

A LISTENER BY THE SEA.

Last night I lay beside the winter sea,
And, waking late, I heard the sound without
Of rain, and heard far off the wild sea about
Beyond the town—a lone and lonely melody.
Heaving with ebb and flow, eternally
Along the rocky coast it poured its rout
Of waves, with constant roar, as of some stout,
Hoar monster, fierce with greed or savage gloom.
Dark Africa heaved, methought, that thunder-sound
And Indian rivers; lone Pacific Isles
Trembling to hear it; from unnumbered miles
Arising, as the brown earth wheels its round,
It with vast whisper grieves the pale moon's height.
With how great songs, O God, Thou fill'st the night.

W. P. FOSTER, in the January Century.

PREPARING TO ENJOY THEMSELVES.

"Now we haven't got much time to get ready, my dear," suggested Mr. Spoopendyke, cheerily, "and I won't be late at a dinner-party. I want you to fix up so as to be the best-looking woman at the table. You can get ready in an hour, can't you?"

"I think I can," replied Mrs. Spoopendyke, with a titter. "Oh yes, I can dress in that time, and I hope you won't be disappointed in me," and the little woman began to take down her back hair.

"You might get my shaving tackle for me," said Mr. Spoopendyke, appropriating the only mirror. "And now I think of it," he continued, after a pause, "my dress coat needs a button. Sew it on, won't you?"

Mrs. Spoopendyke lugged out the coat and hunted through the broken-down old bag after a button that would do.

"Got that button sewed on yet?" inquired Mr. Spoopendyke, lathering away comfortably.

"In a minute, my dear," responded his wife. "Well hurry up! I want you to put these studs and sleeve buttons into my clean shirt."

Mrs. Spoopendyke gradually got around to those studs and laid out the habiliment in readiness for her lord.

"Did you take these stitches in my gloves?" inquired Mr. Spoopendyke.

"Oh! yes, certainly," replied Mrs. Spoopendyke, going right to work at it.

"Well, then you can brush my vest and pantaloons, and by that time I'll be ready to have you tie on my cravat."

A few moments more found Mr. Spoopendyke arrayed completely.

"Come, you ready?" he demanded, having assured himself that his wife had not accomplished a single step toward her toilet.

"Not quite, dear," responded the lady, with one-half her hair in her mouth and the other half crackling under the brush.

"What's the matter with you?" he asked. "Didn't you say you could be ready in an hour? Didn't you hear me tell you when I came in that we only had an hour to dress in? Why can't you go as you are? You look well enough."

"I was busy fixing your things," faltered Mrs. Spoopendyke, "and I couldn't do two things at once."

"Oh, no! You can't do anything at once." Why didn't you have my things fixed this morning? Why don't you keep house somehow? That dress you've got on is good enough. Why can't you go in that dress? If you've got to put on all the frills you won't be ready till next fall. Ain't you most ready now? Think I'm going to stand around here like a jug of mineral water?"

Mrs. Spoopendyke twisted up her hair and jumped in the pins. Then she put on her hat and twisted it first to one side and then to the other; put one hand up behind and shoved it forward, and then caught hold of it in front and pulled it down.

"Well, if you're ready, let's start," growled Mr. Spoopendyke. "You've been long enough now for a telegraph wire, now. Come on."

"Oh! I haven't got my dress on yet," pleaded Mrs. Spoopendyke. "I'll be through in a minute."

"Dodgast that dress," ejaculated Mr. Spoopendyke. "Where's my paper? Give me my paper and I'll read for a month or two. You won't be ready till spring. Where's the paper?"

"Take a book, dear," recommended Mrs. Spoopendyke, blushing deeply and glancing around nervously.

"I don't want any measly book," retorted Mr. Spoopendyke. "I want the morning paper. Find that paper the first thing you do, and then you get ready in four seconds."

"I think you'll find the paper behind—the book-case," said Mrs. Spoopendyke, as red as a brick, and she hustled into her skirt, and began clawing at it behind in an effort to hook it up straight. "I'm almost ready," she giggled, hysterically, as she drew on her waist and buttoned it up nervously. "I'll be ready before you could turn the paper inside out," and snatched a ribbon from the drawer, tied in a bow, pinned it at her throat, and backed away from the glass to see how it looked.

