older free yet loft lacking the cold and tyrannous expression which gleamed laily in the large and stern eyes of his father, "he hair has changed from a warm gold to a deep brooke, and the broad forehead was lined deeply.

Four months previously he had hardly looked

his twenty years; now, on the east marriy fooked the twenty years; now, on the east which would see him one-and-twenty, he looked ten years older than his age.

"Charlin, how idle you are in said Violet, breaking a long pause. "Hand me sor a more sprays, ploase. There, how do you like my wreath?"

wreath?"
"Vory well," said Charlie, obeying the mandate. "What a party Idyll of Christmas Eve
you make, Violet. You have a gracious! buty
about you such as the spirit of the day according

Thanks! I like compliments," said Violet, "Ynanger I like compliments," and violes, very sincerel; "You are far better than I am, Charlie, and this wreath is destined to frame our great-grandmother ever the chimney-piece. How drell she looks in that powdered wig and brocaded dress, simporing at her woolly flock. What flourishing ideas of Arcadia the dear, innecent souls had?"

She watched him as he drew a dainty set of She watched him as he drew a dainty set of steps to the hearth, and proceeded to festoon the wreath round the massive old frame of the portrait, with eyes gradually saddening from their area brightness, and, not wishing him to read their changed expression, she went back to her seat by the window and resumed her task.

"I shall always detest the perfume of codar!" she exclaimed impatiently, as Charlie sented himself again on the cushloned sill. "Do you

himself again on the cushioned sill. "Do you know, if Uncle Aurelius hadn't developed such an extraordinary enthusiasm for Christmas de-corations, I shouldn't have had the heart to undertake them this year."

"I can imagine that," said Charlie quietly.

"I can imagine that," said Charlie quietly.
"It is vory pleasant to know that I shall have
some one to think kindly and lovingly of me
when I am away I can quite understand that
quaint old prayer "Lord, keep my memory

"Charllo!" said Violet, with startled eyes, "you speak as though you never meant to re-turn from the West! Surely you are not going from us with that idea in your mind? Think of your father.

your father."

"My fether cannot alter my determination,"
replied C. arile, "nor does he wish to do so. I
shall probably naver return to Canada. Dear
Violet, I am sorry I told you if it distresses you
thus!" thus!

The hot tears fell on the wreath, her hands The not tests foll on the wreath, her hands had dropped on her lap, but she dashed them away and looked at him hopefully.

"Time," she said, "will bring its cure; you are so very young, Charlie!"

"Not too young to keep a memory green," he

"Not too young to knop a memory green," he said, repeating his former words softly, "n said but 2:sar remembrance." Then his eyes brightened and he went on, "I want work, and this plan of opening a branch of our house in San Francisco will give it to me. After all, Violet, it is a slavish spirit which resigns the work of life because of the griefs of it?"

"Yes," saidviolet, dreamily, "were I a man, so would I think, but it seems to me so cruel for you. Charile."

for you. Charlie.

Charito smiled gravely, and lifted his hand

Oharno similed a.a.v., proudly.

"I am no coward" he said; "but come, Violet we will speak no more of this. We have other anxieties on our minds at present, dearl," "Yes," said Violet, very soberly, "I almost

"Give me the note," said Charlie Silver, rising,
"if you have it about you. I had better take it

violet took from her pocket a little lettermay, perfurned, dainty, looked at it lovingly and put her sweet lips to it.
"With my love," she said, blushing shyly, and Charlie proceeded to place it in his rocket-

"Good-bye for the present," he said, as he

left, "I shall see you before dinner?"

"Tes," .aid Violet, anxiously, "don't disappoint me, doar Charlie."

Charlie smiled and an answering smile rip

Charge stoning and an answering amine rip-pled over Violet's face, and into her eyes. "I must go up stains and toll Maggie to lay out my white talle and trine it with holly," she said to herself, after she had been a few moments in the solitude of the stately room.

