

have, one sees one's friends at their best under those genial influences. But an afternoon party—a crowd of merrymakers circulating in-actively, buzzing like so many gnat-flies, a little music, a little literature, a little science, a little religion, a little scandal, all going on at once in the most distracting manner—upon my word, fashionable woman must be a devoted creature if she can stand that kind of thing; but had I been ever so willing, I could not have been at home this afternoon; we had a field-day in the committee-room.

Augusta was standing by the open window, pale as her muslin dress. Should she talk to him now, or wait till he returned from the dinner? That which she had to say to him was of an agitating nature; she, who was ordinarily so serene and emotionless a creature, felt that she might hardly be mistress of herself when once that subject was broached between these two. Would it not be best to wait till night, when there would be no hazard of a servant coming in suddenly while they were talking? She looked across at the clock on the chimney-piece—a quarter-past seven; and at eight Mr. Harcross was due at her dear friend Lady Basingstoke's. She had promised her dear Julia that she should come; and she knew that her dear Julia relied upon him as the intellectual Sanson who was to sustain the weight of a somewhat heavy banquet; for dear Julia's guests were exalted, but dull. If they were both absent, people might talk—indeed, if even one were wanting, people might talk—since she herself had been seen that afternoon in all her accustomed brilliancy. Mrs. Harcross shivered at the thought that her dear friends might lay their heads together, as the phrase goes, and speculate about her—might even conjecture that she and her husband had quarrelled. She knew that her general opinion when a wife, from any unexpected cause, failed to come up to time.

"I have a distracting headache, Hubert," she said; "but perhaps I had better go with you. I know dear Julia depends upon us."

"Very well, my dear," murmured Mr. Harcross, without opening his eyes; "go by all means, if you really think you can dress in three-quarters of an hour. Or couldn't you wear that peach-coloured and white thing you have on. It's uncommonly pretty."

Mrs. Harcross looked down at her mauve-silk train and Indian-muslin overskirt, with a contemptuous shrug.

"I wonder you can propose anything so absurd, Hubert, when I have been seen in this dress by at least a hundred people this very afternoon, Julia Basingstoke amongst them."

"In that case you had better make haste. I can dress in twenty minutes."

Mrs. Harcross took the engraving from the table where she had thrown it, and carried it away to her dressing-room, where she locked it up in one of her private drawers before she rang for Tullion, the maid. At five minutes before eight she came downstairs in her evening splendour, radiant in pearl-gray satin, and airy tulle, with great bunches of crimson azaleas gleaming amidst the cloudy draperies, and a coronet of azuleans and diamonds on her dark hair. If there were any glory in being the husband of one of the handsomest women in London, Mr. Harcross certainly enjoyed that distinction.

But there was no relation in his countenance to-night, as he stood at the foot of the stairs and calmly surveyed the splendid figure descending towards him. If his wife's splendour and beauty evoked any feeling in his mind it was wonder—wonder that any human creature of average intelligence could be satisfied with a life so empty—this perpetual shifting of gorgeous raiment, this house which was never a home.

(To be continued.)

How—How has the power of soaring with a strong and unobscured pinion from all that is dark and drear, into the radiant atmosphere of joy, that makes us utter words of dream, and cause the heart to wander amongst visions. It diverts the thoughts from the real to the ideal, and lends us amongst the picture-planes of fancy to linger in the airy realms of art. It hastens us into a visionary world, that we may have dreams of glory, power, and fame. It unfurls a dazzling scroll, and shows us engraven on it an immortal name. Its holy task is to exhibit to us a path which leads to the goal, and we are treading along a harsh path, a time of dizzy joys, and to change into bright enchantments the stern realities of actual life. Nor do the strength of its dreams, the nobleness of its visions, and the beauty of its thoughts, cease to dominate and influence our hearts even when life grows pale and wanes fast, when we turn our thoughts from earth to heaven, on the couch of sickness and weakness, and when the faint voice and the faint pulse speak in warning whispers of a time to die. It boldly walks along with us, prompting the spirit never to retrace, from the cradle to the grave.

