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MIRIAM!

The Romance of Heatherleigh Hall.

By Manda L. Crocker.

Copyright, 1889.

"If when Leon Percival in his wrath disinherited my father he had only taken from him the arrogance, the senseless, passionate spirit, and the unforgiving, relentless soul of the house, what a blessing his disinheritance would have been! But it was only the property and the honor of being named as one of them that he missed, that is all.

"Oh! I am glad," he exclaimed, triumphantly, "that I haven't a farthing, no, *not a farthing* of the Percival wealth!"

He looked up as he finished his exultant sentence and caught sight of his face in the tell-tale mirror. Then he laughed softly to himself. "Pshaw!" said he, and the evil feeling had ebbed out its last tidal wave, and he was left in possession of his sweet mother's nature to which he so often referred with fondest pride.

Three days after we leave Allan Percival at his lodgings in London we find him standing in the library, the dimly-lighted, ghostly-looking library of Heatherleigh.

He was alone; the good-natured, portly squire was poking about the gallery on the second floor, imagining he could read the soul by the countenance; and so was very busy reveling and romancing among the portraits. He had no idea that the handsome, well-dressed cockney, as he chose to mentally dub the fellow down-stairs, was a scion of the ancestral line he was viewing.

"No," Squire Bancroft was saying to himself, "that's a young strip of he barrister the solicitors 'ave sent down 'ere to hinspect the books hand take ha list of them, hi reckon, so hi won't bother 'im. Hi will just henjoy myself hup 'ere, hand kill two birds with one stone by looking the pictures hover wile 'e's taking 'is hinventory."

So the easy-natured squire turned the portraits this way and that to get sufficient light, and adjusted the heavy curtains on their dusty brass rings to suit himself, and persuaded his speculative soul that it was having a holiday treat.

Down in the dim semi-twilight of "the room of the books" stood Allan, saying in an undertone: "To the left-hand end of the shelves, and the *third* row. Ah! now I have it," and after removing several volumes he placed his hand on the panel indicated in her letter.

"To the right, now," and he gave the panel a shove in the direction named by Miriam, and it slid back noiselessly, but sending up a cloud of dust nevertheless.

"By Jove!" Allan ejaculated, stepping back and brushing the dust from his face and eyes, "it is worth a ransom to be smothered in this way."

Then he listened to reassure himself that Bancroft was not coming now at the supreme moment to be inquisitive and vex him with words and looks of distrustful questioning, perhaps.

No, the squire was not coming; doubtless he would not, as Allan had announced his intention of overhauling the dozens of dusty volumes, some of them ancient and curiously bound and others of later date. "What a place for an old book-worm of a fellow!" ejaculated Allan, elbowing the ancient tome at his right, as he thrust his hand into the recess in the wall, after having satisfied himself that Bancroft was not coming.

The first thing his hand touched he drew forth. It proved to be the long-hidden casket containing Lady Percival's jewels.

Brushing the dust from the elegant cover he opened it for a moment in order that he might know what he really did have. Diamonds; diamonds scintillating even in the dim light told him he had the required jewels. Shutting the casket he discovered the letters L. P. engraven in the center of the cover.

"Aunt Percival," he murmured. "Oh! I feel so strange in this awful place, where sweet Lady Percival died; from where my father fled, and from whose doors my darling was driven in her widow's weeds! God be merciful, I wish I was out of this!"

Once more he put his hand into the recess and renewed the search. Three small boxes and silver drinking cups next rewarded his endeavors. These he deposited in various pockets without examining them and again he searched the recess.

"The family plate, by Jove!" And out it came from the remote corner of the cupboard. Silver, silver, silver! And here was a riddle he could not solve. How could this little place hold all this! He tried the other side of the aperture, and to his astonishment a panel moved easily back, revealing a capacious recess, and the "corner" he thought he had reached was not a "corner," only a sort of division.

"It's deuced lucky I brought my traveling case, or else how should I smuggle all this away from Heatherleigh? Egad! I feel like a thief!"

Having stowed all the valuables away in his large valise, he shut up the recess and replaced the books he had removed.

"I believe I will go upstairs now and see what has become of the squire," mused Allan, looking about him.

But the Squire was coming down. Allan heard him on the stairs, and forthwith he began to be deeply interested in a yellow-paged volume, for whose contents he didn't care a half-penny.