She got up and, a lovely picture in her tender oung loveliness, tripped through the dark srch f the door, out into the great, square hall, with its Christmas drapertes of green wreaths, and like the room she had left flooded with crimson light in every nook and dranny from a great fire on a wide hearth in the wall. Amelius and Arnold Silver, sitting in the it

brary, one reading the other smoking, heard a cry which rang through the house, and a heavy fall.

They rushed into the hall and at the foot of the wide staircase lay Violet, like an image of snow, perfectly unconscious, a look of intensest horror frozen on her lavely face

"I never know her to faint before," said Ar-nold Silver, quaking in every limb, as Aurolius lifted her from the ground, and carried her into the dining-room. "My darling! What can have

"Nothing," said Aurelius, quietly, "because the never has fainted, that is no reason that she should not do so. She has not seemed herself

He laid her very tenderly and goutly on a couch, touching her check caressingly

Fixels on parting no "Sile is roviving," he said, quintiy.

CHAPTER IV.

VIOLET'S STORT.

"And so, it being Christmas Eve," said Vio let," and just our own four selves here I will tell you a story."

.It was after dinner. The dessert was on the At was after dinner. And desset was excited table, who dushing redly, a glow of rate excited in a great silver basket, peaches blushing in dainty Sovres disher. A saucy page in the same priceless ware, holding aloft a basket of grappe like amothers and amoralds, and the strelight

like amothysts and amoralds, and the strellght and lamplight flowing over all.

The Silvors had drawn from the table and were gathered round the fire, which burned royally as a Christmas fire should, and in its full glow sat Violet, at her fathers not, as Charlie had called her, a lovely Idyll of the soason. She was herself again, and the hely berries gleaming in the glossy coronal on her gold-need, were not more vividly orimsen than ries geaming in the goesy corona on the gode-on head were not more vividity arimson than her checks and lips. Her eyes were starry, shining, dilated, wonderful in their rapid changes of expression as she looked from one to the other of the group. She looked at Aurelius fliver, as he sat on the opposite side of the hearth, his nohis face and head thrown finely out by the ruby to ruly to rul

"A time honored custom at Christras-tide,"
said her father. Do you remember, Aurolius
how our poor father and mother used to tell us
youngsters Christmas tales, in this very room?"

youngstors (Bristmas tales, in this very room in a firm member," said Aurelius Silver, quietly. "And mere Margaton's tales of the Loup-Garon and Feu-folies, in the nursery?" continued Arnold, "and now frightened I used to be. Fou never feared anything during the whole course of your existence I do believe, Aurelius."

Aurelius Silver started very slightly, and looked at his brother, but in his watel composed tones he said:

"Let us hear Violet's story, by all means. It

"Let us hear Violet's story, by all means. It is not likely to be very fearful, is it, Russie?"
"No," said Violet, esgerly, "it is a story just about people like ourselves. There could be nothing very fearful about us for instance, could there, uncle Aurelius?"

nothing very feature about defor instance, could there, uncle Aurelius;
"No." said Aurelius, smiling strangely, as he looked into the fire. "We are anciently respectable, commonplace people. Far above cause for remorae. Infinitely beyond temptation."
"Go on, Violet," said Charlie, looking curiously at his father, the vibration of whose voice

counded unfamiliar. Indeed of late a cortein sounded unfamiliar. Indeed of late a certain strangeness and crept into the life of Aurelius Silver, noticeably during the few weeks ushering in the hely Ohristmas, and which had not excaped the Lean young eyes of Violet and Charlie.

Arnold Silver had historic been alone in the

Arnold Silver and alwards over home in the almost princely generosity, which, at this sea-son especially, had made the name of filler a word honored and blest amongst the poor of the city, but this year Aurelius had borne his part generously, not appearing in the deeds of mercy himself, but deputing Violet in many cases, his brother in others, as the almonds of his bounty, brother in others, as the almoners of his bounty. If possible he was quietor, more relicent than ever, though at times a strange disturbance seemed to relign in his soul, and he would retire from the society of the family remaining seed inded for many hours at a stretch in his library. Who shall say what plantom of remoras sat by his board, visible but to himself? Who shall fell the anguish of such a soul as his reflecting on the second of temptation which had been sufficient to hurl from its high place of arrogant security that cold and jenious integrity, that stern cod honor which he had erecta, into regant security that come and jemous integrity, that stern god honer which he had errotted into a detty and bowed that mee to idelatiously? Its creat had towered to the skies, its feet of clay were on the shifting sands. There be no such doughty Iconoclast for your idel of self-security, as temptation, a truth Aurelius Silver had waded through a sea of fire to learn and understand.

