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Let it Pass.

Be not swift to take offence,
Let it pass.
Anger is a foe to sense,
Let it pass.
Brood not darkly o'er a wrong,
Which will disappear ere long,
Rather sing this cheery song,
Let it pass.
Let it pass.

Strife corrodes the purest mind,
Let it pass.
As the unguarded wind,
Let it pass.
Any vulgar souls that live
May condemn without reprieve,
'Tis the noble who forgive,
Let it pass.
Let it pass.

Echo not an angry word,
Let it pass.
Think how often you have erred,
Let it pass.
Since our joys must pass away
Like the dewdrops on the spray,
Wherefore should our sorrows stay?
Let it pass.
Let it pass.

If for good you've taken ill,
Let it pass.
Oh, be kind and gentle still,
Let it pass.
Time at last makes all things straight,
Let us not relent, but wait,
And our triumph shall be great,
Let it pass.
Let it pass.

Bid your anger to depart,
Let it pass.
Lay these homely words to heart,
Let it pass.
Follow not the giddy throng,
Better to be wronged than wrong,
Therefore sing this cheery song,
Let it pass.
Let it pass.

ROSE BLACKETT AND HER LOVERS.

(From London Society Magazine.)

'Yes, I suppose it is a good thing,' said Fred Whitfield, yawning a little indifferently, considering the occasion. 'You see my mother made it up, so that I don't take much credit to myself in the matter. I dare say I might have gone in and won on my own hook if I had liked; but I left it all to the old lady. She likes managing. So she and Mrs. Blackett laid their heads together, and Rose and I said yes.'

'Well, Fred, you certainly are the most extraordinary fellow!' said his friend, laughing; 'I don't think many people would imagine you were speaking of your marriage.'

'Dessay not,' returned Fred. 'People go in for such a jolly lot of bosh on those occasions; they cannot understand that one should have any common sense in the matter. Time's gone by for blisses and kisses, and Cupids and arrows, and all that rubbish; and it's all very well, you know, to like the girl you are going to marry—but hang it all! one needn't make a fool of oneself about it! I like Rose Blackett very well. She's a nice girl enough; no nonsense about her; can ride well, which is something, and plays cricket first-rate; she is good tempered, and I am thankful to say, without sentimentality; so we hit it off exactly; but as for being over head and ears in love, and all that stuff, I'm far too used up for anything of the kind, and she is too sensible. We marry because our mothers wish it and because—as they wish it—we might as well marry each other as any one else. I can't say I particularly want to marry any one; but I suppose I must do my duty that way; and so you see I do it.'

'All very well, Master Fred, but I cannot say I think you are in a proper frame of mind;' said Harvey Wynn, and I only hope that when I am going to be married I shall be over head and ears in love with my wife. I don't think I would let my mother make up a marriage for me, however sensible in it outlines.'

'Ah! but then you are such a deuced romantic fellow,' laughed Fred. 'Now you see I have gone through all that, and have come out on the other side; and so I save myself no end of trouble and anxiety; and let me tell you, that is no contemptible thing to do in life, if you can.'

'Just so,' said Harvey; and by that reasoning the more nearly we get down to oysterdom the wiser our philosophy.'

'Not a bad idea, Harvey. An oyster must have a jolly time of it till he's caught. And even then—we are all caught some time or other: so what does it matter?'

'Not much, perhaps; but I cannot say I like the oyster theory. I like to live up to the fullest of my powers while I do live, and when I have worn myself out, then it's time to die. But vegetation, social or emotional, does not suit me.'

'All the result of temperament and organization, my dear fellow,' said Fred, languidly; 'you see you have a big heart and big lungs and big muscles and a big brain, and are a son of Anak altogether. I have a weak heart and weak lungs, and more nerves than muscles, and an irritable brain which has to be kept quiet by the never-to-be-sufficiently-praised nicotine; and so emotion and excitement and all that sort of thing bore me to death; and in fact, I am not up to them, and that's just it.'

'One would think you were a poor little miserable starvling to hear you talk,' shouted Harvey. 'A six-foot life-guardsman not "up" to anything! and the best cricketer and boldest rider to hounds in the country! Who is talking bosh now, Fred?'

'Perhaps I am, and perhaps you are; but it's too much trouble to decide,' yawned Fred, lazily.

And Harvey knew that when his friend culminated to this point, there was no good in talking to him any more. Fred was of the *cui bono* school; good-hearted and honorable, generous, brave, affectionate in grain; but he had spoilt himself by the affectation of indifference, by pretending to be so terribly superior to all the weaknesses or emotion, and by making believe—and it was only make-believe—that there was nothing in life worth living for. In aid of which philosophy he had put on a lazy, lounging, careless manner, inexpressibly annoying to earnest and energetic people, maintaining that the cultus of nicotine, as he called it, was the only thing worth a sensible man's devotion, though he added a kind of bye-altar to Bass.

