

warn you it may be necessary, or perhaps he will eat poor little me up!"

"You'd better take care I'm not behind you, then, Mrs. Darrell," he laughs, shaking his head at the demure little woman. "I'll spoil the lion's beauty if I can."

They are soon on the road in a handsome little chaise; and Archie, who is driving, recalls the night of their flight, over which they have a hearty laugh.

"I wonder how Turnbull's getting on with his job?" he says, as they near the park. "He shall have the benefit of his bell this time."

But it is strange; when they come within sight of the lodge, they find the great carriage-gates standing wide open, as if inviting them to enter. These have received a fresh coat of paint, too, and the lodge itself seems to have recovered its former trimness.

As Archer drives past it up the avenue, he perceives also that his old friend, the bell, has disappeared, and that the identical old keeper whom they saw on their first visit is standing in the doorway, looking at them in evident delight.

"Whatever can have happened?" Archer exclaims, as he gazes round on the smoothly-gravelled drive, from which all the disfiguring mounds have been removed. "Old Turnbull must have let the place, and gone away! It is in beautiful condition!"

Madge says nothing, and Archer is too much occupied with the changes about him to notice the curious little smile that puckers the rosy dimples round her mouth.

"This is superb!" continues Archer, in raptures, as they emerge from the avenue and get a charming view of the house, the lawns, quaintly-shaped flower-bed, and conservatories, all in a state of perfect order and elegance again. "Oh, I don't believe Turnbull's had any hand in this! He's let it!"

Archer starts, as he suddenly becomes aware of a flush of tell-tale merriment on Madge's pretty face, which she cannot for the life of her repress.

Another minute and they will be before the great handsome portico.

"Archie," she whispers, excitedly, laying her little gloved hand impressively on his arm, "we haven't a moment for explanation! Do as I tell you, or you'll ruin my happiness for life! Don't seem surprised at anything—take everything as a matter of course! Here we are!"

As they draw up, the massive doors roll back on their hinges, and two tall, red-plumed footmen come forward.

One of them holds the chaise-door while Madge descends; then Archer, nearly dumb-stricken with astonishment, follows her.

A thousand fancies are coursing through his brain. He is in almost helpless bewilderment, until Madge puts her little hand through his arm, and presses him forward into the fine old-fashioned hall.

Here a perfect array of upper and lower servants, footmen, grooms, stable-men—in fact, the whole domestic staff of a wealthy gentleman's establishment—meets his amazed stare, ranged on each side of the hall.

A handsome old dame in neat cap, evidently the housekeeper, makes them a profound courtesy.

"Squire Darrell, myself and all your household here assembled, do give you and your beautiful lady a hearty welcome home!"

"Hurrah for the Squire! Hurrah for his lady! Hurrah!" And the shouts are taken up with a hearty goodwill, and make the old hall ring again.

"Now, Archie," whispers Madge, while the cheering is still echoing round them, "you must thank them for yourself and me, and say how pleased we are."

Archer has no time for thought. Notwithstanding his perplexity, his half-formed conjectures, he understands this much, that he is what is popularly termed "let in for it," and must go through it somehow. So, casting aside all doubts as to who he is, he stammers forth a few sentences of thanks for the master of Aspern Court, and everybody seems highly satisfied and delighted.

"Mrs. Mapleson," says Madge then, turning towards the old dame, "we shall be glad if you will show Mr. Darrell and myself over the Court. As yet, we have to learn our way about our new home."

Thereupon Mrs. Mapleson precedes them, and they view the numerous reception-rooms, and up-stairs the boudoirs and bedrooms, and then round by the servants' offices, where Archer recognizes the Turnbulls' sitting-room, and so in time over the whole premises. Everywhere are evidences of luxury, good taste, and comfort. Archer scarcely says anything; his thoughts are too busy trying to account for all that he sees. But Madge, flushed and happy, talks enough with the old housekeeper for both of them. Presently they return to the large, sumptuous drawing-room, and for the first time are left alone.

Archer now has a chance of demanding an explanation. Everything has followed so suddenly hitherto, that it has been as much as he could do to play his part.

"Now, Mrs. Darrell," he commences, rather severely, "you will perhaps have the goodness to explain this precious farce."

Madge, with the most bewitching little smile in the world, lays her head on his shoulder, and holds up a pair of lips like twin rosebuds for his kiss. But Archer doesn't seem inclined to yield to temptation.

"Come, what does it all mean?"

"That you, Mr. Darrell, are the lion that I have bearded in his den—otherwise the master of Aspern Court!" she replies, gaily. Then, with a sudden change to earnestness, "Oh, Archie, don't look so! You know I couldn't lose you all through this stupid property. It wasn't my fault; it was Aunt Crompton's. And so Mr. Turnbull and I made a—little plot, and—and I thought you wouldn't mind, Archie,"—looking up again brightly through her tears. "You said you had no objection to a fortune after we were married, love. So don't play a real lion, and worry poor little me."

For an instant, as all the scenes with Mr. Turnbull flash across his memory, pride and obstinacy rise within him; but quickly they are laid low, when he looks down on the pretty and artful little pleader. Besides, there is a sort of feeling in the background that the master of Aspern Court is a very lucky man, after all. So he shakes his head with a certain comical gravity at the eyes peeping up from his shoulder—half coaxing, half saucy, beneath their long lashes—then yields to the temptation of her rosebuds.