"The books are quite hinteresting, I should think," said Bancroft, peeping in and seeing the young barrister deeply engaged, as he thought, in reading.

"Oh! yes;" Allan made answer, with a yawn, "interesting enough, but I'm douced tired of them, and, as I have taken the titles

HE THRUST HIS HAND INTO THE APERTURE.

of some and selected others for which they sent me, I guess we may as well go, that is, if you have no further business in this horrid place!"

"'Orrid place! Why, this his the wery place to dream hof romances by the 'our, sir. Our tastes differ, to be sure. Now, hi could stay 'ere for ha week."

"Lord!" ejaculated Allan, in horror. "I should be a raving maniac in half that time!"

"Umph!" and the jolly squire looked at him in amaze. Then he said: "Books packed, hi suppose?" and at the same time eyeing the traveling case keenly.

"Yes," answered Allan, prevaricating.

CHAPTER XXVII.

Squire Bancroft had not been so long in the gallery for nothing. He had almost wept over the fine portrait of the youngest son in the reversed row, Allan Percival, last child of Leon Percival, the austere, as he was known.

And now, on coming out into the hall, this young sprig of a Londoner put him so much in mind of the picture of the high-spirited youth he used to know that he stopped short to think:

"Hi feel some'ow has hif—," he mused, and then taking his gaze from the traveling bag he acted on the impulse of the moment.

"Look 'ere, young friend," said he, touching Allan on the shoulder as they stepped out into the sunshine. "Pardon me, but hi can't 'elp but see that you resemble so much one portrait hin this gallery hupstairs. His hit possible hi ham haddressing a Percival? Can hit be that you hare the son hof Hallan Percival, so long hago disinherited 'solely because 'e 'ad sense henough to marry he sensible woman?"

The squire's first sentence sent a suspicious impression with its curious articulation, and his tap on Allan's shoulder seemed to augur no good to the contents of the case he carried. But the compound question which followed the eccentric old fellow's prelude put those fast-rising fears of detection to flight, and substituted a choking sensation of oppressive wrong in their stead.

Allan looked up. "You know me, then, by my resemblance to my father," he said, with a sad attempt at a smile. "I am the only son of *that* Allan Percival—in fact, the only child living, and that is why Miriam Percival Fairfax and her solicitors trust me on this errand to the Hall. The present owner of Heatherleigh is my cousin, Mr. Bancroft, and I am commissioned to the Hall by her implicit orders."

"'Pon my soul! 'pon my soul!" exclaimed the squire, grasping Allan's hand. "'Pon my soul, Hi thought the world hof your father, my boy; has hif 'e were my hown brother." And the impulsive Bancroft flourished his handkerchief and blew his nose with the sound of a trumpet. "Then hit's your father's picture upstairs; w'y don't you go hup hand get hit!"

Allan shuddered. "Do not ask me to go upstairs and into *that* room," he answered, turning faint at the idea, and covering his face with his hand, as if to shut out even the bitter memories.

"Ho! Hi see," rejoined the squire, "you said this 'orrid place," and he put his arms akimbo. "Hi see! Hi see!" he continued, "you dread lit hon your father's haccount! Forgive me, my boy; Hi didn't think! Hi know the sad story hof your father's being kicked hout; 'eard hof 'is death, too, but didn't 'ear that 'e left ha son. Well! well!"

For some minutes the old squire stood looking affectionately at Allan and thinking, then he placed his hand kindly on the young man's arm and said: "Don't you want your father's portrait, my boy? Hif you do, w'y, hi will be glad to go hup there hafter hit for you."

Allan nodded in the affirmative. He could not speak. A feeling of utter loneliness was creeping out of the shadows and wrapping his soul in its miserable influence. Up there, in the dark, ghostly place, his father's picture hung—with its face to the wall, he had been told a thousand times, because he had been cast out—and now, after three and a half decades of gloom and disgrace, it was to be brought down and given into the hands of the son, the child of his mesalliance.

Allan heard the squire go up the length of the shadowy staircase, heard him treading the corridors, as one hears things in a strange, indistinct dream.

The sunshine stole down through the tufted elms, the noisy rooks chattered and scolded high up above the ancient gables and the April airs went whispering by, but Allan heard them not. He was listening attentively to a voice sounding down the aisles of the by-gone, and he heard it say: "Curses on that old Hall, that sent me adrift; curses, I say!" and it was the voice of his father.