His friend Harvey Wynn was a very different kind of person. Tall, manly, broadly proportioned, his face not handsome so much as honest and strong—(Fred Whitfield was allowed to be the handsomest man in the county, and the most elegant in his appearance and manners—when he chose) full of life and spirit and animal energy and vigorous thought, impassioned in a strong manly way, and romantic too, always in earnest, and never frivolous—surely it was only by the law of contrasts that he was the friend of languid, used up, affected Fred—only by the theory of compensation that the conventional club-man about town found anything harmonious in the country doctor who took life in heroic doses, and even then complained of inanition! But one does sometimes see these odd friendships; and Fred Whitfield loved Harvey Wynn better than he loved any human being, save, perhaps, his mother; and Harvey loved him with that sad kind of love which one feels for people who might be much better than they are if they would be true to their truest selves. So it came to pass that Harvey, who was to be groomsman, was invited to Fred's house for the few days now intervening before the marriage took place. He had only just arrived when they had the conversation given above; and as yet had not seen the old lady, as Fred irreverently called his mother, nor, of course, Miss Blackett, who lived rather more than two miles from the Hawse—the Whitfields' place.

His introduction to the mother came first. She was a handsome, stately woman with the mein and the manner of a duchess; a cold, courteous, iron-hearted kind of person, she wore black silks and point-lace caps, and despised poverty as on a par with vice and crime. Conventional, proud, cold, worldly—Harvey understood now whence had come the flaw that ran through, and pitiably marred the beauty of his friend's nature.

Mrs. Whitfield was very civil to Harvey. She was in too good humor about this marriage of her planning not to be civil to every one; for Rose Blackett was an heiress, owning now some thousand a year in her own right, with inheritance to come; and she was glad that she had secured so rich a prize for her son, when others, and men of higher social standing, (notably my Lord Marcy Masters and Sir James Ventour), were pretendants in the same field; so that Harvey only felt in a general way the ice and iron of her nature; to himself individually she was all graciousness, of a stately sort, not to say grim.

But one thing he did see, and that was, that she was feverish and overstrained, and looked ill, and as if on the point of breaking down. His profession taught him that; besides having by nature the full use of his eyes.

'I am glad that mother likes you, old fellow!' said Fred, when she had left the table; 'I know her manner so well, I can weigh the measure of esteem she gives to any one to an ounce; and I can tell you—if you care for it—that you are in class number one with her; which will make it more comfortable for me, you know. I hope that Rose will like you too, and then we shall be all right.'

'I hope so too', said Harvey, laughing. And they talked of other things.

The next day they went over to Lisson where the Blacketts lived.

Mrs. Blackett was a meek, mild inoffensive creature with weak eyes; always dominated by the last speaker, and given to easy weeping. She had long been under Mrs. Whitfield's influence, whenever that lady chose to exert it; though, since Rose had grown up there had sometimes been fierce collisions, when the poor lady had been put to terrific straits, not knowing which sovereign to obey. Fortunately for her, Rose was too fond of liberty to be domineering; and so long as people would leave her alone, was content to leave them the same. So that, unless Mrs. Whitfield annoyed her personally, and sought to curtail her individuality, as she chose to phrase it, she let her manage her mamma as much as she liked, and gave no heed to the direction which that management was taking. It was only when Fred asked her to be his wife, saying, You see Rose, the old ladies have made it up between them; but we can't do better, unless you are not for it,' that she understood the meaning of the last few years.

'She did not care much about the matter, one way or the other,' she said; 'she liked Fred better than either my Lord Marcy Masters, who was old enough to be her father; or than Sir James Ventour, who was half a fool, so she said, 'Yes, very well Fred;' and there the thing rested. And that was about the extent of love-making that had been between them.

While Harvey was making himself agreeable to Mrs. Blackett, Fred Whitfield went out on a roving commission to look for Rose, who was never to be found, like any other young lady, in the drawing room; but always where she had no business to be—in the stable, or by the dog kennel, or shooting at a mark with a real pistol as she used to say, or practicing croquet, or doing something that was not needlework or anything else essentially feminine. A turn of the scale more, and Rose would have been 'fast'; as it was, she was only free. Fred found her, as usual, in the yard, superintending some tremendous proceedings connected with Fan and Fan's puppies, and after their first off-hand greetings (they met more like two young men than a lover and his betrothed) told her who was in the drawing room, and asked her if she would go and see him.

