Whitcomb Riley.*

A BARITONE'S DEVOTION;

OR A TALE OF SUNNY ITALY.

The place had been strangely still for some minutes. Nicolo had left his caldron, and now lay on the floor smoking; the card-players had finished their game, and seemed to think it was not worth while to begin another before the event of the evening came off; one swarthy, black-bearded fellow shuffled the cards, the others lounged at ease, watching the prisoner indifferently.

When at length a voice in the distance spoke the password, everyone present started slightly. Carlo drew himself up to his full height and looked steadily toward the dark archway; Brancaleone rose, and, with one hand on his victim and the knife in the other, glanced over his shoulder, ready either to strike or to forbear; Lionbruno dropped his cross, and glanced in great agitation from the archway to the prisoner, and back again to the archway. The footsteps drew nearer; the messenger suddenly turned the corner and emerged into sight; the torch-light fell on the token in his hand—was it white or red? With a gasp of relief, Lionbruno sprung forward and seized the handkerchief, waving it joyfully in the air; while the messenger advanced and handed a sealed packet to the chief, who at once sheathed his knife and turned to the prisoner.

"You are free, signor," he said, gravely.

"Nita is ruined! I have failed!" thought Carlo.

The sharpest pang he had ever had to bear shot through him; and, without a word, he fell to the ground.

"*Diavolo!*" exclaimed the chief. "I have often seen a prisoner overcome on hearing his death-sentence, but never yet on getting his reprieve!"

CHAPTER XXXVII.

AT PALAZZO FORTI.

On that Monday evening, after Carlo had started for Casa Bella, Nita dined alone, Gigi hovering round, and always ready to accept promiscuous mouthfuls off her plate like a pet dog. When the child had gone to bed she sat down to the piano, her fingers roaming over the keys, and playing a sort of subdued accompaniment to her reverie.

"I am going to turn over a new leaf," she thought to herself; "it is, after all, rather pleasant to be good, and not so hard as I thought. I have enjoyed these days on the yacht with the Brittons; it was not half so dull as I expected. There was something so peaceful and quiet about it. I think I'm tired of being naughty. Now I'll be like Carlo; that will be a novelty."

She was interrupted by the entrance of the servant with a visitor's card. Holding out her hand for it carelessly, she glanced down at the name and saw that it was Comerio's. A terrible fear seized on her.

"Say I do not receive to-night. I am engaged—not well!" she exclaimed breathlessly.

The servant retired, but in another minute came back still bearing the card, on which Comerio had penciled a few words:

"You must see me on a matter of life and death!"

Nita's color came and went, but to refuse now seemed to her impossible, and the next minute she was alone with her lover. Yet, after all, did she love him or hate him? Of one thing only she was conscious—that with all her heart she feared him, and that over her he had some strange deadly influence.

"How can you dare to come here?" she cried passionately. "Did I not tell you I would never speak to you again?"

Comerio smiled.

"I come because I love you," he replied; "because I knew you would not keep to your threat; because, happen what may, I will never give you up. I have waited for you all these years, Nita, but now you will be mine."

"Never!" she cried vehemently; and, with a glowing sense of terror, she tried to pass him and reach the door.

"Do not speak too hastily," he said, interceptingher; "you are altogether in my power. Your brother has thwarted me for long; now it is my turn. If you wish him to die, to be murdered for your sake, you will refuse to come with me. If you wish to save him you will leave Naples with me to-night; we will fly to Australia and begin our new life there!"

"Oh, it isn't true!" sobbed Nita; "it can't be true! Carlo could never be in your power!"

"Not true?" said Comerio, with a mocking laugh. "It is as true as the gospel. Do you think the Pozzuoli road is so much frequented that I couldn't have him waylaid? I tell you his fate rests in your hands. Now choose!"

"You must be a fiend!" sobbed Nita. "Only a fiend could make such a plan!"

"A fiend or a lover," said Comerio. "All is fair in love and war, Nita, and I love you—I love you—and I will have you. You shall not deny me!"

Again the old subtle influence crept over poor Nita's tempest-tossed heart; it needed only half an hour of Comerio's impassioned pleading to break down all her resolutions. After all, her life was hard and weary, and husband rough and overbearing, and goodness was dull, and this scheme was exciting; besides, it would save Carlo—Carlo, whom she really loved. Yes, she would save him at all costs; she, too, would be self-sacrificing—she would give up everything to save him from death.

It was all over very quickly—the dispute, the struggle, the promise—then once more she was alone, with but a few hours to make all her arrangements for her flight, for Comerio had promised that a carriage should be in waiting for her at 12 o'clock, and had hastened off to see that all his plans were in working order. He had absolute confidence in his own power over her, which was indeed great; but there was another Power which he had forgotten to take into account—a Power which could no more be laid hold of, and shut up with Carlo in the brigands' retreat, than the wind.