And in connection with this maledictive sentence he heard a sweet, soft voice, and it said in a deprecating tone: "Allan! Allan!" And it was the voice of his gentle lady mother.

But Squire Bancroft interrupted this communion of spirits akin, and broke Allan's painful reverie by saying: "Ere hit his." At the same time he wiped a suspicious moisture from his old eyes and locked the great doors in silence.

Allan Percival left Heatherleigh as one in a dream. The long, desolate avenue, down which his darling had passed alone in her grief did not seem real to him. The clanging of the great gates sounded afar off and even the hum of the carriage wheels on the echoing drive beyond came to his ear as unnatural and deadened. He thought of it, and remembered Miriam's horror of the place.

He paused at Hedge Place, the squire's lovely cottage, and letting him out with many warm adieus, drove mechanically on toward the city.

Hastings came in view, and he drew a sigh of relief. The shimmer of the sea beyond gave him a new impetus, and he smiled. "It won't be so very long now," he said, waking up, "until I shall see her my own."

He consulted his watch. "I have time to get every thing attended to in my care and reach London to-morrow; then a final interview with my bankers there, a bidding good-bye to a few friends, and I'm off on the reacherous waters yonder."

"Back again?" Allan ejaculated, as he threw open the door of his lodgings, and entered with his precious burdens. "Well I'm blest if I'm not glad the affair is wind'ing up. What a great deal grows out of a little, sometimes, to be sure," he continued, settling himself comfortably in his chair by the table and emptying his pockets of the Heatherleigh find. "If I had not met that old lady in the park that blustering autumn day last year, I presume I should not have been there again this time.

"I guess I had better shut the door and insert the key, lest I have auditors."

With this timely conclusion he fastened the door, and, returning to the table, spread out the contents of the three dusty little boxes on the green chintz cover.

"I only wish to see them a moment," he apologized to a hint of conscience, "and Miriam wouldn't care."

The two little ebony cases contained jewels also, as well as the more pretentious casket, but whether they were the property of Miriam or not he had no means of finding out. They were very costly, however, and must have been prized very much by the happy possessor, whoever it might have been, Allan thought, as he held up to the light an exquisitely wrought bracelet, with little forget-me-nots clustered at the fastening.

"These shall be her wedding present from the Hall," he said to himself, sarcastically. Then he dropped them, shimmering in the light wandering through the white dimity curtain, as if they had been serpents.

"What if they carry the malediction of our infernal old ancestor!" he questioned, half aghast at the mental suggestion; "every thing about the cursed place, I verily believe, bears the brand and feels the taint! I came near losing my senses under the baleful influence myself, and only a few hours there at that. These have lain for years in the desolate gloom, and the price of a soul may be their cost!"

He shoved the shining heap from him with a gesture of horror, and sat looking at the contents of the third box or case. Whatever it was was wrapped in a little silken scarf. Allan reached over and touched it gently. "Oh! here is a slip of paper attached to it," he said, growing interested in the delicate package, and suddenly forgetting the glamor of a horrible dread connected in his mind with the glittering jewels opposite him.

How his heart throbbed for an instant as he recognized Miriam's delicate, yet firm writing: "My baby curls; Miriam Percival."

"Oh!" he said, half rapturously, "when she, my darling, was a little, care-free girl."

Unrolling the scarf, he held in his palm a long silken ringlet, tied with a bonnie blue ribbon. A look of happy satisfaction beamed from his dark eyes. "My Miriam's curls," he said, tenderly, "cut from her dear head before the shadows gathered over her path; cut, doubtless, by my aunt's fingers, now crumbled to dust, Lady Percival!"

He rolled up the curl carefully and restored it to its case. A kindly emotion stirred the depths of his soul, and a dreamy expression softened his features.

"Perhaps," he mused, "perhaps these jewels are my darling's, also; and, if they are, no harm can hover over them."

The sight of the ringlet had softened and rendered mild the whole atmosphere, and he gathered the bracelets and their accompanying necklace up with a far-away, preoccupied air and shut them in their elegant cases with a sigh.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

It is May, and a beautiful day, with a symphony lingering in the fragrant air.

Miriam is out among the rosebuds that beautify the clambering vines as they wait for the breath of June to unfold their glory. And, instead of the pale, pinched expression on her perfect features as in the winter, the flush of health and—may I say happiness!—yes, happiness, creeps into her royal face, where the dimples of her girlhood are still visible.

