

"Well, how are we to go, Nell?" asked Elsie.

"I won't go at all," said I; "I'd like to awfully, but I have to plant those ferns Sol got me. You had better walk. It is only three miles, and young Baylis can be sent over with the basket of provisions."

"You'll come, Jack?" said Bob.

Here was another impediment. The Lieutenant had twisted his ankle yesterday. He had not mentioned it to any one at the time; but it was beginning to pain him now.

"Couldn't do it, really," said Jack. "Three miles there and three back!"

"Come on. Don't be lazy," said Bob.

"My dear fellow," answered the Lieutenant, "I have had walking enough to last me the rest of my life. If you had seen how that energetic general of ours hustled me along from Cabul to Candahar, you'd sympathize with me."

"Leave the veteran alone," said Mr. Nicholas Cronin.

"Pity the war-worn soldier," remarked Bob.

"None of your chaff," said Jack. "I'll tell you what I'll do," he added, brightening up. "You let me have the trap, Bob, and I'll drive over with Nell as soon as she has finished planting her ferns. We can take the basket with us. You'll come, won't you, Nell?"

"All right," said I. And Bob having given his assent to the arrangement, and everybody being pleased, except Mr. Solomon Barker, who glared with mild malignancy at the soldier, the matter was finally settled, and the whole party proceeded to get ready, and finally departed down the avenue.

It was an extraordinary thing how that ankle improved after the last of the troop had passed round the curve of the hedge. By the time the ferns were planted and the gig got ready Jack was as active and lively as ever he was in his life.

"You seem to have got better very suddenly," I remarked, as we drove down the narrow winding country lane.

"Yes," said Jack. "The fact is, Nell, there never was anything the matter with me. I wanted to have a talk with you."

"You don't mean to say you would tell a lie in order to have a talk with me?" I remonstrated.

"Forty," said Jack stoutly.

I was too lost in contemplation of the depths of grief in Jack's nature to make any further remark. I wondered whether Elsie would be flattered or indignant were any one to offer to tell so many lies in her behalf.

"We used to be good friends when we were children, Nell," remarked my companion.

"Yes," said I, looking down at the rug which was thrown over my knees. I was beginning to be quite an experienced young lady by this time, you see, and to understand certain inflections of the masculine voice, which are only to be acquired by practice.

"You don't seem to care for me now as much as you did then," said Jack.

I was still intensely absorbed in the leopard's skin in front of me.

"Do you know, Nelly," continued Jack, "that when I have been camping out in the frozen passes of the Himalays, when I have seen the hostile array in front of me; in fact," suddenly dropping into pathos, "all the time I was in that beastly hole Afghanistan, I used to think of the little girl I had left in England."

"Indeed!" I murmured.

"Yes," said Jack, "I bore the memory of you in my heart, and then when I came back you were a little girl no longer. I found you a beautiful woman, Nelly, and I wondered whether you had forgotten the days that were gone."

Jack was becoming quite poetical in his enthusiasm. By this time he had left the old bay pony entirely to its own devices, and it was indulging in its chronic propensity of stopping and adorning the view.

"Look here, Nelly," said Jack, with a gasp of a man who is about to pull the string of his shower-bath, "one of the things you learn in campaigning is to secure a good thing whenever you see it. Never delay or hesitate, for you never know that some other fellow may not carry it off while you are making up your mind."

"It's coming now," I thought in despair, "and there's no window for Jack to escape by after he has made the plunge." I had gradually got to associate the ideas of love and jumping out of windows, ever since poor Sol's confession.

"Do you think, Nell," said Jack, "that you could ever care for me enough to share my lot for ever? I could you ever be my wife, Nell?"

He didn't even jump out of the trap. He sat there beside me, looking at me with his eager gray eyes, while the pony strolled along, cropping the wild flowers on either side of the road. It was quite evident that he intended having an answer. Somehow as I looked down I seemed to see a pale shy face looking in at me from a dark background, and to hear Sol's voice as he declared his love. Poor fellow! he was first in the field at any rate.

"Could you, Nell?" asked Jack once more.

"I like you very much, Jack," said I, looking up at him nervously; "but"—how his face changed at that monosyllable! "I don't think I like you enough for that. Besides, I'm so young you know. I suppose I ought to be very much complimented and that sort of thing by your offer; but you mustn't think of me in that light any more."