"He shall not die for my sake!" sobbed Nita to herself; "I will save him by yielding. And yet—yet it is what he would say was wrong; he would call it doing evil that good might come. Oh! what am I to do? Why did I ever see Comerio?"

She was like a poor, terrified bird in a cage, flying now to this side, now to that, but meeting always with hard, impassable bars. The temptation to escape from her distasteful life into a life that was new and untried was terrible. And yet, as in sick recoil she looked at her past, there shone out in it always one bright light. A hundred little details of Carlo's care for her flashed back into her mind; scenes rose up before her in the green-room, at rehearsals, in desolate lodgings, on tedious journeys; and always he was there as her helper, the one perfectly reliable man in her world.

In wild excitement she sprung to her feet. Comerio, in the heat of the moment, had let something fall about the Pozzuoli road? Why should she not rush to Casa Bella and prevent her brother's return, and save him from the attack that had been planned? What gave her strength for this desperate resolution she hardly knew, but the thought itself seemed to lend her wings. She rushed to her bedroom, snatched up a cloak and bonnet, drew a veil over her face, and, without even pausing to close the door of the house behind her, crept down the long stone staircase. The *concierge* was reading *La Campana* as she glided past his little office; he was so much absorbed that he never even saw her.

And now she was actually in the street, and, for the first time since her resolution had been made, a feeling of fear and perplexity overwhelmed her, her brain seemed to reel. "Holy Virgin protect me!" she sobbed, and walked on blindly, too much terrified to form any clear plan of action. All at once she caught sight of a disengaged carriage, and signed to the driver to stop. He looked at her suspiciously, but she was far too miserable to resent that.

"Drive to Pozzuoli," she said; "to Casa Bella."

The man, however, grumbled. It was late, a long drive, his horse was tired. Nita thrust two gold coins into his hand.

"Go! go!" she cried. "Another, if you will drive fast!"

Then she leaned back in the carriage and covered her face with her hands, trembling in every limb, expecting each minute that Comerio would find out all and pursue her. The drive seemed endless, but at last Casa Bella was reached; she sprung out and asked eagerly for Signor Detmil.

"He is not here, signora," said old Dino, looking at her curiously. "He has not been here at all."

Nita gave a cry that brought all the household flocking into the hall. They took her into the Rose room, and there gradually drew from her the whole piteous story. Francesca, as she listened, turned pale as death, but to endure a moment's discussion or delay was to her impossible. Before the captain or Mr. Britton could even recover enough from the shock to frame a clear idea, she had left the room, had run bareheaded out into the summer night, and was flying to the telegraph office. Panting, breathless, with a weight of torturing fear at her heart, she yet ran like the wind. Carlo was in terrible danger, but she might yet save him. The office was still open; she wrote without a moment's delay the following words to the chief of the police: "Signor Carlo Donati was waylaid on the road to Pozzuoli this afternoon, and has not been heard of since. The plot was arranged by the singer Giovanni Comerio. Arrest him immediately."

In the meantime, Comerio, little thinking of the turn affairs had taken, was making his arrangements with the utmost calmness and deliberation. First of all, he went to Brancaleone's agent, who lived in one of the worst quarters of Naples. Here he deposited the white handkerchief, which had been the token decided on, and the little packet of notes for the payment of the brigand chief. Then he gave his final orders about the carriage which was to take them out of Naples; and afterward, finding that he had yet some time to spare on his hands, he went into a *café*, where, to fortify himself for the excitement of the evening, he called for a bottle of champagne.

Sauntering out of the *café*, and still musing over his good fortune, he was a little startled when a passer-by thrust a note into his hand and walked rapidly on. He paused to read it under a street-lamp. It ran as follows:

"Signor Comerio, be warned by a friend, and fly from Naples at once. You are in danger of being arrested."

Though capable, in order to gratify himself, of a certain amount of rash daring, Comerio was at heart a coward. He had a friend connected with the police force, and did not doubt for a moment that the warning came from him. He knew that he had not a moment to lose. Still the mere hatred of being baffled in his plans induced him to risk a call at Palazzo Forti. There was yet a chance that they might be able to fly together; and now that all was known, he risked little more by making his final attempt. Breathlessly he made his way through the dusky courtyard and up the long stone staircase. To his surprise the door at the top was open. He stole in and opened the door to the ante-room, calling Anita in a low voice. He went into the *sala*, but that, too was empty and deserted. He knocked at the door of the bedroom; that, also, was tenantless. Then, with a faint suspicion dawning in his mind that Nita had played him false, he ground his teeth together, and flung open the two remaining doors in the suite. Possibly she was with the child. Snatching up a lamp from a table in the passage, he went into the room to make quite sure that she was not there—looked with a sort of dumb rage at Donati's various possessions which were strewn about—then walked up to the bed where Gigi lay sleeping, with both arms flung up on the pillow above his head, and his ruddy-brown little face the picture of sturdy peacefulness. Comerio shook him by the shoulder.