We all hope. In every one of us that passion finds an object to feed upon. We all form some beautiful ideal—we all sketch some fancy portrait, which we fondly cherish, and hope to find the fair original. When hope is intense, and the mind is concentrated upon one object, a vacuum within is filled, of which we never before knew the extent. Heedless of impediments to success, art, it hastens us into a visionary world, the mind revolves splendidly. All the alluring avenues of fame spread open before us. We burn to achieve some noble enterprise which shall be worthy of our name.

But strong as is the spell of hope to lull and inspire us, equally strong is it to elude and to deceive us. The fraud is sweet, but bitter pain has been dealt award to torment us, upon our waking, and finding its chain broken and lying around us in glittering fragments. The heart that trusts the syren smile of hope drinks the most copious draught of pleasure which the gods grant to mortals; but when the mystic gleam departs, the heart sinks coldly, and too often breaks amidst the world's unkindness.

A NEW USE FOR CATS.—A correspondent of *Leeds and Times* writes:—"It often appears to me that people for the most part are not aware of the great use cats are to us. Of course, we know of their use with respect to mice and rats, but do we know of the invaluable help they can give us in protecting our birds and garden fruit and flowers? The late heavy rains this spring have given us the promise of abundance of strawberries, and in the south, at least, the bloom is magnificent. To keep off the birds who simply hover about the low hanging cat is not a small chain sliding on a wire, and giving the animal the walk up and down the whole length of the strawberry beds. A knot at each end of the wire readily prevents the cat from twisting round, the post which supports the wire, and a small knot placed in the middle of the wire affords her shelter and a home for her kittens. In large gardens a second cat is required, and the young cats in their frequent visits to each other greatly assist in scaring away the birds. I have for more than 30 years used, and soon used with perfect success, this easy method of protecting fruit, and the very same plan is equally simple in keeping hives and rabbits off flower beds. After the first few days cats in no way dislike this partial restraint, and when set free, after a few weeks' watching, they will, of their own accord, continue on guard. The kittens more especially attach themselves to this garden occupation, and of their own accord become the gardener's best allies."

PARRON'S PURGATIVE PILLS.—Best family physic; Sheridan's Capillary Condition Powders, for hoarseness.

THE TWO SHIPS.

BY HENRY HART.

The following beautiful lines will rather surprise those who only know that Harte as a man of irresistibly comic humor.

As I stand by the cross on the lone mountain's crest, Looking over the ultimate sea, In the gloom of the mountain ship lies at rest, And one sails away from the sea: One spreads its white wings on a far-reaching track, With pennant and sheet flying free; One hides in the shadow of the tall oak—The ship that is waiting for me.

But lo! in the distance the clouds break away, The late's glowing journals I see; And I hear from the outgoing ship in the bay The song of the sailors in glee: So I think of the luminous foot-prints that bore The comfort of dark Gales, And wait for the signal to go to the shore To the ship that is waiting for me.

ONLY A SONG.

BY MARY KYLE DALLAS.

Monsieur Du'nte, who had a large family and a small income, hired the upper floor of a large building in the city of Paris; and to reduce his rent, underlet a room to young Mademoiselle Fernande, the musical composer, of whose compositions no one as yet had heard anything.

It was a little narrow room, with one very high window; but it had this advantage: out of this window one could, at the risk of breaking one's neck, catch a glimpse of the beautiful prima donna, Mlle. La C., as she strolled herself on the balcony of the first floor. For this sensible reason had Monsieur Fernande hired the apartment.

He was dreadfully in love with her, though they had never spoken in each other, and he fondly and falsely believed that she knew that he had thrown her bouquets, and had given her special thanks for them as she held them against her pretty chin, and bowed her pretty head over them and smiled with the beaming smile of an actress down upon the audience.

If ever he made his name and fortune, then she should know, but not until then. So he loved on in silence, and worked at his compositions, and offered them to publishers, and had them "declined with thanks."

Now and then, of course, he sold a song; but the songs did not become popular, and he must have starved to death but that he now and then played the piano for some dancing party. At the best, he lived on bread and coffee and a little soup.

In his room he had an old piano, a desk, a chair, a mezzotint, and a little chapeau furanne. When he had five francs in his pocket, and it was not rent day, he felt rich.

