

young Berrington's explanations, she bade him go off; him and his search-parties be drafted! Her master said they would get no satisfaction from him, and advised the Berringtons, father and son, to try to find some wits for themselves before hunting the moors for a crazy beggar woman who never had any.

The window closed again with a snap, and Blyth was left alone.

He went off repulsed and chafed now, all the more resolved to inquire closely or bring the police. But at a wretched cottage by the roadside belonging to old Hawkshaw he got his information. A woman therein, smarting under notice of dismissal from her landlord, told how she had felt curious on seeing one of the visit sisters stealthily hurrying by cloaked and hooded, with an excited air as if afraid of being seen, and watched her going in at the Barton gate. This was so odd that the woman caught up her baby and went out to see what next might happen, wishing also to have a better look at one of the strange recluses whom she had never seen near. She had not waited a few moments when a terrible noise was heard inside the house. Steenie Hawkshaw appeared, pushing out the poor mad-woman, who resisted, clinging to him, and shrieking out entreaties to be heard. Old Hawkshaw stood by, roaring with laughter at the fun. Suddenly ceasing her importunities, Magdalen collected herself and walked to the gate with the dignity of the finest lady in the land. Then, stopping short and raising her arm like a play-actress, she pronounced words of such an awful curse upon the inmates of the house that the poor laborer's wife, listening, declared her blood ran cold! Even Blyth was appalled, hearing the anathemas but partly repeated; denunciation which in all her life she might swear Magdalen never could have heard. It was enough to make him believe in the old doctrine of possession, and that the den on with the frail, delicate form had cried out, not she herself. What followed was as terrible in a different way. Young Steenie then shouted out he would let his dogs upon her. And unfastening the two house-dogs, although holding them by their chains, he called out two or three terriers from the stable, hissing them at Magdalen, and following them up himself with half-tipsy, brutal mirth. Screaming, the unhappy woman fled as for her life down the road, on and on, followed by the posse, mopping, yelping, barking at her heels; besides joined by a troop of small urchins such as seem to spring up from the earth on all occasions of unusual events.

"The terriers didn't bite her, but law! she had the heart as frightened in her body as if they had," said the woman. "And if Steenie had not held in the big dogs with all his might, they would have torn her to bits."

Then in desperation, as it seemed, Magdalen climbed up the hillside that there led steeply to the moors, and so presently the chase dropped. That was all.

Blyth, on hearing this, only asked, "Where might Stephen Hawkshaw be likely found?"

The women said at the inn of Drewston (a little village popularly supposed to be thus called as a corruption of Druid's name).

Thither went Blyth, and Brownberry's reckless sides showed the pace as he drew beside after a mile and half's gallop. The inn there boasted a rickety billiard-table, which, however wretched, was a chief attraction to young Hawkshaw and a few other idle spirits lower in the social scale than himself. For he loved to be king of his company at times, or, as he expressed it, "cock of the walk." He was taking an afternoon drink at the bar now, with some of these companions, when Berrington came and curtly asked him for a few moments' private conversation. Hawkshaw returned rudely he wanted to hear nothing from him, or himself to say anything to him.

"Are you afraid of what I may have to say?" said Blyth, low, seeing his enemy glared under his eye; being indeed tormented by visions he was trying to drown in drink of a dead woman lying in the bogs.

"Afraid?"

Hawkshaw fired up at that, and looked round for admiring scorn of such a charge from his backers, but out of respect for Blyth's request, whose favor it was not unwise to conciliate, they had all retired a few steps aside.

Seeking to command his temper, Blyth

demand to know for what cause Steenie had turned out of his house, two days ago, the poor woman now lost on the moors.

"For what? Because she came and nearly worried the life and soul out of me. Would you like to know why she came, eh?"

And, exulting in the opportunity of giving a nasty wound to his successful rival Steenie jeeringly went on,

"You'll be interested, so I'll tell you as a kindness. She came to beg me to marry her daughter—there I wanted to bribe me with ravings of gold she would give me; ha, ha! I wish you good luck of your mother-in-law, if you find her."

"Hold your tongue, I advise you, since you may be responsible before God for her death," said Blyth in a tone so stern it brought a horrible conviction of guilt for a moment to his hearer's brain, though inflamed and confused by drink. Then adding, "You neither know who she was or what she was," he moved towards the door round which the men were grouped.

