

course with the world—had been guilty during the course of a long career, there was none for which he so bitterly reproached himself as for a certain foolish marriage which he had made late in life. It was when he had thrown away the last chance that an indulgent destiny had given him, that the ruined sop of the Regency, the sometime member of the Beefsteak Club, the man who in his earliest youth had worn a silver girdon at his button hole, and played piquet in the gilded saloons of Georgina of Devonshire, found himself laid on a bed of sickness in dingy London lodgings, and nearer death than he had ever been in the course of his brief military career; so nearly gliding from life's swift-flowing river into eternity's trackless ocean, that the warmest thrill of gratitude which ever stirred the slow pulses of his cold heart quickened its beating as he clasped the hand that had held him back from the unknown region whose icy breath had chilled him with an awful fear. Such men as Horatio Paget are apt to feel a strange terror when the black night drops suddenly down upon them, and the "Gray Boatman" voice sounds hollow and mysterious in the darkness, announcing that the ocean is near. The hand that held the ruined spendthrift back when the current swept so swiftly oceanward was a woman's tender hand; and heaven only knows what patient watchfulness, what careful administration of medicines and unceasing preparation of broths and jellies and sops and gruels, what untiring and devoted slavery, had been necessary to save the faded rake, who looked out upon the world once more, a ghastly shadow of his former self, a penitential burden for any one who helpless might choose to support him.

"Don't thank me," said the doctor, when his feeble patient whimpered flourishing protestations of his gratitude, unabashed by the consciousness that such grateful protestations were the sole coin with which the medical man would be paid for his services, "thank that young woman, if you want to thank any body, for if it had not been for her you wouldn't be here to talk about gratitude. And if ever you get such another attack of inflammation on the lungs, you had better pray for such another nurse, though I don't think you're likely to find one."

And with this exordium, the rough-and-ready surgeon took his departure, leaving Horatio Paget alone with the woman who had saved his life.

She was only his landlady's daughter; and his landlady was no prosperous householder in Mayfair, thriving on the extravagance of wealthy bachelors, but an honest widow, living in an obscure little street leading out of the Old Kent Road, and letting a meagrely-furnished little parlour and a still more meagrely-furnished little bedroom to any single gentleman whom reverse of fortune might lead into such a locality. Captain Paget had sunk very low in the world when he took possession of that wretched parlour and laid himself down to rest on the widow's flock-bed.

There is apt to be a dreary interval in the life of such a man—a blank dismal interregnum, which divides the day in which he spends his last shilling from the hour in which he begins to prey deliberately upon the purses of other people. It was in that hopeless interval that Horatio Paget established himself in the widow's parlour. But though he slept in the Old Kent Road, he had not yet brought himself to endure existence on the Surrey side of the water. He emerged from his lodging every morning to hasten westward, resplendent in clean linen and exquisitely-fitting gloves, an unquestionable overcoat, and varnished boots.

The wardrobe has its Indian summer; and the glory of a first-rate tailor's coat is like the splendour of a tropical sun—it is glorious to the last, and sinks in a moment. Captain Paget's wardrobe was in its Indian summer in these days; but when he felt how fatally near the Bond-Street pavement was to the soles of his feet, he could not refrain from a fond admiration of the boots that were so beautiful in decay. He walked the West-end for many weary hours every day during this period of his deca-

dence. He tried to live in an honest gentlemanly way, by borrowing money of his friends, or discounting an accommodation-bill obtained from some innocent acquaintance who was deluded by his brilliant appearance and specious tongue into a belief in the transient nature of his difficulties. He spent his days in hanging about the halls and waiting-rooms of clubs—of some of which he had once been a member, he walked weary miles between St. James's and Mayfair, Kensington Gore and Notting Hill, leaving little notes for men who were not at home, or writing a little note in one room while the man to whom he was writing hushed his breath in an adjoining chamber. People who had once been Captain Paget's fast friends seemed to have simultaneously decided upon spending their existence out of doors, as it appeared to the impecunious Captain. The servants of his friends were afflicted with a strange uncertainty as to their masters' movements. At whatever hall-door Horatio Paget presented himself, it seemed equally doubtful whether the proprietor of the mansion would be home to dinner that day, or whether he would be at home any time next day, or the day after that, or at the end of the week, or indeed whether he would ever come home again. Sometimes the Captain, calling in the evening dusk, in the faint hope of gaining admittance to some friendly dwelling, saw the glimmer of light under a dining-room door, and heard the clopping of corks and the pleasant jingling of glass and silver in the innermost recesses of a butler's pantry; but still the answer was—not at home, and not likely to be home. All the respectable world was to be out henceforth for Horatio Paget. But now and then at the clubs he met some young man, who had no wife at home to keep watch upon his purse and to wait piteously over a five-pound note ill bestowed, and who took compassion on the fallen spendthrift, and believed, or pretended to believe, his story of temporary embarrassment; and then the Captain dined sumptuously at a little French restaurant in Castle Street, Leicester Square, and took a half-bottle of chablis with his oysters, and warmed himself with chambertin that was brought to him in a dusty cobweb-shrouded bottle reposing in a wicker-basket.