Mlle. La C.—had every luxurious lounge and couch and sofa to be bought for money. She lavished gold on her friends, on herself, on their crooked hands, and showed their distorted faces at the door of the house, as she tripped from it to her carriage.

They said she had been a peasant child, whose sweet voice, as she stood singing at the door of a little hut, had caught the ear of a wealthy music worshipper, who had her taught in consequence. They tell such stories of so many prima donnas. No one would have guessed, from her manner now, that she ever knew the value of a sou.

Yet with all the extravagance she was growing rich, and could make a little fortune in a night. Young, beautiful, adored, who could be happier? And yet, though she could sing so divinely, she could not have composed one of those little songs which were written in the street over her head, to save her bright young life. Each one was a gem, and probably Mr. Fernande knew it, for genius ought to recognize its own work. Still, rattling marches, waltzes that were the same old thing over again, and bits from well-known operas twisted into galops, sold; while his little songs lay neglected on the counter, and others never reached the counter at all, being scorned from the first by publishers with no money in their pockets, however much they may have been in their shops.

If, indeed, some well-known singer would have sung one of them—Mademoiselle La C., for instance—then there might have been a change. The thought crept into poor Fernande's heart by degrees; at last it strengthened into a resolve; but it must be the best of all that he should lay before his idol, the very best—nothing else would do.

So he wrote in his little room, the poor composer, and below the happy song-bird trilled her songs, and laughed and chatted, and was carelessly generous, and never even knew of his existence, who, evening after evening, watched her listened to her, and the men who had the right to sit beside her, hold her fan; perhaps—who knew?—her hand also; the men on whom might one day be her favored lover. And she enjoyed her happy butterfly existence, and knew nothing about him.

At last, in some moment of romantic influence, our composer also turned poet. He wrote the words of a song which he called, "Love's Dying Dream," and he fitted to it an air so sweet, so gentle, so tender, so plaintive, that playing it upon his old piano, he knew it to be the best of all he had ever done—the bright particular gem in his life before his day.

He copied it out himself; but that of an artist, without any signature; but that of an artist, and he resolved to leave it at her door and await the result.

"If I should ever hear her sing it, I should be so happy—so happy," he said to himself, "I should be willing to die."

What strange things we say sometimes! Did you ever say anything, not quite meaning it, that afterward proved itself true, though not as you intended it? I have.

And one morning he said: "To-day I will do it; and with these words left his little room."

He ran down stairs with the precious little parcel in his hand, and stood before the door that led to Mlle. La C.'s—his suit of rooms with a palpitating heart. He had intended to knock, and leave the music and the note with a servant, but—ah, how unfortunate!—the door stood open. Opposite he saw her dainty bodice, and it was empty. He would steal in and put the music upon her table, and so leave it. If she liked it, he should hear her singing it sometime, and then he might speak. He crept in; he laid the parcel down softly, and with reverence, but as he did so his eye fell upon a miniature. It was a portrait of his divinity herself, and it was set in costly gems. These he neither noticed nor cared for. All he saw was the sweet face. He stooped over it; he examined it; he took it in his hand.

"It is *herself*!" he said. "It is wonderful!" And I think he would have kissed it, but that at that moment he heard a little scream and a savage growl.

He turned. The scream came from Mlle. La C., the growl from a gentleman who accompanied her, and on the instant two hands came down on Fernande's shoulders, and the miniature was wrested from his hand.

"How careless of August," cried the lady, to leave the door open for thieves to enter by. The gentleman justly called for help. Fernande said nothing. Conscious of his terrible position, he was stricken dumb; and it was as one passes through the changing scenes of a dream, that he knew himself to be arrested and cast into prison.

The prima donna appeared against him when the proper time came. She had found this man in her room. He had a valuable ornament in his hand, she believed that he intended to steal it. She had never seen him before—no, never.

At this the young man felt that it would be well to be dead. She had never seen him before! Then she had not smiled upon him when he threw her that bouquet of Provence roses. It was all fancy. He had not caught her eyes. She had never noticed him.

The gentleman who had been with Mademoiselle gave his evidence, only he was fierce, and called the hapless Fernande a thief, a brigand and a rascal, when he alluded to him. And Fernande could only say that he was not guilty. He would not give his name, and bring his respectability forward by any defence.