"Where is your mother, child? he said, in a voice that terrified Gigi. "Can't you speak?" he reiterated. "Where is your mother?"

"I don't know!" sobbed the child.

"*Accidente!* she has played me false!" cried Comerio.

Then, suddenly holding his breath, he paused to listen. Undoubtedly men's voices and footsteps were approaching. Darting to the door he drew the bolt, then rushed across to the window, flung it open, leaped out on the balcony, and disappeared in the darkness.

Gigi's first impulse was to draw the bed-clothes over his head and sob for very terror, but some recollection of Carlo checked him, and summoning up all his courage, he scrambled out of bed, unbolted the door, and ran out into the passage, calling now for Carlo, now for his mother.

Strange men whom he had never seen before were marching in and out of the rooms; whether to run to them or from them he hardly knew.

"Here is a child!" exclaimed one of the detectives, picking him up in his arms. "Tell us, little one, who is in the house?"

"Signor Comerio!" sobbed Gigi.

"*Santo diavolo!* where!" exclaimed the man.

Gigi pointed in the direction of the room.

"Through the window," he said, with a rush of tears.

For all answer, the man tossed him on to the bed as though he had been an India-rubber ball, and leaped out on the balcony, while the rest rushed down-stairs to cut off the retreat below.

But their efforts were useless; Comerio had got the start of them, and, with darkness to favor him, found little difficulty in making his escape from Naples.

While the Neapolitan police were still searching high and low for him, he was steaming down the Mediterranean, knowing that never again could he dare to set foot in Italy, and baffled both in his love and in his revenge.

"If only I had had time to go again to Brancaleone's agent, and change the white token for the red, I could bear all else!" he reflected.

But the white handkerchief remained just as he had left it with the sealed packet of notes, and the true love had triumphed over the false.

At Casa Bella all was confusion, and afterward, those fearful hours seemed to Francesca like a long, hideous nightmare. She had vague recollections of returning from the telegraph office, and seeing Clare and Kate bending over Nita's prostrate figure; of a discussion with her father and Uncle George as to whether she should drive in to Naples with them or not; of reaching Palazzo Forti in the dead of night, and finding poor little Gigi sobbing and shivering; of driving home with him on her knee, and feeling a sort of comfort in folding her arms round him and letting him talk on in his happy ignorance; then, of two fearful nights and days, while all Naples was searched, and not the slightest clew as to Carlo's whereabouts could be discovered. In the meantime Nita lay in the guest-chamber, and many times each day both priest and doctor passed in and out.

"Why do those men come so dreffly often?" asked Gigi, one day, turning to his friend and playfellow, Sibyl, and forgetting for a minute the sham-fight which was going on between his two boxes of tin soldiers.

"Why, Dino says your mother is dying," said Sibyl, her eyes dilating. "But, oh, Gigi, perhaps I oughtn't to have said anything! Don't tell the others I told you!"

"But she can't," said Gigi, emphatically, "not until Uncle Carlo comes back."

And so, while the elders of the household lived through their terrible agony of suspense, the two children, who were much thrown together, and left to their own devices in those days, kept their own counsel as children do, and waited gravely for Carlo's return.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

AT CASA BELLA.

Early on the Thursday morning Captain Britton was roused from a short and uneasy sleep on the sofa in his study by the sound of voices on the staircase. He rose quickly, remembering that Francesca had taken Miss Claremont's place in the sick-room, and that he had promised to be at hand in case anything was needed.

"How is Madame Merlino?" he asked, going out into the hall, where Franzoni, the doctor, was just taking up his hat and cloak.

"Better for the time," replied the doctor, "but I doubt if she will last much longer; the shock has been too much for her, and this suspense is the very worst thing. She has inherited her mother's constitution, you see, and when the heart is in question such a strain is killing work."

Francesco moved away from the speakers that she might hide her tears. A lamp which had burned for many hours stood on the table, gleaming faintly in the early morning light. She turned it out, glad to have some little trivial household matter to attend to, and findingit, as most women do, a relief in trouble.

Captain Britton went out with the doctor, not sorry to escape for a few minutes from the burdened atmosphere of his own house; and Francesca, knowing that Father Cristoforo was with Nita, lingered beside the open door, glad for a few minutes to be alone with her grief. The sun had not risen, but rosy clouds floated in the soft, sheony sky, and a delicious fragrance came from the garden, which was all wet with dew. Everything was still and peaceful, with the restful calmness of dawn; perhaps it unconsciously influenced Francesca, or perhaps it was mere exhaustion which quieted her throbbing pulses. Certainly the sound of footsteps on the road from Naples, which yesterday would have made her heart leap into her mouth, scarcely roused her now. She just looked up wearily, too heavy-hearted to hope any longer. But suddenly the blood surged through her veins, and with a low cry, she rushed forward.

"Carlo! Carlo!" she sobbed; you have come at last!"