"I want to know whether you are going to find that dodgast paper for me?" thundered Mr. Spoopendyke.

"I'm all ready except my cloak," jerked out Mrs. Spoopendyke. "If you'll hand me my cloak we'll start right away. It's in the closet there." And Mrs. Spoopendyke flopped down on the floor and began putting on her shoes.

"Suppose I'm going to hunt around for that measly cloak?" howled Mr. Spoopendyke. "Can't you get your things for yourself? I want my paper, and I want it now."

"I can tell you what was in it," said Mrs. Spoopendyke. "I can tell you all about it while

I dress," and she looked up at him piteously, with her face all flushed.

"No doubt," retorted Mr. Spoopendyke. "You know all about it. All you want is a can of oil and ten men swearing at you all day to be a printing-press. When are you going?"

"Now I'm all ready, dear," smiled Mrs. Spoopendyke, who wasn't anything of the sort.

"You won't need to read now, for we're going." They started off together, arm in arm, Mr. Spoopendyke growling and his wife hitching at her various garments as they went along.

"Another time we're going out to dinner, you be ready the day before, you hear?" demanded Mr. Spoopendyke.

"Yes, dear," responded his wife; and then she thought to herself, "I'm very glad he didn't insist on my looking for the paper."

A SLIGHT INDISPOSITION.

"That's better," groaned Mr. Spoopendyke, as his wife arranged the cool pillows under his head; "now I can die looking out upon the trees and the sky," and Mr. Spoopendyke assumed a resigned expression of visage, and gazed out of the corner of one eye upon a bare alantus tree and half a dozen telegraph wires.

"Oh! you won't die," says Mrs. Spoopendyke. "You're only a little sick, and you'll get over it."

"That's all you know about it," snarled Mr. Spoopendyke. "To hear you talk one would think you only had to be fitted with little beds and a bad smell to be a government hospital. I'm down sick, I tell ye, and I don't want any fooling about it."

"Well, well," cooed Mrs. Spoopendyke, "don't excite yourself. Keep quiet and you'll get well."

"Much you'd care," muttered Mr. Spoopendyke, turning on his side and resting his cheek on his hand, an attitude generally assumed by martyred spirits on the approach of dissolution.

"Will you take your drops again, dear?" asked Mrs. Spoopendyke. "It's time for them."

"No I won't. They're nasty. I haven't had anything but drops for a week. From the way you administer drops one would think you was the trap-door of a hanging machine. Gimme some figs."

"But there ain't any figs, dear. I'll go and get you some," said Mrs. Spoopendyke.

"That's it," growled her husband. "You only want an excuse to leave me to die alone. Why haven't ye got some figs? You might know I'd want figs. Got any citron?"

"No, I haven't any citron, but I won't be more than a minute away, and I'll get you any fruit you want."

"Oh, yes! You'd get it, I've no doubt. What you want is a rail fence around you and a gate off the hinges to be a dodgast orchard. Fetch me some strawberries."

"Why, strawberries are out of season. There ain't any in the market now."

"I supposed you'd say that," moaned Mr. Spoopendyke. "You've always got some excuse. If I should die you'd have an apology ready. Gimme something to take this taste out of my mouth."

"What would you like, dear?" asked Mrs. Spoopendyke.

"Soap, dodgast it! Gimme soap, if ye can't think of anything else," demanded Mr. Spoopendyke. "Mebbe you ain't got any soap. At least you wouldn't have if I wanted it. Got any cherries?"

"No. They are out of season, too. There are some grapes in the closet."

"Don't want any measly grapes. If I can't have what I want I don't want it. Where's those drops? Why don't you give me my medicine? Going to let me die for want of a little attention? Want the life insurance, don't ye? Going to gimme those drops before the next election?"

Mrs. Spoopendyke ladled out the dose, half of which went down Mr. Spoopendyke's gullet and half over the front of his nightshirt.

"That's it," he howled. "Spill 'em. They're for external application. Put 'em anywhere. Pour 'em up the chimney," and Mr. Spoopendyke fired the spoon across the room.

"Have a piece of orange to take the taste away?" asked Mrs. Spoopendyke, pleasantly.

"No, I won't," objected her spouse. "Gimme a piece of muskmelon."

"I don't believe they have muskmelons in November," sighed Mrs. Spoopendyke.