"You refuse me, then?" said Jack, turning a little white.

"Why don't you go and ask Elsie?" cried I in despair. "Why should you all come to me?"

"I don't want Elsie," cried Jack, giving the pony a cut with his whip which rather astonished that easy-going quadruped. "What do you mean by 'all,' Nell?"

No answer.

"I see how it is," said Jack bitterly; "I've noticed how that cousin of yours has been hanging round you ever since I have been here. You are engaged to him."

"No, I'm not," said I.

"Thank God for that!" responded Jack, devoutly. "There is some hope yet. Perhaps you will come to think better of it in time. Tell me, Nelly, are you fond of that fool of a medical student?"

"He isn't a fool," said I indignantly. "and I am quite as fond of him as I shall ever be of you."

"You might not care for him much and still be that," said Jack sulkily; and neither of us spoke again until a joint bellow from Bob and Mr. Cronin announced the presence of the rest of the company.

If the picnic was a success, it was entirely due to the exertions of the latter gentleman. Three lovers out of four was an undue proportion, and it took all his convivial powers to make up for the shortcomings of the rest. Bob seemed entirely absorbed in Miss Maberley's charms, poor Elsie was left out in the cold, while my two admirers spent their time in glaring alternately at me and at each other. Mr. Cronin, however, fought gallantly against the depression, making himself agreeable to all, and exploring ruins or drawing corks with equal vehemence and energy.

Cousin Sol was particularly disheartened and out of spirits. He thought, no doubt, that my solitary ride with Jack had been a prearranged thing between us. There was more sorrow than anger in his eyes, however, while Jack, I regret to say, was decidedly ill-tempered. It was this fact which made me choose out my cousin as my companion in the ramble through the woods which succeeded our lunch. Jack had been assuming a provoking air of proprietorship lately, which I was determined to quash once for all. I felt angry with him, too, for appearing to consider himself ill-used at my refusal, and for trying to disparage poor Sol behind his back. I was far from loving either the one or the other, but somehow my girlish ideas of fair play revolted at either of them taking what I considered an unfair advantage. I felt that if Jack had not come I should, in the fulness of time, have ended by accepting my cousin; on the other hand, if it had not been for Sol, I might never have refused Jack. At present I was too fond of them both to favor either. "How in the world is it to end?" thought I. I must do something decisive one way or the other; or perhaps the best thing would be to wait and see what the future might bring forth.

Sol seemed mildly surprised at my having selected him as my companion, but accepted the offer with a grateful smile. His mind seemed to have been vastly relieved.

"So I haven't lost you yet, Nell," he murmured, as we branched off among the great tree-trunks and heard the voices of the party growing fainter in the distance.

"Nobody can lose me," said I, "for nobody has won me yet. For goodness' sake don't talk about it any more. Why can't you talk like your old self two years ago, and not be so dreadfully sentimental?"

"You'll know why some day, Nell," said the student reproachfully. "Wait until you are in love yourself, and you will understand it."

I gave a little forced laugh.

"Sit here, Nell," said Cousin Sol, making room in a little bank of wild strawberries and mosses, and perching himself upon a stump of a tree beside me. "Now all I ask you to do is to answer me or two questions, and I'll never bother you any more."

"I sat resignedly, with my hands in my lap. "Are you engaged to Lieutenant Hawthorne?"

"No!" said I energetically.

"Are you fonder of him than of me?"

"No, I'm not."

Sol's thermometer of happiness up to a hundred in the shade at the least.

"Are you fonder of me than of him, Nelly?" in a very tender voice.

"No."

Thermometer down below zero again.

"Do you mean to say that we are exactly equal in your eyes?"

"Yes."

"But you must choose between us some time, you know," said Cousin Sol with mild reproach in his voice.

"I do wish you wouldn't bother me so!" I cried, getting angry, as women usually do when they are in the wrong. "You don't care for me much or you wouldn't plague me. I believe the two of you will drive me mad between you."

Here there were symptoms of sob on my part, and utter consternation and defeat among the Barker faction.

(To be continued.)

MR. W. H. SMITH paid, it is said, 2,000 guineas for the picture of Lord Beaconsfield after he had undergone much suffering, which by the Queen's command was hung unfinished at last year's Academy. He has now gone to the artist for a pendant to it—a picture of Lord Salisbury, which Mr. Millais is painting to add to what is likely in time to prove a celebrated gallery of historical portraits. Mr. Smith, it is understood, will give £1,000 for it.

