

He breaks off, and lies silent for a moment, breathing stertorously. The fur-clad woman at the bedside mingles her sobs with those of the dusky watchers in the room.

"Aggy," says Dicey, "you run over ter yer Unc' Peter's, an' ax Nancy ter come yer. I'se powful oneasy in my mine 'bout yer gran'daddy."

The terrified girl speeds out into the night, and the dog follows her. Outside he sets up a low howl, and the old woman shudders with superstitious dread.

"Ef Sank's a-stretchin' hisse'f, he's a-medjerin' Newton's grave," she mutters. "De good Lord he's p us!"

The dog's howl reaches the ear of the wounded man.

"I jes' hit him wid de ramrod, 'case he clawed up de bird, Mars' Jeems. I ain't nudder see dis yer dog do dat ar way afo' in all dese years you an' me is been a-huntin' him. He mus' be hongry. I 'spec' Dicey aint gin him no pot-liquor dis mornin'. De bunch o' de flock is down dar by dem briars on de ribber bank. Dey flushed purty, dat time, sho'; an' you hit 'em wid bofe bar'ls. Dey has ter fly soon an' swif ter 'scape f'om you, Mars' Jeems."

"I think you was a-huntin' patt'idges, an' you was a-huntin' men, young marster. Dem's de Yankees a-comin'. Can't you hear de guns, an' see de swords a-shinin' an' de bosses a-buck-jumpin'? Thnnder! look at 'em!" Once more a break and pause; and then, in accents indescribably piteous: "Dey's done kilt young Mars' Jeems! An' w'at 'ole marster and young Mis' Agnes say down dar in Tuckahoe? Shot th'ough de heart, an' tumbled over wid bosses' huffs, an' blood all onter his gray clo'es!"

The monologue of the dying man grows incoherent as Aggy returns, closely followed by Nancy, with open mouth and starting eyeballs.

"Dat dog doin' mighty foolish out dar, Aun' Dicey," she whispers, "he jes a-yawnin' an' a-pawin' an' a-stretchin' hisse'f. I seen him plain by de light o' de do', when I kin in. An' he lookin' jes as straight as he kin look to'ds de graveyard."

"Umph, oh dear!" groans the horror-stricken old woman.

"Graveyard?" says the sufferer. "Who dat talkin' 'bout dat graveyard? Dem's de soljers o' de Lord over dar, w'at fit ter set us free. But dey cudden shake off all de shackles—de shackles o' ign'unce, an' de shackles o' sin!"

The bells of a belated sleigh tinkle merrily, as it passes down the road between Pinchtown and the cemetery. He hears the sound, and says:

"Aggy, dat rock 's down dar in de road yit. Run out, honey, an' stop dat sleigh."

The firelight has died out. The clouds have left the sky, and the pale winter moon has risen. A single beam, chill and dim, falls through the grimy little window, and slips slowly over the new blanket, till, touching the dying man's pinched face, it finds a smile there.

He gasps: "Dicey, tell Aggy I'm fur on inter it now. I'm a-gwine ter l'arn it all purty soon."

The early morning traveller to the city, the next day, sees two huge boulders in the middle of the road that is cut in the side of the long hill; and near them, in the snow, lies three or four misshapen splint baskets.

THE END.

MARRIAGE CUSTOMS IN SOUTHERN SIBERIA.

There is one thing rarely omitted from female costume, which is a silver amulet hanging on the breast, in the form of a kernel, cylinder, or triangle, containing Mohammedan writing or perhaps prayers, and given by the husband at the time of marriage. The various circumstances connected with marriage among the Kirghese remind one strongly of patriarchal times. Fifteen is the marriageable age, and preliminaries are commenced by the parents of the bridegroom sending a deputation of match makers to the parents of the bride, offering presents, and among them a dish specially prepared for the occasion of liver and mutton fat, which signifies that they mean matrimony. After this the compliment is returned by presents and a similar dish sent by the girl's parents to those of the bridegroom. The bride's father then summons a meeting of kinsmen to consider the *kalim*, or gross amount to be paid for the bride. The *kalim* may consist of forty, sixty, or one hundred sheep, or from nine to forty-seven head of cattle, besides which *kalim* the bridegroom has to give at least two presents of camels, horses, cows, fire-arms, or *khalats*. These things decided, the bride's father sends to the bridegroom's *aul* for the *kalim* and one of the presents, after which the bridegroom takes the other present and goes to see the bride for the first time. Not that he can easily change his mind when things have gone thus far, for the delivery of his present virtually seals the marriage contract, and he is so firmly betrothed that should he die before the time of marriage, the intended wife has to go home to his parents and be taken for the wife of the next son. *Vice versa*, if during the period of betrothal the girl should die, her parents are bound to give instead their next daughter, or in default of the one, to return the *kalim* and pay a fine.