Clinging to him, in that first minute of rapture she forgot all else; but a second glance at his face reminded her of Nita, for he bore the look of a man who has passed through terrible suffering, and how much he knew of Comerio's plot she could not tell.

"Carlino," she said, tenderly, "try and prepare yourself for what I have to to you."

"I am prepared," he said, in the voice of one whose work is over—one who knows that he has failed.

"Who can have met you so early? Oh, Carlo, we have tried to take care of her, but she is dying. She has been ill ever since that Monday night."

"Do you mean that Nita is here with you? that she is safe?" he cried, eager hope dawning in his eyes. Then, as she told him all, a light, such as she had never before seen, shone in his face.

"God has been very good to us," he said simply.

In a very few words he told her what had happened to him; and then, while she went to prepare Nita for his coming, he stayed below, receiving the warm-hearted greetings of the captain, giving him a brief account of his imprisonment and release, and thanking him with tears in his eyes for having sheltered his sister. Somehow the old patronizing tone disappeared altogether from the captain's voice as he struggled to reply.

"Do you thank us for what we have done?" he exclaimed, with a choking sensation in his throat, and forgetting altogether to fear what people would say, forgetting even to regret the connection with the stage. "I wish it could have been more. I wish I had stood by you in the past, Carlo."

As he thought of the insults he had heaped on the Italian years ago, the color mounted to his temples, and he would have given all in his power to have had over again the opportunity which he had wasted.

But before anything had passed between them Francesca came to summon Carlo to the sick-room, and not sorry to be free from the captain's questions and congratulations, he followed her upstairs into a bed-room which he knew must be her own. It touched him to think that Nita should be in this place, of all others, with its indescribable air of purity and peace and safety, with its English comforts, with its girlish ornaments and pictures. The bed stood facing the window, with its white mosquito curtans drawn back, but he could not see Anita, for Father Cristoforo was bending over her.

"My daughter," the old man was saying, in his gentle, soothing voice, "be comforted. Our prayers are heard. Try to take this joy calmly, and as a pledge of your forgiveness."

Then he quietly drew back, and looking with loving reverence at his old pupil, signed to him to take his place.

One glance at Anita's worn, weary face showed Carlo that she was dying. He took both her outstretched hands in his, and bending down, kissed her again and again. She was dying, but yet it was the sense that she was safe which outweighed all else.

For a long time perfect silence reigned in the room, then Nita spoke faintly.

"Why I liked the yacht," she said, half-dreamily, "was because you were all so good—there was no temptation. I wanted to be good—only it was always too hard."

Worn out, exhausted and fearful, she had none of that natural clinging to life which Carlo had so lately felt.

"I never understood that till now," she said, glancing at the crucifix which Father Cristoforo held on the other side of the bed.

"But now I see it all; it is you that have made me see it, Carlino."

His eyes filled with glad tears, and again he kissed her reverently.

"You will keep to the stage still," she said, after a time. "Let me at least feel that I have done that much for the profession. I've been no credit to it myself, but you, Carlino, you went into it for my sake, and they will respect you. You will not leave the stage?"

"No," he said, turning his thoughts to the future with an effort; "I shall not leave it."

"I should have liked to sing with you once more," she murmured, dreamily. "When you hold me like that, it makes me feel like Gilda. I tried to put you out the last time we sang that scene—it was at New York, don't you remember; the night of Sardoni's benefit, and I was cross because my white satin had got some paint on it."

"My daughter," said Father Cristoforo, gently, "you will wear yourself out with talking."

"No matter!" she said, with a little impatient motion of the hand. "I am dying—I shall die as I please. Where is Gigi? Let me say good-bye to Gigi."

Francesca slipped out of the room and went to find the child, bringing him in just as he was, in his little night-shirt, and with his hair all rough and disordered. She had told him that his mother was very ill, and that he must be quiet; but in the glad surprise of seeing Carlo he forgot all else, and with a rapturous shout of "*zio caro!*" sprung toward the bed. Carlo took him in his arms, trying to quiet him with kisses, and Nita watched them sadly.

"Well, it is natural enough he should care for you and not for me," she said, wistfully. "I never liked to be troubled with him."

"No, no," said Carlo, quickly; "he loves you, it is only that he does not understand illness."

And putting the child on the bed, he laid the little, fat, brown hands in between the cold, white ones. Gigi looked at his mother with wandering eyes.

"Do you think he will have a voice?" she asked. "He surely will sing—I hope he will. But don't let Merlino be unkind to him, promise to care for him always."

"Always," said Carlo. "For your sake."

And Francesca bent down and kissed her, while the child, aware now that something was wrong, listened wistfully.

"I have been a bad wife," moaned Nita, "and a bad sister, and a bad mother. Oh, Gigi—my Gigi—you must not grow like me! Be good, *carino*—be good!"

"Yes, mamma," said Gigi, simply.

With a sob she raised herself and caught him in her arms, but once more deadly faintness crept over her, and she fell back unconscious.