THE PHOTOGRAPHER AMONG THE THIEVES.

I began operations on a good-looking young pick-pocket familiarly known as "Perth Bess," whom I was anxious to make No. 1 in our album. Now Bess, when brought out into the yard and seated on a chair in front of the camera, had at once an idea of the purpose for which she had been brought there; and, familiar as I am in "reading faces," I saw she was determined on thwarting our pictorial intentions, although she wisely kept her own counsel. The plate being prepared, and everything ready, I enjoined on her the necessity of sitting quite still when I told her to do so. She faithfully promised obedience. "Steady, then," says I, pulling off the cap, and Bessie's head simultaneously underwent a series of slow, steady oscillations from side to side which totally destroyed plate No. 1. On developing it I found a sharp body with an intensely blurred head. I made fifteen trials on Perth Bess that day, but they were all total failures. When I pulled off the cap from the lens, she was so nervous, she said, that the sight of the round glass looking at her that way made her feel so queer that she shook and trembled all over. Intimating my intention of giving up operations for that day, Bessie's eye twinkled and plainly told me that she thought herself the victor. So she was led back to her cell for a time. In this experiment no head-rest had been used, and finding the necessity of such an adjunct, no time was lost in procuring one with a heavy iron foot. Next day Bess was marched out and again placed in the operating chair. During the focusing she behaved well—not the least motion was perceptible; but when the ground glass had been removed and the dark slide inserted in its place, Bess, who had acquired a knowledge of the routine of the business, on observing the cap removed from the lens, suddenly threw around her head with an exclamation concerning "Thir' dees that were kittle'n' her nose." During eight or nine trials the same game was played. It was either "thir' dees" that tickled her at the critical moment, or it was the head-rest that troubled her back neck, or it was an observation by her that she thought a side view of her face would look better (accompanying the observation with a corresponding movement, or, when a side view was attempted, a corresponding movement to the front, with a remark that, after all, the front view would be the best. I could stand it no longer; so, after preparing a plate, I called a couple of constables to come to my assistance, in order that her head might be kept steady by force. Having strapped her arms firmly down by her sides, my assistants stood behind and held her head and shoulders as firmly as possible. The plate was exposed; but during these five seconds, her face had undergone a series of contortions so hideous that I retreated to my dark room considerably crestfallen, and, when the result was developed, it showed a picture so truly extraordinary that language would utterly fail to describe it. Bess was conqueror once more. It now became evident to me that prisoners were not at all ambitious of having their portraits taken, and that, so far as I had gone, both coaxing and force had been resorted to without success, it now only remained for me to try what cunning would effect; for not only was the governor extremely anxious to have some prints of the girl for distribution among some of the other officers, but, "worse to feelings proud," my failures in portraying a black-eyed demure young lassie, were the subject of very free comment by my brother officers, and bets as to my ultimate success were being extensively made. After some hour's cogitation, followed by a day's work of a mechanic, I was again in the field, with my black-eyed enemy sitting before the camera as innocent-looking as possible. The camera was uncapped and standing in its place; on the top of it rested my hand carelessly, one finger, unseen by her, being in contact with a little brass knob which very slightly projected from the top. "Now, Bess," says I, "I intend once more to try and take your portrait; but before we begin, I want to see if you can hold your head steadier to-day than you did formerly." Bess, little thinking that the focusing had been all adjusted before she was brought out, and that at that moment there was a sensitive plate in the camera waiting only the touch of the finger on the brass knob aforesaid—which, in reality, was a trigger throwing open a secret shutter inside the camera—not dreaming of this arrangement, Bess sat as steady as a rock. The knob was pressed, the secret shutter did its duty, and, when the picture was developed, it displayed a magnificent negative, sharp and clear. Various mechanical and even electrical contrivances were subsequently brought to bear on the principle of a secret exposure. Several of these contrivances answered their purpose most admirably, especially the electric one, which, by means of a wire passing up the stand and in contact with an electric magnet inside the camera, enabled me to expose the plate from the inside of my dark room. It is now six weeks since I began operations as just detailed, and I have modified my original opinion about prisoners objecting to the taking of their portraits. Although there are one or two who—like Bess—strongly object, I find the generality are rather proud of the distinction. For instance: "Slushy Bob," a fellow with a most uncompromising face, was particularly desirous of being "taken off," and actually requested that his own clothes might be removed from the storeroom in order that he might be taken in propria persona. This