But Hawkshaw yelled after him, striking his fist on the bar among the glasses,

"What is that you say? Stop a bit—I'll tell you before these gentlemen here. Says I don't know who the old mad-woman is that he is hunting for through the country. Well, she called herself by the name of Steenie, and she's own mother to Miss Joy Haythorn, so-called, up at the Red House, who is said to be engaged, or likely to be, to our neighbor, Mr. Blyth Berrington here, and I wish him much joy of her. And as to what the old witch was—"

He uttered some coarse expressions, on which Blyth turning sharply back, caught him near the throat, and ordered him to take back his own words as a foul lie. Stephen wrestled violently. Stronger by far though Blyth was his opponent was muscular and quick as a panther. A few seconds the bystanders watched the struggle with breathless interest, then as Stephen, gasping still refused to retract his words, Berrington (having foreseen some such likely emergency) gave him a severe hasting with the short ridding whip he carried stuck in his pockets, then walked out of the inn, and rode away. In two days the fame of this exploit went far and near. Only Joy did not hear of it.

But ill-deadbedred emulation still more than good ones, unhappily. And one of the boys who saw Hawkshaw chasing poor Magdalen it was that now had been fired to organize the raid on the cottage.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

Mons Meg.

This cannon, exhibited at Edinburgh Castle, was fashioned at Mons, in Flanders, about the time of James IV. "This gun," says Scott in one of his notes to *Rob Roy*, "figures frequently in the public accounts of the time, where we find charges to grease Mag's mouth, withal ribands to deck her carriage, and pipes to play before her when she was brought from the castle to accompany the Scottish army on a distant expedition." "After the Union," continues Sir Walter, "there was much popular apprehension that the regalia of Scotland, and the subordinate Palladium, Mons Meg, would be carried to England to complete the odious surrender of national independence. As for Mons Meg, she remained in the Castle of Edinburgh till by order of the Board of Ordnance, she was removed to Woolwich about 1757. And in this very winter of 1828-9 she has been restored to the country where that, which in any other place or situation would be a mere mass of rusty iron, becomes once more a curious monument of antiquity."

NEW PUBLICATION.

The Methodist Annual is the title of a most comprehensive little work published and for sale by the Methodist Book and Publishing House, No. 78 & 80, King street east. The information concerning every branch of the Methodist Church in Canada, is most complete. Nothing, in short, appears to be omitted, and statistics are given concerning the church, not only in the Dominion of Canada but in various parts of the world. The little volume contains, in addition, much useful and miscellaneous information, and is altogether a good book of reference to have at one's elbow.

Household Superstitions.

"If you wish to thrive,
Let a spider run alive,"

Is an old household saying that many of us, when children, paid strict attention to, but now when we see a little black weaver running his thread amongst our bric-a-brac we dislodge him to the more modern words

"If you wish to thrive,
And with happy people bide,
Let your house be swept by three—
One to dust, one to tide,
And one to see no spider runs alive."

And so the old superstitions of our childhood are gradually disappearing, although there are many well-bred and educated people who, in spite of their reason, tremble at the breaking of a looking-glass or the upsetting of the salt-cellar, and would on no account cut their finger-nails on Friday. But when we remember that in Italy salt-spilling is never noticed, but a drop of oil is considered an omen of the worst kind, and there are people who not only pare their nails on Friday, but date all the fortunate events of their lives from that day of the week, we are easily led to believe that most superstitions have their origin in some social custom or act of usefulness, just as passing the salt in one country is a sign of sorrow, and in another friendship. The usefulness of many superstitions can easily be proven; for instance, a lady who was greatly annoyed by the carelessness of her pantry-maid said to her one day, "Maggie, you will never have a day's luck as long as you put the dishes away half wiped," meaning that she would never be able to keep her home if she neglected her work; but Maggie saw it in altogether a different light, and ever after attributed any trouble she had to a soiled dish that had escaped her notice. The feeling, also, which prompts a Scotch lass not only to clean her hearth before retiring for the night, but to carefully set the broom on end, is both a useful and economical superstition.

There is an old English rhyme which says that it is very unlucky to buy a broom in May, and declares that

"Brooms bought in May
Sweep the family away."

Donna forget the auld broom in changing your residence, or lend it to a stranger. It is thought to be annoying luck to step over a broom, and great good luck to accidentally walk under one. In Lancashire, England, there is an old custom or superstition, which is still observed, of taking a Bible, salt, and a little oatmeal into a new house. The first is emblematical of a good foundation, and the salt and oatmeal of plenty. Everywhere you will find the right-foot-forward superstition, especially on entering a new home; but should you be so fortunate as to enter a house for the first time well dressed, good luck is absolutely assured you. The parlor bell ringing while the clock is striking, the kitchen fire found alight in the morning, and the rocking of an empty chair are all signs of anger.