Miriam Percival Fairfax has outlived the crucible years of her life; the dark chapters of her strange history are being followed up by bright, golden pages, fragrant with the love of a blissful, happy summer to be.

I had a difficult task, indeed, to persuade her that the dream of seeing Peggy and of hearing her seeming prophetic words would all come to naught. But I fancy, although she declares yet at times that "it means something to come," her faith in night visions is on the wane.

But the roses bud where last year the rue grew darkly luxurious, and the smiles, the rarest of all rare things then, are slipping gradually into her days.

Some time ago she came to me with her fine voice all a-tremble, and wondered to me if I "thought it would be proper to wear colors?" I looked at her a moment; the somber crape folds had grown to be identical with Miriam. I should not have known her, I thought, without them—but ten long, sorrowing years for a young heart to throb beneath the garb of mourning was enough, who could ask more! Then, too, mourning was of the heart, not the habiliments altogether, and if this lone woman has found a silver lining to the heavy clouds of her heavens, why not!

"Yes," I said, "perfectly proper, dear, seeing that Allan is coming."

Then she smiled one of her rare, perfect smiles, which can neither be forgotten nor described, and said she "should go down to the city and make some purchases."

Sly little puss; did she imagine that I, who had played the part of a detective for a twelvemonth or more, could be hoodwinked into "spring fashions" in this manner? If she did, she has reckoned without her host, as I mentally cite a wedding day somewhere adown this golden summer; a perfect day in June, no doubt, as May is waning. Ah! yes; methinks I hear wedding-bells, and their clear, sweet music is in harmony with the symphony of the day.

But Miriam. A couple of letters lying in her lap bear foreign post-marks, and she has been reading them softly to herself, smiling the while, as if the contents were pleasing in the extreme.

The soft, gray texture of her dress—she chose gray for afternoon costume, but there is a beautiful white satin folded away amid a cloud of costly lace for another occasion—falls from her queenly figure in full folds, and she looks every inch a veritable queen; this stately, proud daughter of the Percivals.

"Heatherleigh is in the past," she says, turning her head, with a smile which is half joy, half sorrow. "The house of the Percivals have nothing more in its somber shadows. No; no more, forever!"

"Bold!" I ask.

"Yes; disposed of," she answers, looking away seaward. The fair face flushes and pales fitfully. There is a strong tide of memory surging up from the past; a thousand thoughts are coming to the front for recognition, and it is safe to say they are not pleasant ones.

I work away on my embroidery and finish an impossible grape cluster in smoky purple without pretending to offer any thing further. Such things are best thought out in silence, I have learned. So we sit an hour in the soft, sweet weather without a word; she looking seaward and down at the letters alternately, and I attentive to my embroidery, with an occasional glance at her face. She will speak presently, and tell me what she is thinking about. I have known her long enough to know this, and work away, awaiting her pleasure.

"I have sent to the Hall for a few things," she begins, just as I expected she would; "and if I am happy enough to get those the whole place known as Heatherleigh may rest for ever under the curse of Sir Leon Heatherleigh, for aught I care."

Her face flushes crimson, then pales like a lily; she is still revengeful and passionate in her hatred of the Hall. I had thought she had forgotten the old, desperate days, but she has not. I do not answer; I have no words. I scarcely ever have when Miriam towers up in speeches like this, and she relapses into another reverie, as disagreeable, perhaps, as the first.

"Peggy Clarkson never told you," she begins again, "of a certain night's work of ours, did she—hers and mine?"

Her face assumes a look of mingled pride and defiance, and she smiles a little as I answer "No."

"I thought she could be trusted, even unto death," and her eyes filled with tears, in memory of the deceased servant. "Now after it is all over and done with, I will tell you our little secret," she said, confidentially.

"Well," I answer, folding my hands over my work, preparing to listen.

"My mother," continued Miriam, "had a beautiful silver service of her own, and before I left the Hall I, with Peggy's assistance, hid it away, with several other things of value, including my mother's jewels. We stowed them all away in a recess behind the book-shelves in the library, taking the midnight hour for our work. Sir Rupert" (she never calls him father) "had forgotten, I think, the existence of the secret cupboard; and as it was closed by a sliding panel, scarcely visible when closed, I do not doubt but that they were found just as I put them away. I hope so, at least," she ended, with a sigh.

The pleasant, cheerful look comes into her face once more, and she stoops and absently gathers a dozen violets at her feet. There is something more she wishes to tell me, so I wait.