When the period of betrothal is at an end the bridegroom goes to the *aul* of his bride, who is given up by her parents, with a dowry of a tent, a camel or riding horse, cattle, and a bride's head-dress, besides a bed, crockery and a trunk of wearing apparel. On the wedding night the mullah, or priest, places the bride and bridegroom in the midst of a tent, puts before them a covered cup of water, and begins the prayers. Then he asks the contracting parties if it is with their full consent they engage themselves to be married, and three times gives them the water to drink. Mullahs sometimes put in the water vessel an arrow with a tuft of hair tied thereto from the mane of the bride's horse, or one of her ribbons; others dip therein a paper of written prayers. The happy completion of a marriage is followed among the Kirghese by feasting and games, and then the newly married depart to the bridegroom's *aul*, with the camels carrying the *trousseau*, and the portion of his wealth which a father gives to each of his daughters on her marriage.—*Dr. Henry Lansdell, in Harper's Magazine for September.*

A DREAM OF FAIR OCCASIONS.

In the darkening shades of twilight,
As I wandered, sore distraught,
Griefs and woes of days departed
Surged unbidden on my thought;
Joys and sorrows intermingled
In the memories of the Past,
Fair occasions, lost and vanished—
All too beautiful to last.

Suddenly, between my vision
And the lurid setting sun,
I beheld a troop of shadows
Dimly rising one by one.
But though filmy, vague and shapeless,
Loose and thin and undefined,
Gathering form and seeming substance.
In the rushing of the wind.

Gradually in human semblance,
Draped in robes of trailing mist,
I could trace their pallid features
In the moonlight new up-ris't.
Silently they flitted past me,
Each with warning hand upraised,
Long and lank, and bare and skinny,
Pointing at me as I gazed.

Well I knew them! friends and lovers
I had scorned in days of yore,
Unobservant and ungrateful
For the blessings that they bore:
Blessings, Promises and Chances,
All by kindly Fortune planned,
To be moulded to my purpose,
And be fashioned by my hand!

Fortune, Fame, Dominion, Glory,
Friendship, Love and Peace of Mind,
They had brought for my acceptance,
Had I known what they designed.
But I saw not, or neglected—
Heedless mid the whirl of life,
Lured by pleasure, swayed by passion,
In the never-ending strife.

Blinded by misleading splendours,
Prodigal of strength and youth,
Late my weary eyes were opened
To the knowledge of the truth,
That I'd wasted Life's young morning
And the noon-time, past return:
Burning up the years, and leaving
Nought but ashes in the urn.

For a moment, as I sadly
Gazed and wondered, every face
Of the pallid ghosts and phantoms
Seemed to glow with youthful grace;
And to woo me to caress them
As I might, in Life's young prime,
Have caressed a radiant maiden,
My heart's goddess for the time.

And I called in plaintive accents—
"Stay, ye fair ones! stay, oh stay!
I am wiser, I am better,
Than in Youth's departed day;
I have learned from Sorrow's teaching
Priceless truths so long unknown—
Stay and guide and shape the future,
Oh, my beautiful, mine own!"

Suddenly to gloom relapsing,
And evanishing from sight,
They were lost amid the darkness
Of the melancholy night.
And I heard as they departed,
Fitful as the wings they bore,
Mournful voices whispering faintly,
"Lost! oh lost, for evermore!"

—Charles Mackay.

POLAND IN THE FUTURE.

During the protracted but fitful struggle there were many oscillations in the management of affairs at Warsaw, of the varying nature of which it would be difficult to give a proper account. As the prospects of the insurrection waned more and more, the advanced party of the Secret National Government, which had initiated the rising, found itself compelled to enter again into close relations with an aristocratic party of Polish emigrants abroad. A few months more and the struggle was over. Large bands of Polish captives, of all ages and of both sexes, had then to tread the weary way to Siberia, driven by the Cossack knout. Still even now, twenty-four years after these terrible events, every competent observer will hold with General Fadeyeff that it is idle to imagine the Polish question to be in reality settled. Should a great war once more desolate Europe, it will only depend on the powers interested in curbing Muscovite aggression to make good use of the Polish hatred of Russia. This, I believe, is well understood at St. Petersburg; and therein probably lies one of the restraining forces which still make it advisable for the Northern autocracy to keep the Pan Slavist hounds of war against Germany and Austria-Hungary in the leash.—*Karl Blind, in the Fortnightly Review.*

ALDERMAN WHITE, a member of the Birmingham school board, has given the subject of non-attendance his personal attention. He has been convinced that in five cases out of six the absence of the children from school may be accounted for by the drunken habits of the parents.

British and Foreign.

IN New Zealand there are 4,000 Freethinkers in a population of 600,000.

ALL the American missions in Burmah have incorporated total abstinence in their work.