How often the hideous memory of that star. it and peaceful night, on which he had fied, as much morally a murderar as Cain, from the iake, returned upon he soul no one but him-self could tell, for the secret was buried, and would for ever remain buried in his own breast. This upas-tree memory had borne some good fruit. When he found Charlis firm as a rock in his determination to remain faithful to the me-mory of Daisy Leighton he had not taged him or threatened, or discoved him, as most exsuredly he would have once done.

euty ne would have once done.

"Watt!" he had said quietly, "if you retain
the same mind at Christmas, I will speak no
more to you on the subject. But let the matter
rest until then. You are very, very young, and
youth is the changeful April time of a man's
life. Watt."

And Charlie had watted, but as we have seen,

changed not at all.
Through his soul there ever rang an appealing

and plaintive voice, "Reep my memory green!"

"Paps!" and Violet, putting her hand on her father's, and turning her wisful eyes to his, "in my story there is a girl, like me, and perhaps you will think her wicked and ungrateful to her father who was just like you, but you will hear all about her quite to the end before you say so. Won't you dear?"

"If she is like my little girl, she can't be very

of the maple logs on the high additions. "About print major ogeog there were two brothers, parturers in a grote bomnele, just, paps, as you and unde Aurelius are, and one of them had two some and the other one only little child, a little firl, and the two mothers were dead. Now this elder brother, the father of the two boys, was a straige man, cold and haughty and like from in evarything he said and did, and when his wife died, he was very fond of feer, undle Auvellus, he grow coldst and harder, until it seemed as though he had but two aims in life, to heap up wealth and to be known smongst men as of spotiess integrity. He did not seem to care for his children, though of course that was impossible, because the elder, who was about eighteen, was like the dear mother who had little kirl, and the two mothers were dead. Now was impossible, because the elder, who was about eighteen, was like the dear mother who had died, and a generous high spirited lad, and I am yuns sure all the time the father hardly seemed to know he had a son, he was proud and fond of this boy, only it was not his way to show his heart to the world. And the youngest, a little child of six, was it likely he did not love the little motherless thing dearly? Of course every one here knows how impossible that is," said Violet confidently, "don't, we papa?" "I suppose so, Pussie," said Arnold Silver very soberly, and looking straight at the fire. Aurelius was silout, his face a little in the shadow of the jutting marble piliar supporting the chimney-piece. His nice glanced at him and stole her hand into her father's. Her eyes were very bright, her sweet young volce steady and clear as silver as she went on.

"How much that your votes steady and dear as silver as she want on,—
"How much that your man was to be pitted!
He was so absorbed in his own business that he had no time to see the evil which was gathering round his elder sob, and had he seen it, I don't think he would have moved a finger to save him." Not that he meant to be cruel, you mustr't think that for a moment, but he said and thought that for a truly honorable and upright man there was no such thing as tempta-tion. Those who fell, fell from inclination, and as they fell, so for him, should they lie. So it came about that one day, the proof was brought came about that one day, the proof was orough home to him that his sor, the elder one, had forged his name for a trifling sum.— Did you speak undle ?" "No," said furelins Silver, but he had made a sudden movement which had attracted her at-

tention.

"Well, the boy's father, quietly turned him adrift to herd', as he said, 'with the dregs of the earth his crime had levelled him with.' I the earth his crime had levelled him with." I don't believe he seemed angry even, but mone of us can fancy what he felt in his secret soul. He must have thought that perhaps if he had acted differently himself, watched and guarded the boy from corrupt influences, this would not have happened, and how I how dreadful that thought must have been. But the boy disappearod."