Francesca took Gigi away to Sibyl, and by the time she was able to return Anita had revived. Father Cristoforo had thrown the window wide open; Francesca stole quietly across the room and stood beside it, listening now to the old priest's hushed voice, now to the birds in the garden below; the sun had risen, and sea, and trees, and houses glowed in the roseate light, contrasting strangely with the scene within. When the last offices were ended there was a long pause, broken at length by Anita's faint voice.

"Why are the footlights out?" she asked, impatiently.

"Because the sun has risen," replied Carlo, smoothing back the fringe of dark hair from her cold forehead.

"I can't see," she said, with a little shudder.

Then after a minute, losing consciousness of the present, she sang just above her breath a little snatch from "Faust:"

"O del ciel angeli immortal!
Deh mi guidate con voi lassu."

There was something inexpressibly touching in the fair't yet still beautiful voice; Carlo's breast heaved and hiseyes grew dim. Evidently she was wandering—fancying herself back once more in the old life.

"Well! it is over," she murmured, "and I'm tired—its a long opera! How cold it is lying on this draughty stage! But Carlo will be waiting with my cloak, he always thinks of me, though I am so cross to him." Then, her voice rising to a cry, "Carlino! Carlino! come back! O God! I have killed him—my sin has killed him."

"I am here, Nita, close to you," he replied, bending over her, while Father Cristoforo held the crucifix to her lips.

She came back to the present, and grew calmer.

"You see I never understood till you showed me," she whispered. "Oh, Carlo, how much you have borne for me?"

He held her more closely. "Don't you understand that I love you?" he said.

"Yet I wish that—I too—had loved!" she gasped, in a voice so sad that Francesca's heart ached for her.

After that she never spoke clearly again, only, as Carlo listened intently to the last long-drawn sighs, he caught one more faint whisper.

"*Ceau!*"

Then he laid her down tenderly on the pillow, and closed her eyes, and folded her hands over the crucifix on her breast. The sun had fully risen, and golden rays played about him as he moved. Francesca noticed it, and would not draw down the blind.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

AFTERWARD.

For the next two or three weeks the story of Carlo and Anita was in every one's mouth; the account of Comerio's vengeance, and the alarming news of brigandage in the very environs of Naples, created something like a panic, while, as to Donati's share in the matter, opinions were divided. Some called him a hero, some a fool, others remarked cynically that in any case the affair would be a good advertisement for him, and that now, at any rate, he might be expected to draw large houses.

Merlino, when he earned all, made scarcely any comment on what had happened. He merely wound up the affairs of his company, and announced his retirement from the position of impresario. Only in regard to Gigi did he show any sign of feeling.

"You'll be kind to the child, Val?" he said, as he bade his brother-in-law good-bye. "I shall stay in America for a few years till this scandal has had time to fade in people's minds. But you'll go to school and see that Gigi is all right, now and then; won't you?"

"He shall be like my own child!" said Carlo, warmly. His holidays shall always be spent with us."

People were surprised that the new baritone fulfilled his engagement at the San Carlo that summer. Some called him cold-blooded, others called him brave and honorable, and both those who praised and those who blamed flocked to hear him. He went his way, as ever, with straightforward simplicity, thinking of the past with thankfulness and of the future with eager hope.

"*Carina,*" he said, one afternoon, as he sat beside Francesca in the familiar old belvedere which had sweet memories for them both—"*Carina,* here is work enough for me for months to come—offers of engagements all over Europe. Piale wishes to know which of them we are pleased to accept."

"We?" she said, smiling and blushing.

"You do not think I could go without you?" he exclaimed. "You will not send me away alone?"

"No," she said, with deepening color; "I don't think you would take enough care of yourself."

"Darling!" he said, drawing her toward him, "why should we wait any longer? Let us be married quietly while Mr. Britton and Clare are still here."

"But they are only here for another week," said Francesca.

"*Ebbene?*" said Carlo, with a of expression in his tone.

"How could I be ready?" she faltered.

"A wedding takes a great deal of preparation—certainly Flora's did. I must at least have a dress that is fit for your eyes to look on."

"If you want to dress to please me, I will tell you what to wear," he said, smiling. "Wear that white dress like a baby's—the one you wore on the night of our betrothal."

"That old nainsook!" she cried. "Why, Carlo, it is more fit for the rag-bag than for a wedding!"

He made one of his expressive Neapolitan gestures.

"I should like nothing else so well, and you will see it will wash and get up in two days' time, and look as good as new. Oh, I am very learned in such matters now, I assure you."

She smiled and nestled close to him.

"I will wear anything to please you, *mio caro!* And, after all, we don't want to be thinking of new dresses just now. All I want is to go away from everything else for a little while—away with you. Let us go somewhere among the mountains, where there are no people and no newspapers—nothing but just we two by ourselves!"

He kissed her white forehead.