'That's your friend come to see you turned off?' she asked. And Fred said yes it was.

'Oh, very well! of course I'll go, cried Miss Rose, with just the shadow of a blush on her face, 'but you know Fred, though I don't care about such things myself, it is terribly like being trotted out for show.'

'Oh! nonsense, Rose,' drawled Fred. 'Harvey's far too good a fellow to have any such disagreeable ideas.' And they went into the drawing room together.

Certainly Rose Blackett was a very pretty girl. Tall, graceful, and yet with a certain look of personal power about her, which some men like in women, though others repudiate; with large dark eyes of uncertain shade, and thick, rich, glossy hair of the brown that sits next door to black; small hands, no thrust into dog-skin gauntlet gloves; small feet and dainty ankles, which the lopped-up purple dress and curt red petticoat showed to full advantage, dangling her hat with its sweeping feather in one hand, while sticking the other into the pocket of her short jacket with the big metal buttons, half blushing and half defiant, she was altogether a 'girl of the period,' after the best models of her kind; just a little too jaunty, perhaps, and a shade too indifferent but evidently a free natured, pure-minded, high hearted creature, as yet in the block, and unawakened. At a glance Harvey read it all.

'She does not love him,' he said to himself, 'and has never loved.'

The two young men stayed to dinner on Mrs. Blackett's invitation; and, at first amused, then surprised, Harvey ended by being indignant at the cavalier indifference with which Fred treated his betrothed. Indeed the whole thing was really painful to him; it seemed to be so little earnest, and so devoid of the poetry and passion of love. And he, who thought of marriage as of an earthly heaven, and who would have given all he had in the world to be loved by such a girl as Rose!

'How often is it that people have what they don't prize, and that others would give their lives for! he said to Fred as they drove home.

'Yes,' said Fred, wearily. 'Some men like love-making and all that bother; I confess I don't.'

'You do not give yourself too much trouble about it,' said Harvey, secretly nettled, but attempting to laugh. 'Of all the indifferent lovers that ever lived I should say you were the most indifferent.'

'It suits Rose,' said Fred; and I'm sure I do the best I can under the circumstances. It is such a stupid position for a fellow to be in, altogether; and even Rose, though not silly, and not a bit sentimental, dislikes it as much as I do. Did you see how she blushed when she came into the room to see you?'

'I saw she looked very beautiful and rosy', replied Harvey; 'but I did not notice that she was particularly embarrassed or blushing.'

'No, not embarrassed; she is not the kind of girl for that; but she colored up.' Which seemed to have impressed the young man as something wonderful; for he spoke of it again before they got home.

When they reached home they found that Mrs. Whitfield had gone to bed, suffering from a slight attack of fever; by to-morrow morning she was decidedly ill; and in a short time dangerosly so. It was an attack of nervous fever, and for a time her life was despaired of. Of course the marriage was put off indefinitely now, until she recovered; and as Harvey Wynn was free, not having yet made a practice anywhere, he agreed to remain in the house in close attendance, until she had passed the crisis, either for life or death.

And this was how it came about that he took up his quarters at the Hawse, and, by consequence, became well acquainted with Rose.

Rose was not merely 'the jolly girl without any nonsense about her' that Fred proclaimed her, and that she ostentatiously proclaimed herself to be, in deed at least, if not in word.

Harvey, who had no love for 'fast' girls, and who had the power of truth to elicit truth, soon found her out, and told her plainly that she was acting a part which neither became her nor belonged to her. It was all very well, he said, that she should like riding, and be fond of dogs and horses, and even enjoy firing at a mark—though he hoped she might never develop into a sportswoman, clever at killing pheasants, or hares either; but it was nothing but affectation her trying to make herself into the bad imitation of a man, and pretending to be ashamed of herself as a true woman. Women are women he said; and not all the big buttons or easy-going slang in the world could make them anything else; and, whatever the fast school might say, there was a grace in softness, and a power in love, and an ennobling influence in enthusiasm not to be had in stables and hunting-fields; 'and womanly work was womanly glory, Miss Blackett,' continued the young doctor, warmly; 'and home is not merely a "place to sleep and feed in", as you say, but the emblem and enclosure of woman's truest life. And all this you ought to feel strongly and enact steadily, because you are strong and steadfast.'

This he said earnestly, for he was too thoroughly manly himself to uphold as truly womanly incapable or imperfect women; and the thing he liked best in Rose was her power and the dash of manliness in her, which might be turned to such noble account if she would.

'And when you have made me all these fine things,' she said, her eyes kindling as she spoke, but not with enthusiasm, 'what will be the good of it? Much Fred will value me! Much the world will understand me! One gets no good by such subtleties, Mr. Wynn; people do not care for them, so what is the good of them?'