"Of course they don't," reasoned Mr. Spoopendyke. "They don't have anything when I'm sick. It's a wonder they have houses. It's a miracle they have beds. I'm astounded to think that they have doctors and drug stores. I've got to hurry up and die, or they won't have any undertakers, or collins, or graves. Gimme a piece of orange, will ye? S'pose I'm going to lie here and chaw on the taste of these drops for a month?"

"You'd like these grapes," suggested his wife.

"No I wouldn't either. What do you want me to eat 'em for? Got any interest in the grape trade? Got any commission on the grapes? Anybody pay ye to make me eat 'em? One would think you only wanted an iron arbour and four small boys climbing over you to be a grape-vine. Where's my pills?"

"You took your pill, dear," replied his patient wife.

"Oh, of course! A pill is out of season now."

Can't even have a pill when I feel like it?" and Mr. Spoopendyke groaned in spirit and looked dismal."

"Now sit down and don't move. I want to sleep. Don't you make a bit of noise if you want me to live."

And Mrs. Spoopendyke held her breath and never rustled a feather while her husband lay and glared out of the window for an hour and a half.

ECHOES FROM LONDON.

CHEAPER telegrams, a parcel post, and telegraphic money-orders are items for anticipation.

MR. THORNE is reported to have given Mr. David James £4,500 for his share of the Vaudeville lease.

It is said that the Balaclava panorama exhibiting in Leicester Square will shortly be taken the round of the provinces.

A NEW quarterly publication called the *Prisoners* has been projected by Mr. Arthur Kinglake, a Somersetshire magistrate.

It is said that Mr. John Hollingshead made Mrs. Langtry an offer of one hundred pounds a night for twelve performances at the Opera Comique.

AFTER all, the site of the Avenue Theatre is not to be absorbed by the South Eastern Railway Company. The theatre is to be opened early in the year, and the rental is £2,000 a year.

THE electric boat in which it is proposed to cross the Channel between Boulogne and Folkestone is almost ready, and is only awaiting its electro motors.

THE Crystal Palace authorities cater for the education of the masses as well as their amusement. Classes for young ladies, held during the past year, have been attended by some five hundred pupils, who have contributed to the exchequer fees amounting to £3,500.

Gil Blas at last exclaims against the *maladi du duck*. It seems that in France the customary opening business now is a shower of smacks in the face. The old gentlemanly tone is entirely lost in this revival of a bad phrase of the manners of our forefathers.

THE Countess of Bective is still active in her efforts to revive British woollen manufactures. She has obtained the assent of the Lord Mayor to the holding of a meeting at the Mansion House on St. Valentine's Day, at which the Chief Magistrate will himself preside.

MESSRS. LONGMAN are going to try an experiment. The serial *Le Tour*, by Mrs. Oliphant, will be issued by them in January. It will be handsomely printed in three volumes, and the price will be twelve shillings, the publishers thus breaking through the custom of issuing three volume novels at a guinea and a half.

THE members of the Wanderer's Club, Pall Mall, have determined to become the owners of the establishment, and thus obviate the necessity imposed by the Excise on clubs, the property of which is in the hands of private individuals, of taking out a license to sell excisable liquors, and to be under the same rule and restrictions as ordinary licensed victuallers.

It is said that the Princess Louise is compiling a work relating to her Canadian experience, and that the work will be illustrated by a Royal hand. The Princess Beatrice's birthday book has already become such a success that a work from any member of the Royal Family would be sure to be welcome. Whether these interesting details of Canadian life will make their appearance in a complete form, or whether they will be published in a serial, is doubtful.

ACTORS and actresses do not like the electric light, as it reveals their make-up, their patches, and their ages. But actors and actresses will have to accommodate their paint and powder to the light, instead of the light to their paint and powder. They will, in fact, have to learn once more the art of making-up under new conditions. As regards the dresses at the Savoy there was actually an improvement, but some of the faces looked anything but fair under the full glare of the white searching light which has succeeded to mild yellow gas.

THE *St. James's Gazette* announces that it will reduce its price from twopenny to one penny on the 1st of January next. This step has been resolved upon in consequence of the report that the *Pall Mall Gazette* is about to take a similar one. Mr. Greenwood's paper aims at being an antidote to Radicalism, and its conductor says that "if Radical teaching which cannot be got to circulate in one direction is to be spread abroad more freely in another, it behoves him

to provide the antidote in a corresponding measure." The *Globe*, we hear, is to be increased in size, the price remaining the same.