"*Carina,*" he said, thoughtfully, "if one did not believe success to be a sort of sacrament it would frighten one."

She mused over the old definition in the prayer-book, and caught his meaning.

"They said at Merlebank it was useless knight-errantry," she replied; "but I think they changed their minds when they saw the smile on Nita's face after all was over. Do you remember what she said about those days on the yacht? It made me cry, for I never saw till then how fearful temptation must be."

"She conquered and is at rest!" said Carlo, steadying his voice with an effort. "Father Cristoforo told me he never knew one so young who has so little clinging to life. It is as she would have wished."

For some time he was grave and silent; his mind was full of Nita's sad story.

"Does it not seem to you more than three years," he said, at length, "since we last sat here together like this? To me it seems like a lifetime."

"And, oh, Carlo," said Francesca, clinging to him, "I don't know how it is—but, though so many sad things have come between, I can't help feeling happier even than long ago! I thought I couldn't be happier than I was when you first told me you loved me, here in this summer-house—but now, Carlo!—now——"

* * * * * *

So, one day in the following week, Francesca put on the old white dress and her confirmation veil, and Kate twined orange blossom and myrtle into a wreath, and Sibyl and Gigi gathered the prettiest white flowers thew could find in the garden, and with infinite pains made them up into a very original bridal bouquet. Then every one at Casa Bella drove into Naples, where Carlo awaited them with Enrico Ritter at his side; and presently, with Piale, Marioni, old Florestano, and Sardoni and his wife for spectators, the two lovers were quietly married.

"After all," said Captain Britton, when the bride and bridegroom had driven away, "though I suppose a voice like that must be used, yet I shall always think that Carlo deserved to be something better than a singer."

"My dear sir," exclaimed Piale, vehemently, "the life of a good singer is one perpetual course of self-denial! And, I assure you, we, too, have had our heroes. Must a whole profession be despised because some of those engaged in it are not all they should be? When a man like Donati is sent to us, for heaven's sake let us keep him, and say, as in duty bound, 'DEO GRATIAS!'"

[THE END.]

THERE seems to be a wide difference between the aims of the French Anarchists and Socialists, although by many they are viewed as similar organizations. In France yesterday the Socialists distributed their election programme of a paternalistic but strictly constitutional movement. Its articles are substantially as follows:

1. Establishment of school canteens at which children may obtain, at reduced cost, meat lunches between morning and afternoon classes.
2. Establishment of maternity hospitals and asylums for aged persons and invalid workingmen.
3. Eight hours in public contracts.
4. Labor exchange.
5. Suppression of taxes on articles of food.
6. Exemption from personal taxes for all citizens paying small house rents and heavier taxes for those paying higher rates. Proper sanitation and repairs of tenements.
7. The placing of the unemployed by municipalities.
8. Establishment of a gratuitous medical service and pharmacies with reduced prices.
9. Free public baths and lavatories.
10. Sanitariums for children of laborers at the expense of the commune.
11. Legal advice free of cost in the actions in which laboring men are interested.
12. Remuneration of municipal office holders cut down to the maximum pay of laboring men, so that the latter may not be excluded in future from the administration of the commune.
13. Workingmen acting as arbitrators between employer and employed to be paid.
14. Publication of a bulletin of the decisions rendered by the council.

—We sometimes hear a great orator exclaim: "As far as the east is from the west." The east and the west are not far apart. In fact, they meet at every point. The west is just as far east as the east is. *Galveston News.*

WHO IT WAS.

"Tommy," said the teacher calmly,
"Courage take, your duty do;
If you know who broke the window,
Tell—I shall not punish you."
"Sure of that?" asked Tommy sharply,
"Why, of course," came the reply.
"Well"—and Tommy moved off slowly
Towards the doorway—"it was I!"

—The best platform speaker in England is said to be the widow of the late Post master General Fawcett.

—The Belgian Society of Gynecology and Obstetrics has undertaken to call an International Congress at Brussels from the 14th to the 19th of September, 1892, to which is to be annexed an international exposition of instruments and apparatus relating to these two branches of medicine

'TWAS A GLORIOUS BLUNDER.

The Brilliant Charge of the Light Cavalry at Balaclava.

LORD LUCAN'S MISTAKE.

He Sent Cardigan to Charge the Wrong Battery?—The Slaughter in the North Valley—The Struggle Among the Guns—Fighting the Russian Horsemen—The Retreat—D'Allonville's Timely Work—Counting the Cost.

Time, October 25th, 1854.

Place, the southward slope of the Chersonese, looking toward Balaclava.

Twenty minutes ago 673 horsemen, the flower of the British Light Cavalry, dashed down from those heights along an Avenue of Death, into the very heart of the Russian army, silenced a battery, sabered its gunners and——rode back again. Now they call the roll and count the cost of the achievement which as long as the martial spirit warms the human breast shall reflect imperishable glory on British arms.