'I am sorry you think so,' Harvey answered. 'I should have expected from one so entire as yourself the recognition of a good for its own sake, quite independent of the sympathy or understanding of the world.'

'One must be understood by some one,' she answered; 'and the more one's nature is called out, the more need of a response.'

Then she blushed—cheek, neck, and brow, all one burning crimson—while her eyes dropped, full of thoughts and feelings better left untold.

Harvey felt his own heart beat with strange violence while he watched the lovely face before him; but he was not a man to show what he ought to hide; so, with an effort he drove the blood back to its calmer current again, and simply answered: 'The response always comes some time in life, Miss Blackett.'

She raised her eyes to his. 'Is every one happy, then?' she said; 'is every marriage well suited?'

'There are other means of happiness beside marriage, though this is the greatest,' he said; 'a woman's home has generally other loves and other duties besides the one of the husband; and at the worst there are friends.'

'Friends!' she said, scornfully; 'what good are friends to one?'

'You think so? I had hoped for a different verdict,' said Harvey.

'Oh, you are not a mere friend,' cried Rose, 'at least you are not the kind of friend I meant,' she added; and again she blushed to the very roots of her hair.

'No; I am more the brother than the mere acquaintance,' Harvey said, in a low voice, altered, too, in its tones, and deep and mellow—'your future husband's brother-friend, I am yours also, am I not?'

'I suppose so,' she answered, coldly, and turned away from him, as if offended.

Something not quite so fiery as wrath, nor so happy as mirth, came into Harvey's eyes as he watched her move away discontentedly, perhaps more hurt than annoyed; but he did not follow her, and in a few moments she came back to him, smiling as usual, as if she had done battle with the evil spirit within her and had driven him out.

But when Harvey parted with her that day she went into her room and wept as if her heart would break; and he, for the first time in his life, felt inclined to hate Fred Whitfield, and to curse his blindness and fatuity.

Had it not been for the young doctor, Mrs. Whitfield's life would not have been worth many hours' purchase. More than once during her illness he had dragged her out of the very jaws of death, and had now so far recovered her that the wedding day was again discussed, and only waited Harvey's sanction for the invalid to risk the fatigue and excitement consequent.

'Oh, bother the marriage!' said Fred, taking his mother's hand. 'Rose is a dear, good girl, and will wait to doomsday, rather than you should risk anything, mother. There is no hurry, and we can wait quite well until you are strong; can't we, Harvey?'

'Very well indeed, I should think,' Harvey answered, with an almost imperceptible dash of sarcasm in his voice; 'but it is not good for your mother to be anxious to conclude this affair. Offer to wait, and she will insist on its being concluded at once.' 'Nothing to me,' he added hastily. 'I have no purpose of my own to serve in the delay or the conclusion.'

He had though. As it was to be, it was better concluded with all decent speed, he said to himself; and then he, at least, would be out of danger. She, perhaps, needed no such precaution; and yet—those blushes of hers, and that eager, tremulous face had wakened strange thoughts in him. Hush! he must not dream such dreams. What would he think of himself, a poor, penniless, country doctor, if he came here as his friend's almost brother, and, in return for his love, broke off his marriage with an heiress, and secured her for himself? The thought brought the blood to his face, and made him loathe himself, as dishonored in soul, for even harboring such a vision.

So it was arranged that the settlement should be signed, and that next week the marriage should take place, Mrs. Whitfield's health not preventing. And when Rose was told this she wept again; and, to her mother's intense dismay, burst out with, 'Mamma, I will not marry Fred Whitfield!'—an announcement which that fine lady put down to insanity, as the mildest term.

The day following this decision Fred could not go over to Lisson; he was detained on some business or other at home; so the young doctor rode over, with a note containing a request for the two ladies to dine at the Hawse this evening, seeing that on this side one was disabled and the other detained, and no intercourse possible unless they would kindly come.

'Certainly,' said Mrs. Blackett, a little nervously, glancing at her daughter, who, with her head thrown up, stood sideways to her.

'And you, Miss Blackett?' asked Harvey.

'Oh, by all means!' said Miss Rose, not quite pleasantly, at least to her mother's ears. 'I want to speak to Fred very seriously.'

'My dear!' remonstrated Mrs. Blackett; and then she left the room.

'What has happened?' asked Harvey, impulsively.

'Oh, nothing,' answered Rose; she was standing now in the bay-window, looking out into the garden, so that her face was not seen. 'I have only told mamma that I am not going to marry Fred; and she is put out.'

Harvey reeled like one struck. Had his senses played him false?

'Indeed!' he then said, after a long pause, 'your determination is sudden, Miss Blackett.'