"This is the last of May?" she speaks, interrogatively, and I answer: "Yes, the very last days of the spring."

A crimson flush sweeps up over cheek and brow, and "Allan is coming," she confesses, sweetly.

"Oh!" I pretend to be surprised, happily so; but I was certain he would come long before this disclosure.

But it does my soul good to see the happy love-light in her beautiful eyes and to hear her confession, so I reach over and press a kiss of congratulation on her rose-flushed cheek, and say: "I am so glad for you, Miriam, and for Allan, too."

"I was sure you would be," replies Miriam, looking at me wistfully, questioningly.

"What is it?" I ask, intuitively knowing she desires to ask me something from which, for some reason, she shrinks.

"Do you suppose Arthur would care?" The question came scarcely above a whisper, and her face takes on a look of frightened, painful inquiry.

"No," I answer, decisively, and give her a look of incredulity. I can scarcely believe my ears. "Would Arthur care! No, Miriam, he would not; so rest contented. Do you suppose that Arthur would be so selfish as that?" I ask.

She answers by a negative shake of her head, which brings one long, glossy curl down over her heaving bosom, but she does not speak. Evidently I have alluded to the dead too abruptly. Well, I have never understood the strange, beautiful woman before me thoroughly, and what might please anybody else would, likely as not, fall disastrously across her thoughts.

"You shall be married here at the cottage," I say, making a bold attempt at turning her mind from the mournful past to the future with its promising outlook. "My poor little cottage has never known a marriage, a birth or a death," I add, pleadingly, looking straight at her for the answer.

"Your dear little home has been very lucky, then," she replies, with a far-away, sad look.

I am almost out of patience with her. Why must she dwell forever on the doleful past? But she speaks.

"Yes, I should like to be married here," she says. "I was married once in church," and she shivered as if the memory of it chilled her very soul, "and I never want to have the ceremony repeated there."

She fastens the violets in her fichu of creamy lace, and, gathering up the letters, goes in.

"Allan is coming," I repeat to the rosebuds; "Allan is coming when you bloom," and the breeze, sweeping up from the sea, sighs through the trees: "Yes, yes, yes!"

"Allan is bringing a friend with him." Miriam nestles down beside me on the sofa later and whispers this bit of news in my attentive ear.

"But I can not imagine who it can be," she adds, in a puzzled tone.

"A friend," and we ponder until we give up in despair of even thinking of one likely to come with him, and turn to discussing the preparations necessary for the happy event of her wedding.

Now that she has spoken to me and I know that they are to be united, Miriam is not reticent about speaking of the affair at all. She talks freely of her coming marriage, and in a short time our plans are laid to make it a happy, enjoyable event; and in our devotion to the details of the future festivities we forget that "friend" over whose name we puzzled our brains so much at first.

But we are again put in mind of it in a day or two by Allan's writing a hurried letter from New York saying that "his friend, having business in the city of New York, they had sailed for that port, and as soon as possible they would be at Bay View. In two or three days from date we might look for them.

"He had forgotten," he thought, "to mention the friend's name in his last letter; would just say now that it was an old gentleman who resided near the little church of All Saints near Hastings, by the name of Earle Fairfax!"

Miriam uttered a cry when she read this name; whether it was one of delight or surprise or both, I never knew. She threw up her hand, and, staggering forward, threw

"ALLEN IS BRINGING A FRIEND WITH HIM."

herself into my arms. "Earle Fairfax! Earle Fairfax!" she repeated. "I wonder why—O, I wonder why!"

"Miriam," said I, "don't you want to see the old gentleman; Arthur's uncle, I presume?"

For a moment she lay quite still, making no response. Then she said slowly: "He is a good, kind old man; such a friend of mine—such a friend of mine!"

The words were whispered with colorless lips and pallid cheek. I was sorely puzzled to know why, if he was such a good, kind friend, she felt this way at mention of his name.

People don't generally grow white as death at the prospect of seeing a friend, not generally, at least, and I was at a loss to fathom this new phase of affairs.

I made no reply. I simply released her, and she went directly to her room, with the letter clasped tightly in her nervous fingers. "Old memories," I said, by way of excusing this, to me, unexplainable freak of Miriam's. "Doubtless his name was interwoven with some painful memory, which the mere mention of was like the thrust of a dagger."