"Men," says the intrepid Cardigan, as he sadly gazes at the 195 mounts before him, "it was a mad-brained trick, but it was no fault of mine."

"Never mind, My Lord! we are ready to go again!"

Yes; brilliant as was the charge, great as must be its moral effects, and deserving of praise as are the gallant fellows who made it, it was, nevertheless, a stupendous blunder.

Let me take the reader over the ground.

* * * * *

Yonder is the North Valley stretching away in front. On the left is the Fedioukine Hills, occupied by Jabrokritsky with 8 battalions, 4 squadrons and 14 guns. On our right is the Causeway Heights, held by Liprandi with his strong force of infantry and field artillery, extending to the Arabtabia Redoubt. His cavalry have withdrawn a full mile and a half down the valley where, behind a Don Cossack battery of 12 pieces, they stand massed, probably counting their losses in the recent engagement with Scarlett's Heavies. The enemy has the valley covered from either side and one end by artillery, infantry and cavalry.

His line on the Causeway Heights, however, is weak. Scarlett's attack has caused the retirement of his horse and at the redoubts captured by him yesterday he would be ill able to withstand an attack. Lord Raglan from the Headquarters Hill sees his opportunity, as it cannot be seen from the valley or the lower slopes, and he determines to make the attempt to recapture the redoubts and save the guns. He is not given to placing too much faith in cavalry. He has been awaiting the appearance of Cambridge's and Cathcart's Divisions of Infantry, but the latter is tardy. What he does must be done soon if it is to effect his purpose. The Russian flank may be easily turned; he will appeal to the cavalry.

October 25th, 1854, will be a great day in the annals of cavalry. The men were early under arms. Just as they were about to be dismissed for breakfast they received the order to advance. Their haversacks were empty. The Heavy Brigade won glory on empty stomachs; it is the Light Brigade's turn now. Right under their eyes on the slopes of the Chersonese the brilliant dash of the Heavies was made, while they were compelled to stand with sheathed sabres and curse the orders which doomed them to inaction. But their work is cut out for them now! Soon Captain Morris who has just implored in vain that Cardigan would allow him to lead his regiment to the support of the Heavies, may give his charger the rein and revel in the carnage of a veritable Valley of Death!

Down from Headquarters Heights comes an aide with a despatch from Lord Raglan:

"Cavalry to advance and take advantage of any opportunity to recover the heights. They will be supported by the infantry who have been ordered to advance on two fronts."

Brief enough, explicit enough, it seems; but Lord Lucan fails to grasp its meaning or its urgency. He cannot see the whole field as can his chief; he does not comprehend the object of the order. Leaving the Heavies to await the arrival of the infantry he advances across the valley with the Light Brigade, and there he halts them and waits—and waits.

Every field glass on Headquarters Hill is turned on the cavalry on the right slope of the valley. Lord Raglan cannot know that his order has been misconstrued—that instead of advancing on the enemy and looking to the infantry for support, Lucan is waiting to support the infantry with his cavalry. To the Commander-in-Chief his inaction is inexplicable, provoking; it invites disaster, and that disaster—the loss of the guns—the very one the order was intended to prevent. Even now, unseen by Lucan, but in full view of the staff on Headquarters Heights, Liprandi's artillerymen move forward with horses and lasso tackle to carry off the captured ordnance. Over half an hour has passed since Lucan received the "third order"; why does not he advance

Lord Raglan's patience is exhausted.

Calling Quartermaster General Airey he dictates a new order. To whom shall it be entrusted? Nolan! Nolan, the brilliant, dashing aide-de-camp of Airey. The daring young cavalry enthusiast seizes the important paper, and at break-neck speed tears down the slope. He has been chafing at Lord Lucan's inaction and, what he conceives to be, wilful disobedience of the "third order" of the Commanding Officer, and he burns with eagerness and anger as he brings his steed to its haunches before Lord Lucan, salutes, and presents the "fourth order."

Sitting in his saddle in front of the troops Lord Lucan reads the order:

"Lord Raglan wishes the cavalry to advance rapidly to the front and try [to] prevent the enemy carrying away the guns. Troop of horse artillery may accompany. French cavalry is on your left. Immediate.—AIREY."

There is nothing obscure in the order. Lord Lucan looks at the young aide. Is that a look of authority assumed, of impatience, or of contempt on his handsome flushed face. Airey signed the order; Airey's aide bore it. Lord Lucan has been inclined to credit Airey with originating orders which he only transmits. Having in mind the Cossack battery a mile and a half down an artillery-swept valley, he jumps at the conclusion that the order is a blunder, and, forgetful of his position, forgetful of the presence of the aide, he rails at the commanding officer and his strategy. Little wonder that the young captain is shocked! Little wonder that he answers an angry interrogatory in less respectful tone than he should use towards a superior officer:

"Lord Raglan's orders are that the brigade should attack immediately."

"Attack, sir! Attack what, sir? What guns?"