If the fire goes out just after it has been lit, your sweetheart is cross; if it burns brightly, he is in a good temper; if soot hangs on the bar of the grate and falls outward, he is coming; and should a coal drop immediately after, you can tell by its shape what he will bring. The misplacing of the shovel and tongs is a sign of jollity, but the falling out of the grate, the breaking of a dog-iron, and the spilling of coal are all bad omens. If you are thinking of any one and the fire suddenly blazes, it is sure evidence that the compliment is returned. If you wish for anything very much, poke the fire for fifteen minutes and think of your wish and nothing but your wish, and it is said you will surely get it.

It is unlucky to leave dirty water in the kitchen overnight, or the chairs and tables out of place. In Scotland the loss of a dish-cloth is equivalent to finding another home, and the accidental burning of a sheet or towel is the forerunner of sickness; it is also the greatest sign of ill luck either to

throw at or in any way touch a person with the dish-cloth.

Trouble attends those who burn green vegetables or bread; and in buying onions always go in at one door and out at another. Onions bought in this way, and placed under your pillow on St. Thomas's eve (December 21), will reveal to you your future husband. It is not good for soap to slip from the hand while using it, and it is equally unlucky to allow a lamp to burn out in utter forgetfulness. A sure sign of disappointment is to light a match and have it go out. If you break one dish, you will surely break three. Words spoken backward is a sign of company, and the accidental slamming of a door or window, of unpleasant company. A cup of tea and the salt-cellar afford innumerable signs of coming fortune. For good luck demands that the salt-cellar should always be clean and well filled; that you should never lend or borrow salt; that the salt-box must never be allowed to get entirely empty; that before using salt from a fresh box some of it must be burned; that salt which has fallen to the floor should not be used; that to exchange salt-cellars with a neighbor at table unbeknown to him, or to use his salt accidentally, is a sure sign that you will become fast friends. Be careful not to spill salt on Friday. It is possible to avert evil on any other day by throwing a bit over the left shoulder. Never give an old salt-box away, or leave it for others to use. If you wish to make a person think of you, burn salt, repeating his name; and never forget that the person who has once eaten salt with you is, no matter what he has done, lucky to speak of kindly.

If we know anything at all about "tea-cup-ology"—the name given by a Boston girl for peering into the future through a tea-cup—the temptation to practice it is irresistible. One of the commonest of signs are the little white bubbles which all declare to represent money. Do not let it melt away, but catch and drink it. A tea stalk floating on the top of a cup of tea indicates visitors; if it is soft, your company will be a lady; if hard, a gentleman. If a lady places the wet stalk on the back of the left hand, and strikes it with the fingers of the right, and it lies off at the first blow, they are coming in a day, at the second blow, in two days, and so on. If a gentleman, stir the tea briskly, and plant the spoon upright in the middle of the cup, holding it quite still, if the stalk is attracted to the spoon, he will come that day. A long or short stalk will determine the height of the expected visitor, and you may tell how long he will stay by balancing the spoon on the edge of the cup, and seeing how many drops of tea you can make it hold without upsetting. Tea drops counted in this way will also foretell the number of years before you will marry. In counting for your visitor, you may call the drops hours, days, weeks, or months. It is also a sign of company to forget to put the lid of the tea-pot on after the tea is made; and on no account must you put the milk into your tea before the sugar, or you will be crossed in love. If a fly fall into a glass or cup from which any one is or has been drinking, he or she will have good luck. It used to be thought not only ill-mannered, but a sign of bad-felting, for a visitor not to invert his tea-cup on leaving the table. Every one in the house must stir the Christmas pudding, beginning with the oldest, even if she be a servant. Do not sit on the edge of a table or trunk, else you will be disappointed.

If you wish to rise in the world, cut the top side of the loaf of bread first, and cut clean and even. Four slices of toast is the smallest quantity that can be made for luck. A good Catholic will always cross his knife and fork, although it is considered a bad sign to find your knife and fork crossed. To get a torn napkin at table foretells a fortunate journey, and the upsetting of wine or water a surprise. Do not eat a piece of bread or meat that has fallen to the floor in being passed to you, and on no account drink water that is given to you with a scowl. It is never unlucky to say "thank you," and the old rhyme of our grandmothers that

"A clean house and smiling face
Bring right good luck to any place"

is a superstition that no one can find fault with.

Old-fashioned rings set with crystals, which were fashionable in our grandmothers' day, have again appeared.