She did not come down to dinner and I did not see her until the breakfast hour the next morning. She was cheerful as usual and seemingly anxious that I should forget the little episode of the previous afternoon. Launching off into conversation, in which I was sure that her heart had not the least part, in order to detract my attention from the pallor of her countenance, she managed to become unusually talkative during the breakfast hour.

"Perhaps," said I to myself, "she is not paler than usual, and I am yielding up yesterday's circumstance with a morbid fancy of my own imaginative brain."

But when Maggie, my little maid, said solicitously behind my chair after Miriam had excused herself for a walk in the garden: "I seems to me that the lady is ill; she is uncommon white-faced and talks sort o' wild-like, don't you think?" I thought, ah! well, then my conjecture is not all an imaginative affair, after all. But I said to the maid that "the warm weather might have something to do with it."

"Oh! well, she 'pears so anxious like," persisted Maggie. "I shouldn't think the weather would give that worry to her look and manner, ma'am."

The maid knew that something like a shadow had fallen athwart the path of our guest, and with natural inquisitiveness was doing her best to wring a confession from me.

"Well, well, Maggie," I said, finally; "let it pass, and if she is really ill or worrying about any thing she will tell us by and by, if it is proper for us to know." Thus admonished, the maid gave me a look of suspicion and began clearing away the breakfast things in silence, while I sought Miriam, deep in the garden of roses and illies in front of the cottage.

"Dissembling," I said, as she greeted me with a wintry smile from behind a rose-hedge, but the beautiful eyes told no tales, and the lips touched not on the friend's coming, as I half expected them to do, during the morning.

During the afternoon, while I was engaged in the re-arranging of a cluster of stately lilies which the wind had tossed ruthlessly from their fastening, a cab drew up at my humble gate and two gentlemen alighted. Instinctively I knew it must be they whom we were expecting, and I dropped my twine and went down the graveled walk to meet them.

Sure enough, as one of them came forward, I recognized my aquaintance of the Heatherleigh park.

As soon as he looked up he smiled and extended his hand. "I remember your face," he said, gladly. Then he introduced an old gentleman, in a dark gray suit and gold-bowed glasses, as "Mr. Earle Fairfax, of suburban Hastings, Eng."

"She is in there," I said, indicating the direction of the library door with a wave of my hand, as Allan looked inquiringly about the little front parlor into which I had conducted them.

I knew she would rather meet him alone, with no eye to criticise or intrude on the sacredness of their greeting, and I knew also that she was in there waiting for Allan, because I caught the swish, swish of her dress, and the soft closing of the library door as we came in.

Allan Percival gave me a look of such joyous gratitude that I thought had he asked me to carry a thousand letters to the ends of the earth for him, instead of one little request that he did, that look rewarded me in full for every thing.

Then he stepped into the library and closed the door behind him, while I did my best to entertain this friend of Miriam's, although I could see plainly that he was very anxious to get a glimpse of her, as his eyes sought the library door frequently. I was fully as anxious that she should meet him, for I had a curiosity to see them together; if there was any secret between them, perhaps I might be able to guess it should I see their meeting.

After awhile Allan came out of the

there was a frightened, inquiring look on her face that dared not put itself into words, at least not before me.

I noticed Allan watching her with a grave, uneasy expression when she conversed with the uncle. Evidently he read the riddle no better than I did, and the worried look on her face set him ill at ease.

I could see that Allan loved her madly, and I said to myself that now, after he had crossed the ocean at her bidding, if any thing would happen to separate them again, it would wreck his life completely.

The next day Allan had some letters to mail, and he drove the phaeton down to the city. I had expected Miriam would ride out with him, but for some reason she did not, so he went alone. After his departure Miriam took her uncle into the library to show him the portraits of herself and family "as they were once," she said to him with an appealing look.

I went out to see after some dessert I had ordered for dinner and to offer a few suggestions to Maggie, knowing that I was not needed in the library. Instinctively I felt that the portrait business was only a ruse of Miriam's to get Uncle Fairfax all to herself for a confidential talk. Doubtless it was her privilege, I thought, and some way I felt glad that Allan was out of earshot, and that it, whatever it might be, would be over before his return.

Having an occasion to go into the parlor an hour or so after, whom should I see standing just outside the library door but Allan Percival, and his attitude was that of an attentive listener. I could not see his face, but I knew he heard the conversation going on in the library.

(To be Continued.)

SCRAPS.