"There, my lord, is your enemy; there are your guns!"

The scornful words, the no less scornful gesture by which Nolan indicates the locality of the captured guns on the Causeway Heights, should under ordinary field discipline bring swift punishment. Does Lord Lucan place Nolan under arrest? Not he. He accepts Nolan's taunting words as an explanation of the order, his scornful gesture as a direction, and assumes it to be not a direction toward the Arabtabia Redoubt, but toward the Cossack battery, backed by Ryjoff's squadrons, away down the North Valley. He hesitates no longer. He will order the Light Brigade into that cul-de-sac of death!

Lord Cardigan is no coward, but he receives the order with unfeigned surprise:

"Certainly, sir; but allow me to point out that the Russians have a battery in the valley in our front, and batteries and riflemen on each flank."

"I cannot help that; it is Lord Raglan's positive order that the Light Brigade attack immediately."

There is no misunderstanding on Lord Cardigan's part. He realizes the seriousness of the work he has to do; he has pointed out that obedience means the sacrifice of the brigade. Now the reasoning man gives way to the soldier. He has but one duty—to obey.

"The brigade will advance!"

Every man in his place! There is motion in the brigade. Men and horses feel there is warm work coming. Narrow the front! Captain Oldham's 13th Light Dragoons and Capt. Morris' 17th Lancers will lead the way. Col. Douglas dresses up the 11th Hussars, Lord Cardigan's troops, to form the second line. Lord George Paget's 4th Light Dragoons and Col. Shewell's 8th Hussars fall in as the third line. The brigade is ready.

Fifteen or twenty yards in advance of the centre of his first line Lord Cardigan, attired in the uniform of the 11th Hussars and resplendent in gold lace, bestrides his white-stockinged chestnut charger. He is a leader who leads! "The brigade will advance." And with their commanding officer as pilot the fated Light Cavalry swing into a front and fronts straight down the Valley of Death.

Nolan is electrified. Standing on Headquarters Hill he has made a mental map of the field. He has been waiting in the expectation that we would bring forward the left shoulder, and now he sees that this is not our intention. He knows well that a terrible blunder has been made—that the result will be to sacrifice the brigade. He bore the order; he even pointed out to Lord Lucan the location of the guns to which it referred. It may not yet be too late to rectify the error. He will try!

Spurring out from the left front of the first line he rides diagonally across the front of the advancing brigade, waving his sword, shouting to attract attention, and pointing in the direction of the Arabtabia Redoubt. Cardigan sees him, but, far from divining his object, views his strange conduct as a grave breach of military ethics—an unseemly endeavor to excite and hurry the brigade. And he rides on undeceived.

The Russ is awakening. The guns on our front and on either slope come into action. The gunners are feeling for our range. Nolan has nearly crossed our front when a fragment of an exploding shell strikes him full on the breast and tears a way to his heart! As the brigade advances the steed turns short and gallops toward the line, bearing the horribly mangled Nolan, left hand on rein and sword arm uplifted. As he nears us his blade drops, and from the lips of the ghastly rider comes a shriek so weird, unearthly, horrible, as to chill our blood!

And from his natural conning tower on the heights Lord Raglan and staff look down upon us with wonder and alarm.

Liprandi sees us too. Never for a moment does he suspect that our goal is the Cossack battery. He has rightly judged Lord Raglan's intentions, and he expects us to bring forward the left shoulder and move on the Arabtabia Redoubt. So sure is he that the recapture of the guns is our object that he withdraws his infantry beyond No. 2 Redoubt and forms hollow squares to withstand our expected attack. What an opportunity Lord Lucan's blunder has lost!

The Light Brigade has now fairly entered the Valley of Slaughter. Down the stretch in our front tear solid shot which crash through our ranks, and from right and left of the Light Brigade. Generous admiration changes to horror as he sees it charge straight down between the Russian batteries. He perceives that a terrible blunder has been made; he will do what he can to minimize its effect. He is a man of prompt decision. Jabrokritsky's batteries, doing such deadly execution, must be silenced; and he will silence them. He orders the gallant D'Allonville and the "Travellers" to attack.

Bringing forward the right shoulder the regiment moves off at a quick pace, wheels to the right and sweeps down upon the flank of the nearest battery. Veterans are there. The Russian artillerymen quickly limber up and dash off, while Jabrokritsky himself leads up a strong force to prevent D'Allonville from carrying off the guns. But D'Allonville's work is done; the recoil is sounded, and he retires. And, thanks to the noble Frenchman's well-timed attack, the murderous batteries of the Fedioukine Hills, which inflicted so much injury on our cavalry in their advance, are silent during their retreat.

And such a retreat! Lance thrusts and sabre strokes may be parried or evaded; not so the plunging shot, the hail of musket balls and the whirring fragments of shell. And yet the efforts of Liprandi's gunners are to some extent a cover for the retreating cavalry, protecting them from pursuit by