"I am named Fernande, and I have twenty-three years, and I am nothing and nobody."

This he said, when called upon to account for himself, and nothing more. And he was written down vagrant, and condemned to six months' hard labor as a thief.

Mlle. La C.—went home pouting, and declaring that she "hated to go to such dreadful places." She sat at a delightful little lunch, and afterward *lindie* a packet upon her table, opened it, and read Fernande's anonymous note, at which she laughed and hummed over the song, pronouncing it "very pretty." A few days after she practiced it, and on being engaged one night, she brought her to sing it.

Poor Fernande! if he could but have been there to have seen how the women wept over his pretty little lay of love and death, and to have heard how the applause rang.

After that, the manager brought Mademoiselle to sing "Love's Dying Dream" every night, and the lady obeyed his request.

Amateur singers went mad over it, and it was published. Having the name of no composer upon it, it was called Mlle. La C.'s song, and by many was believed to be her own; and it sold as never song sold before.

One day, with a party, she visited the prison where Fernande was confined.

She stood amid her little circle of cavaliers, and said to one in authority in the place: "What do they like, these people? Shall I sing a little love song?"

"As Mademoiselle pleases," said the man, "every one understands that theme."

And Mademoiselle smiled, and tried her voice with a little trill, and began "Poor Fernande's song," "Love's Dying Dream."

Oh the eager, glittering eyes that watched her! Oh the flushed cheeks, the hurried breath! Oh the mad throb of the heart of Number Twenty-four, as he whispered to himself: "It is my song! It is my song!"

"What is the matter?" whispered Number Twenty-three to Number Twenty-four. "I say, mon ami, speak!"

"What is the matter?" asked the singer of the Superintendent, as the last notes of her song died upon her lips. "There seems to be some commotion."

"There is a little," said the Superintendent calmly. "Number Twenty-four has caused it."

"Has he escaped?" cried the lady, looking about her through she had heard that a tiger had broken loose.

"After a manner, Mademoiselle," said the Superintendent. "He is dead."

"These people never have any sense of propriety," said Mademoiselle. "How dreadful!" They buried Fernande in whatever spot of ground is given to pauper prisoners. And Mlle. La C.—sang on until she sang herself into the heart of some man with a title; and as long as she sings at all, she will sometimes sing "Love's Dying Dream." It is so pretty, so sweet, and then it was the work of an unknown admirer. It is a favorite with Madame, and always has been.

No one now remembers Number Twenty-four, named Fernande, who was so impolite as to die while Mlle. La C. was singing.

(For the Hearthstone.)

MY NEW COOK.

For some time past we did very well, and we had a treasure of a cook, a fine strong girl, whose strongest recommendation was that she had never been out of her native village. But the week before last she left my house for a better place," as she said. I might have danced her to remain, by an offer of another dollar; but experience has demonstrated to my satisfaction that this kind of bribery never turns out well. So I let the girl go to her "better place."

As to how it was a better place I did not make enquiry. That was her business. She was a free agent, and I did not attempt to influence her. In fact, being of rather an independent turn of mind myself, I sympathized with others in their independence, and rarely seek to interfere with a declared course of action.

My new cook unfortunately had been out of sight of her native village, and that for weeks and months together. She came of an Irish family, and when she presented herself I saw in her but small promise. Having learned an enquiry that her name was Alice Maloney, I said:

"How long have you been in this country, Alice?"

"She hesitated for a moment, then answered: "Six months, mum."

I mentioned afterwards that she had arrived only three days before."

"Can you cook?" I enquired.

"Oh, yes, anything from a rib of bife down to a potato."

"Are you sure of that, Alice?"

"Oh, sure, mum."

"Can you give me a reference?"

"I've got a character from Mrs. —, where I lived, and she produced a written testimonial of ability signed by the said Mrs. —. There was a suspicious look about this ready-made producible character; but, of course, I had no means of knowing if it was true or not.

It seemed only a few minutes before tea was announced by Alice; and I, of course, remarked: "Ah, this is something like expedition!" and I arose, adding: "Will you walk into the room, ladies?"