"And your story ends," said Aurelius Silver, but not looking at her.

"No!" cried Violet, "it has a sequel, uncle Aurelius. Let me so on!"

Aurelius, liet me go on!"
Aurelius Silver was silont and Arnold turned
his cordial face towards-him, with a mingled
aspect of entreaty and command.

"Lee her go on, Aurelius, the sequal is new to

na hath."

"He went," said Violet, rising and leaning towards her uncle, her votes broken, her cheeks palling and finming, her eyes fixed on his, "he paling and finming, her eyes fixed on his, "he went to another country, and alone battled for fifteen long and lovely years with the world. He had a great heart, this boy, and it carried him on eagle wings, far above the associations such as they were, of his former life. He action wired wealth, and in the faint hope that his rather had forgotten all but that he was his eldest sou, he turned his steps homewards. He met his cousie, now a woman grown, how it does not matter, and only pane, also was very rary like me, but don't begin to hate her just yet, and he berged that she would try to soften his father towards him, and from one thing to another, the girl and he got to love each other botter than all the world. They met very often in sec. et, though it was the wish of both better than all the world. They met very often in sec.et, though it was the wish of both families that she should marry her young cousin, now a man, and she promised, against he returned from California, where he had to go to look to his affairs, to beg his father to forsive him; but she was such a coward," cried go to look to his affairs, to beg his father to forkive him; but she was such a coward," cried Violet hursting into tears, "as well as such a wicked, deceifful thing to her own father who was the best and dearest in the whole wide world, that she put off speaking until Christmas Eve, and ohl uncle, you must faish the story," and Violet fashed into her father's arms, which folded tightly about her, and hid her face amid the ruffles decorating his expansive chost.

"Aurelius Eliver," said Arnold, solemnly as Violet trambled in his arms, "I charge you to faith it as your heart and conscience urge you to do. Beflect where the chiefest fault lay."

A poculiar smile, gracious yet shadowed, crossed the lofty face of Aurelius Eliver. He rose and came towards them.

"Double my daughter!" he said, taking Violet into his arms, and kissing her pure, young brow, "the good Angel of this Christmas tale as you will."

"Papa dear," cried Violet, "tell me that you

"Papa dear," cried Violet, "tell me that you don't hate me dreadfully, but I couldn't help it, indeed I couldn't!"

She came back clinging to his arm, a man with dark, lustrous eyou and the kingly port of the Silver's, but with a face all his own and his dead mother's. She left him, however, and stood by her father, and Aurelius looking steadfastly at him, clasped his outstretched hand in his and held it in a firm grasp. "You are welcome?" he said, and still holding it turned to his brother.

"Arnold," he said, "where is your welcome?"
"Here?" said Arnold Silver, taking Violet's resy hand and placing it in his nophew's, "one more expressive than words. But no California, remember. I cannot part from bor."

"A good gift?" said Aurelius Silver musingly. "Charlie, she might have been yours. Your brother is leaving us," he said turning to his elder son, "on account, as perhaps you are sware, of a certain sad event dating some four months back?" She came back cliusing to his arm, a man

I have heard of it," said the young man in a "I have neard of it," gait the young man in a tone of quiet, yet heartfelt sympathy, and Violet's pretty head drooped sadly. She had no spell to dissolve the trouble which was to darken the whole of that young life.

"Violet," said her uncle, after a moment's pause, "as Charlie's promised tride, I bought you a set of fewels, as the bethrothed of ner some the state them."

you a sot of levels, as the betarothed of h.y son Aurol'us I should like to clasp them on yo."."
"Thank you, uncle," said Violet, an a he loft the room, she went up to Charlie, and looked at him with sad eyes.

looked at him with sad eyes.

"This Christmas has held nothing for you," she said, "it is very sad."

"Except a darling sister and brother," said Charlie, clasping her hands in his.

"And wife!" said the voice of Aurelius Silver

behind them.