But in these latter days such glimpses of sunshine very rarely illumined the dull stream of the Captain's life. Failure and disappointment had become the rule of his existence—success the rare exception. Crossing the river now on his way westward, he was wont to loiter a little on Waterloo Bridge, and to look dreamily down at the water, wondering whether the time was near at hand when, under cover of the evening dusk, he would pay his last halfpenny to the tolkeeper, and never again know the need of any earthly coin.

"I saw a fellow in the Morgue one day,—a poor wretch who had drowned himself a week or two before. Great God, how horrible he looked! If there was any certainty they would find one immediately, and bury one decently, there'd be no particular horror in that kind of death. But to be found like that, and to lie in some riverside dead-house down by Wapping, with a ghastly placard rotting on the rotting door, and nothing but ooze and slime and rotteness round about one—waiting to be identified! And who knows, after all, whether a dead man doesn't feel that sort of thing?"

It was after such musings as these had begun to be very common with Horatio Paget that he caught the chill which resulted in a very dangerous illness of many weeks. The late autumn was wet and cold and dreary; but Captain Paget, although remarkably clever after a certain fashion, had never been a lover of intellectual pursuits, and imprisonment in Mrs. Kepp's shabby parlour was odious to him. When he had read every page of the borrowed newspaper, and pished and psawed over the leaders, and groaned aloud at the announcement of some wealthy marriage made by one of his quondam friends, or chuckled at the record of another quondam friend's insolvency—when he had poked the fire savagely half a dozen times in an hour, cursing the pinched grate and the bad

conls during every repetition of the operation—when he had smoked his last cigar, and varnished his favourite boots, and looked out of the window, and contemplated himself gloomily in the wretched little glass over the narrow chimney-piece,—Captain Paget's intellectual resources were exhausted, and an angry impatience took possession of him. Then, in defiance of the pelting rain or the lowering sky, he flung his slippers into the furthest corner—and the furthest corner of Mrs. Kepp's parlour was not very remote from the Captain's arm-chair—he drew on the stoutest of his varnished boots—and there were none of them very stout now—but-tuned his perfect overcoat, adjusted his hat before the looking-glass, and sallied forth, umbrella in hand, to make his way westward. Westward always, through storm and shower, back to the haunts of his youth, went the wanderer and outcast, to see the red glow of chery fires reflected on the plate-glass windows of his favourite clubs; to see the lamps in spacious reading-rooms lit early in the autumn dusk, and to watch the soft light glimmering on the rich bindings of the books, and losing itself in the sombre depths of crimson draperies. To this poor worldly creature the agony of banishment from those palaces of Pall Mall or St. James's Street was as bitter as the pain of a fallen angel. It was the dullest, dearest time of the year, and there were not many loungers in those sumptuous reading-rooms, where the shaded lamps shed their subdued light on the chaste splendour of the sanctuary, so Captain Paget could haunt the scene of his departed youth without much fear of recognition: but his wanderings in the West grew more hopeless and purposeless every day. He began to understand how it was that people were never at home when he assailed their doors with his fashionable knock. He could no longer endure the humiliation of such repulses, for he began to understand that the servants knew his errand as well as their masters, and had their answers ready, let him present himself before them when he would: so he besieged the doors of St. James's and Mayfair, Kensington Gore and Notting Hill no longer. He knew that the bubble of his poor foolish life had burst, and that there was nothing left for him but to die.

To be continued.

SCIENTIFIC AND USEFUL.

DOLOMITE or magnesian limestone, calcined at a low heat and powdered, and then made into a paste, forms under water a stone of extraordinary hardness.

REMOVING STAINS FROM PAINT BY CHLOROFORM—Chloroform is said to remove stains from paint, varnish, and oil. Every one knows that care is requisite in the use of chloroform. As little as possible should be used, and the work should not be done in a close place, but where the vapour will be rapidly carried off. Another fluid recommended for the same purpose is a mixture of six parts of strong alcohol, three parts of liquor ammonia, and a quarter part of benzole.

PRESERVATION OF BUTTER IN FRANCE—One part of sugar, one part of nitre, and two parts of salt, reduced to a very fine powder, constitute a good mixture for the preservation of butter. Sixty grammes, or rather more than 2 oz. of this mixture, is sufficient for a kilogramme, or about 2½ lb. of fresh butter, which, thus prepared, remains very good a fortnight afterwards; its taste is soft and agreeable. There is also another mode of preserving, viz., the butter is melted and purified with honey, 60 grammes of which are used for each kilogramme, the two substances being mixed with care. An agreeable flavour is obtained, and it will remain good a long time.

An old gentleman who has dabbled all his life in statistics, says he never heard of but one woman who insured her life. He accounts for this by the singular fact of one of the questions being, "What is your age?"