'Yes,' she answered, with assumed carelessness; but her quivering voice and bashful eyes belied her assumption. 'Now that it has come so near, I fear that it will not do; and I am sure Fred will feel with me.'

Again Harvey was silent. What could he say? that he thought Fred would consent to give her up, being utterly unworthy his good fortune? that he hoped he would keep her still to her word when he hoped just the reverse? that she was doing wrong to be honest, when he loved her for it more than he had ever loved her before? What could he say? Truth and honor were on opposite sides as sometimes happens in life; and if he said what he thought, he would say what he ought not to say. So he kept silence; and Rose was not quick enough to divine why.

While they were standing in this awkward position, both too much moved to speak a carriage dashed up to the door, and 'Mr. Norton' was announced. Mr. Norton was Rose's trustee and guardian, in a way; though that young lady had full power over her own funds, and did not in general either ask advice as to what she should do with her own, or defer to it if given. And being of the school which 'goes in' for a great many things better left alone, she 'went in' for speculation, on a tolerably large scale; so that since she came of age, she had placed most of her money out at nurse, she said; but she had chosen, unfortunately for her, the most capricious nurse of all—mining property. However, she would do it; so she had no one to blame but herself. Not even smooth-spoken, cleanly-shaven Mr. Norton; who had helped her, by-the-by, to more than one 'good thing,' in which he himself had taken shares that he generously handed over to her, after private advices received and pondered over. And when Mr. Norton came Harvey left, bearing with him the promise that the two ladies would come to dinner at half-past six precisely. As much before as they liked, but not a moment a after.

When they came it was easy to see that something had haspened. Mrs. Blacket was depressed, tearful; her eyes were red and swollen, her face puffed and pale; she spoke as if she had a violent cold, and in every other particular of manner and showed that she had been weeping bitterly. Rose was flushed and excited, with a certain bravery of manner which trembled too nearly on bravado to be quite as lovely as might have been. But she looked beautiful—perhaps more beautiful than she had ever looked in her life before; and even lazy Fred seemed struck by her, and warmed up to unwonted feeling.

After dinner she asked him to go with her to the library; for she was utterly unconventional in all she did, and would not have minded asking a prince to tie her shoe, or anything else that she might desire, being just a little touched by the self-will belonging to the heiress; and Fred assented, wondering what was up and what she wanted. When she had shut the door, 'Dear old Fred,' she said in a coaxing voice, 'I want you to do me a kindness.'

'I am sure I will, Rose,' said Fred, naturally, and without his drawl.

'You do like me, don't you now?'

'Why, yes; of course I do. I think you the best girl going,' answered Fred, opening his eyes.

'And would not like to hurt or distress me?'

'By Jove, no,' he cried. 'I should think not, indeed.'

She was standing by the fire, leaning one hand on the chimney-piece, with the other just lifting her dark-blue gown over her ankle her foot on the fender, showing her pink silk stockings, bronze slipper, and a bit of broad needlework as a flounce above.

'Well, I will take you at your word,' said Rose, 'I want you to give me up, Fred, and break off the marriage. Come, now; are you a good enough old fellow for that?' very coaxingly.

'Break off the marriage, Rose!' cried Fred, all in amaze. 'Are you dreaming?'

'Not a bit of it,' she answered, laughing a little hysterically; 'quite serious and wide awake.'

Fred. 'My mother has set her heart on the marriage; and it is so near, too, now; and I do love you—a great deal more than I have said or shown,' he added, stirred out of his affectation. 'You know, Rose, how I hate the idea of sentimentality or spooneyism with any one; and I have fought off that as long and as well as I could. But I am not the indifferent beast you may think me. But I do love you, Rose, and I cannot give you up.'

She had turned quite pale during her lover's speech. 'Well Fred,' she then said, 'of course I'm very much obliged to you, and all that; but I have not been paying a par, and I do not feel a bit more than I have shown; so that we are not on equal terms if you love me so deeply as you say; and I am simply in the old way of good fellowship. Mind that, and never reproach me hereafter, for I have told you the truth, remember. And as for your lady mother, I don't think she will make much objection when she knows all, because dear old Fred, I am ruined.'

'Good God, Rose!' cried Fred; 'what on earth do you mean?'

'Well, you know I have been going in for speculating; and so Mr. Norton came down to tell me to-day that all my great expectations are come to nothing; the Bella Juanita mines are drowned; and I have not what to realize two hundred a year instead of two thousand. And so I think the question of Mrs. Whitfield's consent is settled, is it not?'