NO fewer than four great movements for the unification of the churches are proceeding in Japan.

MR. JOHN R. WIGHAM, of Dublin, a member of the Society of Friends, has declined the honour of knighthood.

THE Rev. Hector Hall, of Glasgow, instead of going to America, has accepted a call to the Second Presbyterian Church in Cork.

THE Rev. E. Lloyd Jones, Wesleyan minister, recently of Rochdale, has been invited to become the Liberal candidate for Montgomery.

THE offences committed by the teetotal soldiers in the Indian army, as compared with those of the non-abstainers, are declared to be as one to forty.

THE Rev. John Kinnison, of Medina, Jamaica, and formerly of British Guiana, died on his voyage out to Jamaica. He had reached his sixty-first year.

A NATIVE prince from Northern India, Kanwir Sahib, of Kapurthata, addressed a great missionary meeting in the music hall of Inverness; 1,600 were present.

FORT WILLIAM Free Church congregation has resolved to erect a new church on account of the state of their present building, the wood work of which is hastening to decay.

THE late Miss Mary Tulloch, of Sydney, commonly known as Scotch Mary, has bequeathed a valuable house and sixteen acres of land to the Sustentation Fund of the Presbyterian Church.

THE Scots Church, Melbourne, is crowded to the doors since Dr. Cameron Lees arrived. Many absentees have rejoined the congregation, while a considerable number of outsiders likewise attend.

THE benefit of closing the public houses in Ireland is demonstrated by the parliamentary return. Last year there were 1,839 fewer arrests on Sundays than in the year previous to the passing of the Act.

THE Dean of York says the efforts of the Burial Reform Association have been generally successful among the upper and middle classes, and that a costly ostentatious funeral is now considered a mark of vulgarity.

THE congregational committee of the church at Comrie has selected the following list of four as candidates for the vacancy: Rev. Messrs. Norwell, Perth; Scobie, Glasgow; M'Donald, Leith; and Ogg, Dundee.

THE Session of North Church, Aberdeen, have rejected the protest challenging the regularity of their proceedings in the recent election of elders, and the protesters immediately gave notice of appeal to the Presbytery.

THE Rev. Robert Macpherson, B.D., first minister of the collegiate charge in the parish church of Elgin is likely to receive a call to Greenside Parish, Edinburgh, as successor to the Rev. John Rudge Wilson, M.A., recently translated to Hawick.

PRINCIPAL RAINY was the preacher, along with Mr. Mackay, M.A., the pastor, at the third anniversary of Trinity Church, Glasgow. Since the abolition of seat rents in March the income has been more than maintained by increased freewill offerings on the Lord's Day.

PRIZES offered by Dr. Somerville when he visited the island of South Uist last year have been eagerly competed for by the scholars in the various Sabbath schools, many of whom have acquitted themselves admirably. The subjects of study were St. Matthew's Gospel and the Acts.

BOTHKENNAR Church is to be restored and enlarged, the present building, which dates from 1789, having become too small for the congregation. The estimated cost is \$10,500, of which sum the heritors have agreed to provide \$5,500, while the minister, Rev. George Anderson, B.D., has undertaken to raise the rest by voluntary subscriptions.

THE old church of Troqueer is being restored, at a cost of \$10,500, and the work is nearly completed. It was one of the edifices which figured prominently some time ago in a discussion on "the ugliest church in Scotland." Towards the cost of the restoration the heritors give \$1,250, while \$3,750 was subscribed by the congregation and minister, Rev. James Campbell.

DRS. MARSHALL LANG and Elder Cumming, of Glasgow, gave addresses at the third Christian conference at Dufftown, which was attended by ministers and laymen of various denominations from all parts of the country. Dr. Cumming presided over the meeting on the subject of consecration, in which Mr. J. E. Mathieson, of Mildmay Hall, was one of the speakers.

IT was first suggested that the meetings of the Free Church General Assembly next year at Inverness should be held in a large wooden structure in Bell's Park; but the committee have now selected a vacant piece of ground in Ardross Street, opposite the Castle Hill. The building will be fitted up in a manner resembling the Assembly Hall in Edinburgh, and will accommodate about 2,000.

AT Rutherglen the memorial stone of a mission hall in connection with the parish church was laid with full Masonic honours by Rev. William F. Stephenson. The procession of school children, Oddfellows, etc., was one of the largest that has been seen in the old burgh for many years; the houses in the vicinity were decorated with flags, and the ceremony was witnessed by several thousand spectators.

SINCE the opening of the London Temperance Hospital, thirteen years ago, the results have continued to justify the hopes of the founders and to prove that the treatment of disease without the use of alcohol was desirable and possible. For the lack of means, however, there are 120 beds in the hospital which are tenantless, as the management refuse to go into debt. The reliable income is only \$7,685 per annum.