The words were no sooner uttered than a doubt as to all being as I could wish crossed my mind, and I regretted that I had not first repaired to the next room above first. But it was too late now, or rather I did not happen to have presence of mind to recall my invitation until I had preceded them a few minutes.

Well, we were presently seated at table. My practical eye once saw that the cloth was laid coolly, and the things were laid in a very slovenly manner.

I was obliged to make an apology, on the ground of a new domestic, and we then proceeded to drink the tea. The cups were handed round, and I soon noticed that my guests were sipping from their spoons in a very unsatisfactory manner. I was in the net of taking my own cup, when I missed the plate of sausages, about which I had boasted to my lady friends as being something better than was usually to be got.

"So I rang the bell, and Alice presently made her appearance."

"Alice," said I, "where are the sausages I told you to cook? You surely have not forgotten them?"

"Oh, no, indeed, mum. They're there."

"Where? I don't see them!" and my eyes ran round the table.

"They're laid the way, mum, shure?"

"With the tea?"

"Shure, mum, they're laid the way. Ye would see 'em if ye wanted the sausages with the tea, and shure they're there. I biled 'em well."

A light flashed over my mind, and, throwing up the lid of the teapot, I saw floating on its surface a hard-looking substance, I thrust in a fork, I drew it forth, and exhibited a link of well-biled sausages.

My lady friends have not called to take tea since, nor do I think they will until I make another change, when I am determined to have a cook with a character which shall not be a "written" one.

COMPOSITIONS.

When we are grown up, we write essays. At school, our literary productions are called compositions, although, if we regarded the true meaning of the terms, we would regard their application, and call what we compose, a composition. But the application of the term is of small importance. The point we wish to make is, that much of the time now applied in our schools to "composition-writing" is very often time utterly thrown away, because of the unsuitable and improper character of the subjects chosen.

Whether the scholars or the teachers make the selection, the result is generally the same. The teacher of composition of the present day is prone to favor themes of the most theoretic and metaphysical nature, and anything better adapted to extinguish in a child ability or desire for literary composition could hardly be imagined. It is a matter of course that ordinary boys or girls can not write well upon Government, Philosophy, or the Moral Attributes, and their continuous doleful tollings and certain failures with these subjects will soon, and very naturally, give them a distaste for any kind of literary work.

"Compositions" are, in ordinary schools, the most disagreeable and irksome days in the week, for then it is that tasks are required of the scholars for which their minds are almost always unprepared. Many a cultured writer would stand and shiver before the abstruse themes which are daily presented for elucidation and comment to children who scarcely know the dictionary-meaning of the words. The art of English composition is necessary to a good education, but a man may be well educated without being able to write an essay on an abstract subject. In fact, uneducated people never do write them. What the majority of children need in this regard is a course of education that will enable them to give honest, earnest, and simple expression to what they really think, and straightforward and interesting descriptions of all that they see. They should thus be taught to give suitable expression to the ordinary impressions of their minds, and if they can do this, the teacher should be satisfied. If those impressions are of a high order, all the better; but it must not be forgotten that the scholar ought to be taught to write what he really thinks. If a subject is given him of which he has never thought, and of which he is incapable of thinking properly, of course he can do nothing but furnish up a set of old, trite, high-sounding expressions that have been used in the schools until their original meaning is almost dried out of them, and which will generally serve about as well for one subject as another. There is surely no possible use or advantage in requiring young minds to soar blindly and helplessly into the regions of otities and philosophy, and bring down some such grandiloquent production as the following, which would probably be dimly recognized by half the school-children in the land:

HAPPINESS.—Happiness is the greatest blessing ever bestowed upon mankind. If it were not for happiness, this world would be a sorrowful place of abode. When George Washington, with his strong right arm, thrust aside the clouds of oppression that hung over the land, he gave happiness to his country—and so on, with ever so much more of carefully cultivated flourish and stupidity.