'Now then, Rose, I will not give you up for any one in the world,' said Fred, in a deep voice. 'My mother may say what she likes, and you may say what you like—the marriage shall go on; this day week you are my wife, come what may! I never felt how much I loved you before to day, Rose, when there has been just a chance of losing you.'

'But if I dont want to marry you, Fred?' urged Rose, touched, in spite of herself, by the unusual warmth and chivalry of the man.

'Oh, bosh!' said Fred. 'You are not the girl to be engaged for three months contentedly enough, and then turn round just at the last moment and say you don't care for the fellow. I quite understand you, Rose, dear old lassie! You think that my mother will not like the match so much now as when you had money, and that you are not the catch you were before you had lost it; and so you would release me. But I will not be released, Rosey; and so I'll tell my mother when she speaks to me about it, if she takes that tone at all.'

Upon which Rose did what was a most extraordinary thing in her to do—what Fred had never before seen the slightest inclination in her towards him—she flung her arms round his neck and kissed him; and then burst into a violent flood of tears, which soon passed into hysterics: when he was obliged to call the servants and Harvey Wynn.

So now the whole thing came out, both to Mrs. Whitfield and to Harvey: Fred had no idea of making mysteries and keeping secrets unnecessarily; but he noticed two things as the result of his communication, that his mother looked decidedly displeased, and as if she had made up her mind in a different direction to his, and, perhaps, with more stability; and that Harvey, whose face had lighted up with strange passion, suddenly burnt himself out, and became cold, and ashen, and 'odd.' But Fred Whitfield was not remarkable for penetration, so the coil coiled itself a turn tighter, and no one seemed likely to get out of the rounds, or to be free of its strands. Rose could do no more than she had done; Fred could do no less; and for once in her life his mother was powerless, and he flatly refused to obey her. His nature had been ploughed up for the first time, and the weeds had been cut down and the good seed had sprung up. Rose Blackett, however, and Harvey Wynn were as miserable as it often falls to the lot of people to be by the virtues of another. If Fred would only have been selfish and narrow-hearted, how many days and nights of suffering would have been saved!

The time was coming very near, now; it wanted only three days to the wedding, and none but Fred was content. Mrs. Whitfield was coldly savage, and declared she would not appear at the church, or breakfast either. Conditions were changed, she said, since the engagement was made; and Rose Blackett, who had once been well enough, was no fit match now for the owner of the Hawse; Mrs. Blackett was in a state of chronic tearfulness, which made her poor eyes very bad; Rose was broken up out of all likeness to her former self, and her attempts at the old high-handed 'fastness' failed signally; Harvey was moody, irritable, feverish, uncertain; and the whole octave rang with an undertone of discord, which no one saw any means of preventing; it not being always possible for one's fingers to strike the true key.

The three friends were riding along the lane leading up to Lisson; Rose and Fred in front, and Harvey some little distance behind—the lane being too narrow for three abreast. Fred was talking about Thursday next (it was Monday now), and talking naturally and lovingly—for somehow he had forgotten his drawl of late—when they heard a terrific plunging in the rear, and then a heavy fall as Harvey's horse—a wild, fiery, nervous brute—flung him suddenly to the ground, taking him at a moment of inattention when he was riding with a slack rein and his mind far away; so that he was thrown in a second, almost at the first start and plunge the terrified brute had made—frightened at an idiot lad of the place starting up from behind the hedge, yelling and flinging his arms abroad.

In another moment, Rose Blackett, throwing her reins wildly to Fred, was kneeling by his side, holding his head against her bosom, and calling him her 'Beloved Harvey'; which he, stunned as he was, and unable to reply, was not too insensible to hear and understand.

The carriage was sent for from Lisson, and the poor fellow, bleeding and terribly shaken, was taken to the house to be set to rights as soon as possibly; and while they were carring him through the hall Rose turned to Fred, who stood leaning against the lintel of the door, and nearly as pale as the wounded man, but a great deal more wretched.

'It has come out, Fred,' she said, laying her hand on his shoulder, the tears in her eyes, but with a more contented expression of face than she had had of late. 'I am very sorry for you, especially as you have seemed to like me so much more really than you did; but I cannot help it.'

'You are a dear, good girl, Rose,' said Fred; 'and I have been a fool. But it situation I tooled away my opportunity; and now, when I would die to be loved by you, Rose, you have gone off to another.' He tried to smile, but his lips quivered, and he was obliged to turn away his head.

'Never mind, Fred,' said Rose, 'you will find some one else better suited to you, and more worthy of you than I am; and perhaps you will come to me some day and say, 'Rose you have been the best friend I ever had in my life,' when you have a sweet little wife that you adore.'