THAT there are men of mettle, less thin skinned in one respect than the majority of their fellow sufferers, is convincingly demonstrated by the recent foundation, in the ancient burgh of Herne, of a club exclusively composed of "Unfortunate Lovers." Fourteen members have already joined, and unanimously elected as their chairman of committee an elderly bachelor whose frequent discomfitures in the matrimonial venture clearly entitle him to distinction among these luckless slaves of the blind god. Only the proprietor of a heart still bleeding, though advanced in years, from unnumbered wounds, the results of as many unrequited passions, could fitly preside over so dismal an association as the Club of "Unfortunate Lovers."

FOR once Paris will not beat us. It is said on undoubted authority that the show of electric lights at the Crystal Palace will in every way surpass that at the Palais de l'Industrie. In the former there was a great absence of classification. At Sydenham the classification will be perfect. At Paris it was impossible to judge one light in presence of the hundreds blazing in the same open room. At the Crystal Palace each light will have its own compartment. In Paris some of the best lights never got into working order at all. At Sydenham every light will be brought to its full perfection. In the matter of machinery, Paris will beat us probably—though that is not certain. But we shall have the best "electric light exhibition." The end of January is now mentioned as the time when the exhibition will be really opened.

VARIETIES.

THE trial of Mormonism made by Mack Johnston and his two wives, in Kansas City, Mo., was a failure. He married one woman there and one in Wyandotte. His bigamy was soon exposed, but the two wives agreed to a compromise, by which he was to live a week with each in alternation. This arrangement lasted until he overstayed his time with the Kansas City wife, for which offence the Wyandotte wife shot him.

THERE is something almost comical in the notion of the Thieves' meeting, at which Mr. Howard Vincent, the Chief of Scotland Yard, presided. The event is characteristic of a humane age. Mr. Hatton, whose earnest and successful labours amongst the criminal classes cannot be too highly spoken of, deserves congratulation upon his selection of a chairman. These thieves' meetings are no new thing; but they have not always been conducted with the greatest degree of discretion. Sometimes a "Converted Thief" has addressed the assemblage of self-confessed criminals. Such a person usually commences by describing himself in the language of St. Paul and with more injustice as the "chief of sinners," and proceeds to acquit himself with exaggeration by giving painful details of the dreadfully nefarious transactions in which in his unregenerate days he was engaged. The juvenile pickpockets enjoy the recital, which has to them all the gusto of a "penny dreadful," but the interest wanes when the speaker begins to point his moral. It is infinitely more to the point to demonstrate as Mr. Howard Vincent did so effectively, that crime doesn't pay, and that as a means of livelihood it is not only unremunerative, but unpleasant as compared with an honest career.

EFFECT OF DUST UPON HEALTH.—We shall probably never know the real effect of dust upon health. It is by no means improbable that many ailments which are now ascribed to other and more remote causes, are really due to it. Professional and business men would perhaps be more hale and hearty if they worked under more cleanly conditions; but any housewife, even the most careless, would be horrified if she saw the state of dirt in which by far the greater number of offices are left from one year's end to another. In many of the busiest parts of London, and other cities, it is an almost universal custom to have the windows cleaned only once a year, and their grimy and sooty appearance during the other eleven months must be familiar to every one. In many offices the dusting operations are wholly limited to the desks in use, and to the removal of the surface and scattered scraps of paper from the carpet. Books and papers, which notoriously accumulate more dust than anything else, are very rarely dusted at all. It is true that now-a-days professional and business duties are performed upon a "high pressure" system, but it is to be regretted that more care is not taken to minimise the dangers to health to which an enforced sedentary and indoor life exposes the great majority of men; and a great change for the better may reasonably be expected if the char-woman or caretaker is required to do something more than the present quantity of work, and periodical and thorough cleaning of offices is insisted upon.

PEOPLE have no more right to become dyspeptic, and remain gloomy and miserable, than they have to take poison and commit suicide. If the stomach becomes weak and fails to perform its functions, Burdock Blood Bitters will speedily remedy the trouble.