They turned their faces to him, in a silence born of awe. A pallid silence through which Violet's voice rang out in wild exuitation.

"Datsy! Oh Charile, this was the ghost I

saw to-day! Appellus Silver stood towering like some lofts Affolius biver stood towering has some into column, crested with sparkling snow and by bits side a dark and beautiful little creature, whose wide and speaking oyes were fixed on Charlie's

faco. "Take her," said Aurelius Silver smiling, "she is yours. That night when she fell into the lake, it was my fortune to save her young life. I had her brought here in order to test the life. I had her brought here in order to test the real strength of your affection for her, determined that she should be yours if I found you true to her memory on this day. Charlie! he and abruptly with a sudden change of voice, no more of this idea of leaving me. I am old I wish my children about me. Will my

"no more of this idea of leaving me. I am old and I wish my children about me. Will my Christmas gift bind you to your home?"

Charlio's answer need not be recorded, suffice it to say that in the happy silence which acceeded it, the silvery clock on the chimney place rang out twolve!

"See i" said Victor Silver, as the last stroke

"Seo!" and Viclot Silver, as the last stroke died away, "it is Christmas morning." And in the dawning of that gracious day we will leave them. No one ever knew the fearful tempisition, which for a second had mattered Aurolius Silver, and no one ever knew, except him, that Daisy had not fallon into the lake by merest

Paisy had not failed into the lake of merest accident, no, not oven her husband.

No one knew how potent the ditter experience of that night had been in stirring the soul of Aurelius Silver to its depths, or how the latent fire of human sympathy and affection burned so late but so warmly in his soul.

## THE MYSTERY OF VISCOUNT BOYLDOUT.

A WEST-END ROMANCE.

BY GEORGE AUGUSTUS SALA

His lordship was furious, and all the attempts to pacify him were the dismelest of failures. "Never," he said solemnly to her ladyship, "never," and as he spoke he added weight to whitely whit as he spoke he anded weight to his injunction by bringing down his finely-form-ed but somewhat gouty hand on a buhl table covered with gimeracks from Dresden, and causing those tiny magets to shiver in their percausing those tiny magots to shiver in their per-celain shoes,—"nover let me near the name of that abandoned, that hardened prodigal again? I absolutely forbid its being pronounced in this house. He is a disgrace to his family, to his order, and to the profession to which he belong-ed." And having delivered himself of this tor-rible denunciation, his lordship buttoned his cost across his noble breast, leant one hand on his hip, and extended the other in a monitory manner towards his lady, looking in our att. his hip, and extended the other in a monitory manner towards his lady, looking in this attitude remarkably like Sciplo Africanus, or the late Lord Groy in the act of moving the second reading of the Reform Bill. I think, by the way, it was Lord John who moved it; but that matters little.

Her ladyship wept. How could she refrain from tears, seeing that the hardened prodigal whom she had just heard denounced, repudiated, and banished from the paternal roof—ropre-sented for the nonce by a back drawing-room in a private hotel in Jermyn-street —was her own son? Du reste, her lady-ship was continually weeping. In her inter-esting youth her nursomalds were went to all about her quite to the end before you say so. Won't you dear?"

Won't you dear?"

"I'll get over it in time, Pussio," said Arnold ship was continually weeping. In her interpating her pretty hand as it rested on his; "but go on, my dear, we are all anxiety."

Violet chaped her hands on her lap and fixed her eyes musingly on the scaping amethyst and moltan gold of the flamos licensy the great sides into the fall.

"I'll get over it in time, Pussio," said Arnold ship was continually weeping. In her interpating the known it all along, sating youth her nursemalds were went to address her reproachfully as "Cry-baby," and "Did you know of this?" quoried Aurelins to speak of her contumeliously, when she was out of hearing, as that "whining little interpating to Charlie as Violet fled, rosy as out of hearing, as that "whining little interpating to Charlie as Violet fled, rosy as out of hearing, as that "whining little interpating to Charlie, simply, "but it is only of alas! belonged) they used to call her landy waterworks.