As an illustration of the manner in which this stilted treatment of high-faloot subjects is nurtured, to the detriment of a healthy and sensible style of school composition, we offer the following incident: A bright little girl, in a large seminary, once found herself, for the first time, in a composition-class, where all the other girls—young ladies they were called—were very much older than herself. When the teacher announced that one hour would be devoted to composition, and that each young lady would select her own subject, our poor little girl sat in silent misery. She had never written a composition in her life, and as to choosing a subject where there was nothing to choose from, how could she do that? If she could only consult with some one, a theme might be suggested, but that was impossible, for silence was strictly enjoined. So there she sat, puzzling her poor little brains until one half of the allotted time had passed, and not a word had she written. At last in despair she set herself to describe an excursion she had made with two other little girls to "Culver's Hill," a short distance from the village. She told how they made a little bonfire under the rock; how they gathered d-moss for a carpet for it, and how some of the mosses were soft and green, and others were soft and gray that when they put them down on the floor, of their house, they looked just as if they had been made at home; how there were little fishes with thorny backs in the creek by the rock, and how their sides glistened when they whisked themselves up to the top of the water; how the great dragon-flies with purple wings—the color of Mrs. Baldwin's pantes—fluttered about over the water, and balanced themselves on little bits of seaweed; grass, which looked exactly as if they

were going to break every minute and let them down into the water; how there were not nearly so many flowers around Culver's Rock as there were in the spring, and how they could see the big wild-grapes on the high side of the creek, and how they knew it was time to go home when they heard old Brimble's bell tinkling down in the meadows, as she led the cows in a long line to the village.

There were a good many errors in our little girl's composition, and it was not expressed quite as well as it might have been, but it was finished in time, and handed up with the others to be read aloud by the teacher. The other girls were silent. Vainly, however, she contrasted her composition with that of her friends, and the reading of their productions elicited no remark, excepting the occasional approbation bestowed by the teacher upon some unusually felicitous expression. But when the little girl's composition was read, the whole school, teacher and all, burst out laughing. Such a ridiculous thing had never before been read in that class, and when the general merriment had subsided, the teacher told our little girl that she was afraid she was yet too young for the composition-class.

The teacher says that this little girl had written the only original and sensible composition that had been read that day.—*Health and Home.*

A DRAWING-ROOM GAME.

Perhaps the best drawing-room game of all is that called Words, an invention not only entertaining in itself, but exceedingly useful to all young people (and between ourselves, to a good many grown up folks) as a Royal Road to Spelling. It is played in this way: each person, as in the game of Historical Pictures, is provided with pen and sheet of paper, and a word of moderate length (but with as many vowels as possible) is publicly selected upon, and written down upon it. The object is to break the word thus given into as many words as possible, using only the same letters; and he who makes most words out of it—thought of by the rest of the company—wins the game. Any word may be used upon for this experiment, but the words to be derived from it may not be the names of places, nor perfect tenses, nor participles of verbs, nor plurals; and they must consist of not less than four letters. Thus supposing Cambridge to be the word selected, would it be thought that this comparatively short word breaks up into sixty-one others? Here, for instance, ridge, badge, crane, bride, were, admit, game, dear, brick, curb, brand, ride, card, stream, datum, mare, girl, vial, hand, beam, abide, bare, grab, mire, drag, amber, liver, beer, bid, grab, grass, gear, dare, rib, race, mood, carp, brace, bond, cream, grade, mold, brain, cigar, dire, drum, card, rage, grim, color, mud, cream, badge, erin, cage, drag, mirage. There may be many others; but a novice who attempts this game may be very clever if he hits upon half of those within the time allowed for their discovery, which is five minutes. Nothing but modesty can make modest request of a moment, and a child who is acquainted with an ear can run off fifty words, while a highly intelligent adult is setting down his pen. But it is not the number of words, it must be remembered, that gains the victory, but the comparative rarity, since all those that appear on duplicate lists are cancelled, and go for nothing. When the clock on the mantle-piece announces that the five minutes are over, everybody is bound to stop, and then each declares how many words he has thought of out of the original. He who has made the most, (whom we call A.), reads them out aloud, and then everybody makes request of a moment, and a child who is acquainted with an ear can run off fifty words, while a highly intelligent adult is setting down his pen. But it is not the number of words, it must be remembered, that gains the victory, but the comparative rarity, since all those that appear on duplicate lists are cancelled, and go for nothing. When the clock on the mantle-piece announces that the five minutes are over, everybody is bound to stop, and then each declares how many words he has thought of out of the original. 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