Some people get drunk in the hope of having their natural idiocy charged up to the account of whiskey.

His position in the firm.—Smith—I understand you have formed a copartnership? Jones—For life. "Indeed!" "Yes, I was married last week!" "What position do you hold in the firm?" "Silent partner." "That's what I thought."

Old lawyer—"I cannot take your case. Circumstantial evidence is so strong against you that it will be impossible to prove your innocence." Prisoner—"But I am not innocent. I am guilty." "Oh! Then maybe I can clear you." *N. W. Weekly.*

Stranger—There doesn't seem to be any choir this morning. Texas sexton—No; the organist and tenor are both laid up with pistol wounds. Stranger—Has there been any trouble here abouts lately? Texas sexton—Oh, no. Them two fellows just got into a little friendly dispute over the hymns to be sung to-day, that's all.—*Judge.*

Anxious wife—Doctor, how is my husband?

Doctor—He will come round all right. What he needs now is quiet. I have here a couple of opiates.

"When shall I give them to him?"

"Give them to him? They are for you, madam. Your husband needs rest."

"What is an agnostic?" asked Rollo, who was reading something by Huxley. "An agnostic," replied his Uncle George, "is a man who loudly declares that he knows nothing, and gets mad and abuses you if you believe him. He says he doesn't know anything, but he really believes he knows everything."—*Burdette.*

A St. Louis police Judge, who is a terror to evil-doers, says the Globe-Democrat, one day had a gambler on trial before him. The prisoner denied having played for money, but said chips were used. The judge fined him $10, however, saying that "chips" were money. After the docket had been disposed of the judge was approached by the poker-player, who wanted to know if the judge still thought that chips were money. On receiving an answer in the affirmative, he said: "Well, I suppose I will have to pay my fine." Coolly counting out ten chips, he laid them on the magistrate's desk, and before the judge had time to recover his equilibrium he had disappeared. The fine was afterwards remitted by the judge, but the "chips" are still in his possession as a reminder of his ruling that "chips" were money.

An Atlanta, Ga., girl, who has just been married, certainly possesses unusual business tact. About two weeks ago she made a tour of all the prominent jewellery, furniture, book and china stores of her city. At each she inquired for the proprietor, and on being shown to the person she said:—"I am about to be married, and it is very probable that some of my friends may come in here and select me a present. It's horrid to get something you don't like so I want you to look out for me, and if you can satisfy yourself that a present is to be purchased for me, induce the purchaser to buy something I will now select." The proprietor could see nothing wrong in granting the request, and the young lady selected a number of things which suited her taste. They were marked and the clerks satisfied. From all that can be learned the scheme worked well, and on her wedding night the happy bride had but few presents with which she was not pleased.

King Carlos, of Portugal, who possesses sixteen Christian names, while his younger brother answers to no less than thirty, is personally one of the most amiable of monarchs. He is a handsome blond young man, who carries himself with a military air, and is credited by his personal friends with considerable decision of character. He is a devoted sportsman, an accomplished musician, speaks seven languages and paints in water colors—in short, he is a bit of a savant, like his relative, the unlucky ex-Emperor Dom Pedro. The Queen is believed to be popular. She is tall and handsome, and was very carefully educated.

She does not share her husband's passion for music, but is a student of history, delights in mathematics, and is a clever sketcher. She speaks French, Portuguese, English and German. She is said to take a deep and intelligent interest in public affairs, and to be exceedingly fond of her adopted country.

A NOVELIST BY ACCIDENT.

Edward Eggleston became a novelist by accident. He was a Methodist preacher, and growing tired of riding the circuit in the west he went to New York, where he edited Hearth and Home. Upon one occasion a contributer failed to supply a certain amount of fiction for the number of the journal, and the editor, at the last moment, wrote a story suggested by his experience as a circuit rider in Indiana. The story struck a popular vein, and the public asked for more of the same sort. He wrote "The Hoosier Schoolmaster," "Roxy," etc. His reputation is now so well established that he receives from $5,000 to $7,000 for any novel he writes. —Ex.

VERY CONSIDERATE.

Mr. W.—"The idea of a man coming to the theatre in such an intoxicated condition. I'll have the usher remove him."

Mrs. W.—"Let him alone, John. I think he is very considerate. He got all he wanted before he came in, and will not be likely to annoy people by going out between the acts.—*Life.*

ONLY HOPE OF SAFETY.