'I don't quite think that,' said poor Fred; 'but if you are happy, that will be something. At all events you are a dear good girl; and I love you more than you know of, or would perhaps believe. But that is nothing to the purpose now; I have lost you, when I might have won you if I had been wise.'

They shook hands cordially, and parted; and the next day Fred left the Hawse, and soon after went abroad. Rose and he did not meet again till many years after her marriage with Harvey; and when they did, Fred was really married to the 'dearest little woman under the sun,' and Rose was a handsome matron, superintending her nursery instead of the kennel, and finding her children rather more interesting objects of care than Fan's puppies of olden time. She had saved altogether about four hundred a year out of the wreck of the grand Bella Juanita silver mines; and so on the whole did not do badly in life. Happiness has been found at even a lower figure.'

TOUCHING INCIDENT.

In the campaign of Napoleon in Russia, while the French army was retreating from Moscow, there lay in a poor, low cottage, in a little village, an invalid boy. This village was exactly in the course of the retreating army, and already the reports of it approach had reached and excited the terrified inhabitants. In their turn, they began to make preparations for retreat; for they knew there was no hope for them from the hands of the soldiery, seeking their own preservation, and who gave no quarter. Every one who had the strength to fly, fled; some trying to take with them their worldly goods, some to conceal them—the little village was fast growing deserted. Some burnt their houses, or dismantled them. The old were placed in waggons, and the young hurried their families away with them.

But in the little cottage there was none of this bustle. The poor crippled boy could not move from his bed. The widowed mother had no friends near enough to spare a thought for her in this time of trouble, when every one thought only of those nearest him, and of himself. What chance in flight was there for her and her young children, among whom was the poor crippled boy?

It was evening, and the sound of distant voices and of preparation had died away. The poor boy was wakeful with terror, now dreading lest she should take him at his word, and leave him behind.

"The neighbors are just going away; I hear them no longer," he said. "I am so selfish, I have kept you here. Take the little girls with you; it is not too late?—And I am safe; who will hurt a helpless boy?"

"We are all safe," answered the mother; "God will not leave us, though all else forsake us."

"But what can help us?" persisted the boy. "Who can defend us from their cruelty? Such stories as I have heard of the ravages of these men! They are not men, they are wild beasts. Oh, why was I made so weak—so weak as to be utterly useless? No strength to defend, no strength even to fly!"

"There is a sure wall for the defenceless," answered his mother; "God will build us up a sure wall."

"You are my strength now," said the boy. "I thank God that you will not desert me. I am so weak, I cling to you. Do not leave me, indeed! I fancy I can see the cruel soldiery hurrying in. We are too poor to satisfy them, and they would put their vengeance upon us! And yet you ought to leave me! What right have I to keep you here? And I shall suffer more if I see you suffer."

"God will be our refuge and defence," still said the mother, and at length with low, quieting words, she stilled the anxious boy, till he, too, slept like his sisters.

The morning came of the day that was to bring the dreaded enemy. The mother and children opened their eyes to find that a "sure wall" had indeed been built for their defence. The snow had begun to fall the evening before. Through the night it had collected rapidly. A high wind had blown the snow in drifts against the low house, so that it had entirely covered it. A low shed behind protected the way to the outhouse, where the animals were, and for a few days the mother and her children kept themselves alive within their cottage, shut in and concealed by the heavy barricade of snow.

It was during that time that the dreaded scourge passed over the village. Every house was ransacked; all the wealthier ones deprived of their luxuries, and the poorer ones robbed of their necessities. But the low-roofed cottage lay sheltered beneath its walls of snow, which in the silent night had gathered around it. God had protected the defenceless with a "sure wall."

LAUGH ON.—Laugh on and never mind the censure of cynics. Joy is one of the greatest panaceas of life. It braces the nerves, makes the heart dance to pleasant music, and the very soul ring again with harmonious sounds. It is the delight of the good, makes sunshine where there would be all shadow and gloom, promotes domestic hapiness, drives away sorrow; and prepares the mind for the exigencies of the future; so laugh on, but laugh discreetly, and in due season.

BRITISH CENTRAL AMERICA.

From a recent report made to the Secretary of the United States Treasury, on the subject of a Pacific Railway by Mr. James W. Taylor of St. Paul, Minnesota, we take the following remarkable passage in relation to our "out west":—

Public sentiment in Canada and England has long demanded measures for the colonization of Central British America, as that fertile belt of territory is now called which extends from Canada and Lake Superior to the Rocky Mountains. It includes the valleys of the Red River, which belong to, the hydrographical system of Hudson's Bay and are covered by the charter of the Hudson Bay Company.