suggested to me a pregnant hint that for purposes of identification there was little use of taking gaul birds in gaul costume; and acting on this, and by holding out as an inducement for good behaviour, the taking their portraits in their own clothes, we have succeeded in interesting the prisoners to such an extent that at present there is actually a competition who should be taken. One most troubles me desperately, in for a burglary, has most humbly petitioned that a copy of his portrait might be sent to his mother, promising—in the event of complying with his request—that for the future term of his stay with us we will not be troubled with any acts of insubordination on his part.

ECHOES FROM PARIS.

THE plans for a new Chamber of Deputies (the building) is under consideration. The cost will be under a quarter of a million sterling. The Chamber will be erected in the new court of the Palace.

THE Cercle de la Chasse, which last year gave an interesting dog show in the Tuileries Garden, will again organize an *exposition canine*, to take place from June 3rd to June 11th. All Paris will go to the dogs.

MADAME SARAH BERNHARDT and husband were announced for the 25th in the "Panne aux Camélias." The world that has gold has given as much as fifty louis for a box and fifteen for a stall. Sarah goes halves.

M. OCTAVE FEUILLET, the French dramatist, is seriously ill. If anything happens to the worthy Frenchman the loss to English drama, tists will cause them sincere grief. It will be a complete fraud upon them, and close a never-failing supply of plots and dialogues.

M. JACQUET's picture of "La France Glorieuse," in the present Salon, is a very curious work of art. The female that represents France is seated on her cloud with the jaunty aplomb of a circus-rider. And how comes it that she has apparently only one leg? Is that a delicate allusion to the loss of Alsace and Lorraine?

THE French Crown Jewels have been a matter of much trouble to the various Governments that have succeeded the one which could legitimately make use of them. We have been given many reports of many committees, and the last has determined to sell half, and apply the money to some useful purpose. Retaining half seems like anticipating a necessity for them again.

FROM information furnished by the recent Census, it appears that the gay capital has within its walls as many as 2,250 somnambules or fortune-tellers. This gives one fortune-teller to every 800 inhabitants. Some thirty of them earn on an average upwards of 60,000fr. a year, while the less fortunate pocket between 5,000fr. and 6,000fr. annually.

IN *lingerie*, a thousand and one dainty and charming trifles are being constantly produced. Collarettes, fichus, jabots, and ruffs of mull, figured and plain, the most delicate shades of silk and satin, and a new mother of pearl silk, are very handsome. Elizabethan ruffs are made of the finest embroidered India muslin. Some have a row of pearl or fancy beads on the edge.

VICTOR HUGO is known to have a great taste for drawing, and to be in the habit of sketching during the intervals of writing. While composing his "Toilers of the Sea" his pen was more than usually busy in drawing on the margin of this manuscript and on scraps of paper. It is said that he made no fewer than fifty-two sketches, twelve of which are sea pieces illustrative of the work he was occupied on. They display great talent, and are interesting from the fact that they were drawn by the illustrious French poet. They have been engraved, and are now published in the form of an album. Unfortunately this album is not for sale, but is to be distributed only among Victor Hugo's friends and relations. This is not the first work of the kind from the pen of Victor Hugo. Many years ago an album of his drawings was published, but this work has become very rare, and as a matter of fact it is, as regards artistic power, by far inferior in value to the present album.

CONSUMPTION CURED.—An old physician, retired from practice, having had placed in his hands by an East India missionary the formula of a simple vegetable remedy for the speedy and permanent cure for consumption, Bronchitis, Catarrh, Asthma and all Throat and Lung Affections; also a positive and radical cure for Nervous Debility and all Nervous Complaints, after having tested its wonderful curative power in thousands of cases, has felt it his duty to make it known to his suffering fellows. Actuated by this motive and a desire to relieve human suffering, I will send free of charge to all who desire it, this recipe, in German, French or English, with full directions for preparing and using. Send by mail by addressing with stamp, naming this paper, W. A. NOYES, 149 Power's Block, Rochester, N. Y.