Wimple (grabbing his hat)—"Chugg, we haven't a moment to lose!"

Chugg—"What do you mean?"

Wimple—"Don't you see? Fladd's coming. His grip isn't any better, and his list of symptoms is 45 minutes long." (They fly.)—Ex.

A DANGEROUS PROJECT LE.

Startling Effects Produced by the Invention of Zalinski.

The Dynamite Gun's Performances.—How Sea Port Towns can be Defended.—Dynamite to Supersede Gunpowder.

Even supposing that Lieutenant Zalinski does not find some means of increasing the range of his gun, and that a mile remains its limit, the fact that within that limit dynamite projectiles can be used without precision and effect is staggering enough. In the first place, land defences will be given an enormous advantage in any contest between them and ships. In attacking forts in harbors and estuaries, the ironclads are often obliged to come within a mile of the shore. But if the land batteries are armed with guns throwing dynamite shells, to do so will mean destruction for the ships. Such projectiles do not merely injure the vessel struck, they extinguish her. Under ordinary circumstances, an unarmored war-ship, though she may run a considerable risk of being disabled by forts if she comes within their fire, has a very fair chance of keeping afloat even if struck. The bombardment of Alexandria, for instance, showed that ships could be hit again and again without serious damage being done to them. But as some experiments made a few months ago with the Zalinski gun proved, the effect of its fire is very different. One of its projectiles was dropped on the deck of a vessel and the explosion that ensued was sufficient to totally wreck the whole structure. Nor were even the misses harmless. So great a column of water was raised by the explosion as to do a great deal of damage in its descent on the subject of attack. If then, the forts at the entrance of the Thames were armed with the dynamite gun it would be impossible for any hostile squadron to force the passage. The batteries could not be destroyed by ships out at sea, as they would be protected by the turns of the river, and whenever they were attacked for close quarters they would be able to reply with far greater power than that possessed by their assailants. In fact the Zalinski gun makes it possible to fire torpedoes through the air and with the accuracy of rockets. If, then, the effect of the new discovery be such as we have described it, the problem of how to defend our coasts from attack will be immensely simplified. Floating batteries which can be towed to the most convenient points in a harbour or at a river's mouth would soon put places like Liverpool and Newcastle-on-Tyne out of all danger of being raided. A hostile cruiser obliged to keep two miles out to sea, though it might set fire to a few public buildings, would not be a formidable enemy. It can, however, hardly be supposed that the invention will stop where it is. Everything seems to point to the fact that we shall soon discard ordinary gun powder as the filling for projectiles. Up till now there has been a difficulty in discharging dynamite and similar compositions from an ordinary cannon, and therefore pneumatic guns, which are comparatively safe, have had to be adopted, in spite of the short distance to which they will throw a shell. Methods of getting over this are, however, being diligently sought for, and we may be certain that before long either the pneumatic guns will be improved, or, what is more probable, some means will be devised for firing dynamite from ordinary artillery.—*The Spectator.*

A RUSSIAN MASSACRE.

An Extract From a Nihilist Paper Describing a Siberian Tragedy.

The first number of the Russian weekly paper, Znamia, which is to resume publication in New York some time in January, will contain an authentic report of the riot between nihilists, Siberian police officers, soldiers and Kossacks which took place in Jakuctsk March 22. The Znamia's report was written by eye witnesses of the affair, which, owing to the Russian censorship, received but slight mention in the press at the time of its occurrence. It was smuggled out of the Czar's dominions by friends of the "cause," who did not dare to trust it to the mail, but acted as their own postman, carrying it from station to station till at last it reached the frontier, and from it was sent to the Russian Revolutionary Committee in Paris, who forwarded a copy to New York. The following is an extract from the original report:

Jakuctsk is a station in Siberia from where the exiles condemned to work in the mines are deported to Kolinimsk and Werchojansk. It has a military governor and a strong garrison of infantry and Cossacks. In February the new Governor, General Ostaschkin, issued a proclamation which threatened that the march of the mines should be hastened, the food rations lessened and monetary allowances cut off entirely. As this meant certain death for the exiles they petitioned the Government to withdraw the ukase and allow the old order of things to prevail. The Governor, without reading the communication, commanded the exiles, thirty men and women, to await his orders in the house of one of their own number, a nihilist named Hotkins, and forwarded the papers to the Chief of Police, Colonel Suchatschier, who declared them to be seditious documents and