Selkirk settlement, on the Red River of the North, was founded in 1812, and has a population of 10,000—an industrious, moral and well ordered community. Fort Garry in this settlement, is the North American [illegible] pany. The posts of this company, more than fifty in number, occupy very commanding situations over the immense area bounded by Hudson's Bay and Lake Superior on the east, the Rocky Mountains on the west, and the Arctic Ocean on the north. The fur trade of this immense territory concentrates its annual product on the Red River of the North at Fort Garry, from which point, by the annual voyages of brigades of botteaux, merchandise and supplies are distributed to the most distant posts. Prior to 1858 the imports and exports of the Hudson's Bay Company were chiefly transported by the difficult and dangerous route of Hudson's Bay and Nelson's River, or over the numerous obstacles intervening from Lake Superior to Red River, on the British side of the international line. In 1858, however, materials were transported from the navigable waters of the Mississippi River to construct a steamer on the Red River, and in 1862 two such vessels navigated that stream. The trade previously existing between St. Paul and Selkirk has been greatly increased in consequence. The imports of Central British America for the use of the Hudson Bay Company and the Selkirk settlers amount to $400,000 annually, while the average annual exports almost exclusively furs, amount to $1,000,000.

It is now well known that north-west of Minnesota, the country reaching from the Selkirk settlement to the Rocky Mountains, and from latitude 49 deg. to 53 deg., on the longitude of 94 deg. and to latitude 55 deg. on the Pacific coast, is as favorable to grain and animal production as any of the North ern States; that the mean temporate for spring, summer, and autumn, observed on the 42nd and 43rd parallels, in New York, Michigan, and Wisconsin, has been accurately traced through Fort Snelling and the valley of the Saskatchewan to latitude 55 deg. on the Pacific coast, and that from the north-west boundary of Minnesota, this whole district of British America is threaded in all directions by the navigable waterlines which converge to Lake Winnepeg.

These facts, however favorable to agricultural settlement, would have failed to revolutionize the policy of the Hudson's Bay Company, except for the violent excitment of gold discovery. The year 1858 directed a column of adventurers to the channel and sources of Frazer River, the organization of British Columbia followed, and it was soon ascertained that the richest and most extensive gold fields of north-west British America—the Cariboo mines—are so far within the Rocky Mountains so far up to the utmost sources of Frazer River, as to be practically more accessible from Selkirk than from the coast of Puget's Sound. At length, in 1862, the tributaries of the Sakatchewan and Peace Rivers, on the eastern flank of the Rocky Mountains were discovered to be auriferious; while eastward stretched towards Canada and Lake Superior not less than 100,000,000 acres of fertile lands destined for cereal cultivation whenever reached by emigration. English and Canadian exploration also established in favor of this district that its average elevation above the sea was far less than in American territory; that the Rocky Mountains were diminished in width, while the passes were not difficult that the supply of rain was more abundant and the carboniferous and silurian formations were of greater extent than further south; and, owing to the greater influence of the Pacific winds through the mountain gorges and the reduced altitude that the climate was no material obstacle to civilized occupation.

The Hudson Bay Company, in 1863, was reorganized to meet the exigencies of imperial and provincial policy in Central British America, "in accordance (to quote the circular of the new directory) with the industrial spirit of the age, and the rapid advancement which colonization has made in the countries adjacent to the Hudson's Bay territories."

While the present most effective organization of the fur trade will be continued and often extended the company now proposes to avail itself of all possible agencies for the rapid colonization of the Sakatchewan basin and the gold districts at the sources of the Columbia Frazer, Sashatchewan, and Peace Rivers. A telegraph line from St. Paul to Pembina, and thence through the Selkirk and the Rocky Mountains to the Pacific coast, is first announced as the special enterprise of 1864. Then a connection of the Selkirk settlement by railrord with St. Paul, and by a direct emigrant road with Fort William on the British coast of Lake Superior will receive effective aid, concurrently with the prosecution of American and Canadian enterprises. Steamboat navigation is to be extended upon Lake Winnipeg and the Saskachewan river. The system of land survey and gratuitous allotments of land to colonists which prevail in the United States are proposed the company reserving alternate blocks or sections to support future railroad constructing—since at the earliest practical moment a railroad will be undertaken traversing the colonies of Central British America and British Columbia. It is in the power of the modernized Hudson's Bay Company, and it is well-defined purpose, to connect Lake Superior and the Pacific coast by a cordon of settlements, and to carry forward the construction of two thousand miles of railroad simultaneously with the advent of population, and as the sure means to encourage the settlement of the North-west British America, or the interval which separates the lake coast of Canada from the coast of the North Pacific ocean.

This international railroad (as it may properly be called, until the development of British America warrants a direct communication with Canada) will be the favorite object of English capitalists on the completion, at the Union Pacific Railroad will