"There, Archie, I knew you'd be my dear, good boy!" she whispers, wiping away a tear.

"Madge, you are a little witch. But you are a very dear little witch, and I love you very much, darling,"—pressing her to him tenderly.

At that moment there is a knock at the door, and the young couple fall asunder in some confusion.

A footman enters.

"Please, sir, there's a gentleman to see you. He says he's been directed here by Mr. Audley."

The man presents a card to Archer upon a salver.

"Mr. Joshua Hawthorn, New Zealand," reads Archer, in a tone that is wonderful to hear.

"Yes, sir; that's my name!" exclaims a loud, hearty voice; and a well-preserved specimen of the old Englishman gentleman walks coolly in at the open door.

He is a sun-browned, portly man, somewhat past the prime of life, with iron-gray hair and whiskers. He has bright, kindly eyes, an upright figure, and a countenance full of character and decision.

"You are the son of my cousin, John Darrell, unless I mistake, and about the only relation I have left in the old country," he says, cheerily. "I have just heard that you returned from your wedding trip yesterday, and hasten here to congratulate you, my dear boy."

The old gentleman comes forward with extended hands and a frank smile, but Archer falls back with very pale, set features. The footman has gone, and Madge has sunk down on an ottoman, and buried her face in a cushion.

"Joshua Hawthorn!" falls from Archer's white lips, in a strange, stifled voice. "It—it is impossible!"

"Impossible, sir!" exclaims the old gentleman, drawing himself up. "What do you mean? I am Joshua Hawthorn, and I believe that you are Archer Darrell, my second cousin. To-day I hear that you have lately married, and here I am to congratulate you."

"But have—you risen from the dead to—to congratulate me?" stammered Archer, backing a little further.

"Nonsense, sir!" cried the self-declared Joshua Hawthorn, beginning to look irritated. "I returned from New Zealand about a month since, and after numerous inquiries, managed to trace you as far as Hambleton, where I arrived this morning; thence on here."

Archer stares amazedly at this new-found cousin.

"There's some mistake," he says, hoarsely. "Joshua Hawthorn, of Blenheim, New Zealand, is dead!"

"Dead! Do you mean to tell me that I am dead?" demands the old gentleman, highly excited. "I say that I am not dead, and I think I ought to know!"

"He died last year," replied Archer, recovering himself, as he considers the unghost-like specimen of flesh and blood before him. "He left me twenty thousand pounds in his will."

"The deuce he did! Did you ever get it?"

"Certainly; and married on the strength of it."

The old gentleman blows a long whistle, and wipes the perspiration from his brow with his handkerchief.

"Well, I never!" he ejaculates. "And who the deuce am I, sir, if I'm not Joshua Hawthorn?"

"I'm sure I can't imagine," returns Archer, politely, as he sees the old gentleman is really perplexed. "Are you a bachelor?"

"Good gracious no!—got a wife and six!"

"There, you see, is a difference at once, sir. My cousin Hawthorn lived and died a bachelor. He was disappointed in love when young."

"So was I! I got over that!"

"Very strange!" says Archer; when at that instant he catches sight of Madge, who is shaking all over with suppressed merriment.

"Oh, what shall I do!" she exclaims, springing up, and coming forward in comical despair. "Mr. Hawthorn, I must appeal to you for mercy. I am the wicked cause of all this trouble."

The old gentleman turns to Madge's pretty, pleading self.

"My dear," he says—and his kindly smile

returns at the sight of hers,—“don't appeal to me. I could deny you nothing. Explain this mystery. I don't need to ask whether you are Archer Darrell's property!”

"She is Mrs. Darrell," interrupts Archer, putting his arm proudly round his property, and shaking his head at it, as if it were a very wilful, naughty piece of property. "And I fear I understand now how it comes about that twenty thousand pounds were left in your will, Mr. Hawthorn. This is the little culprit. She declared also that you died a bachelor, and she ought to be made to suffer for her temerity. An explanation from her is your due; but it will be a long one, and had better wait. Will you, meanwhile, allow me to apologize for my unfortunate mistake, and give you a right hearty welcome now, my dear cousin?"

And Archer grasps the old gentleman's outstretched hands warmly.

"My dear boy, it's a capital joke, don't mention it! And as for this bewitching little conjuror, who can conjure money out of people's pockets without their missing it—No; I must! It's a cousin's right, you know."

And the old gentleman gets his kiss, despite Madge's blushes and laughter.

"And am I forgiven, Archie?" she asks, when the little scene is over. "I couldn't resist the temptation of making you well off. Mr. Turnbull did it. He arranged it all with the lawyers, and then met you that afternoon in the train on purpose."

The footman enters before Archer can speak, hands him a telegram, and retires.

"What have we here?"—tearing it open.

"Why, it's from the very man—Turnbull!"

"Read it out!" exclaims Madge, brimming over with mirth and mischief.

"From James Turnbull, steamship *Cete-wayo*, Liverpool, to Squire Darrell, of Aspern Court."

"Wishing you and your lady long health and happiness. Hope I finished your job to satisfaction. All just off for Canada. Splendid job there, thanks to one you know. Good-bye!"

"Oh, Madge, you are hopeless!" says Archer, taking his little wife to him, and looking at her tenderly.

"But what does it all mean?" asks the old gentleman, who has been a patient and amused spectator.

"It means, Cousin Hawthorn—" says Archer, and then pauses, while Madge takes up the burden.

"It means, Cousin Hawthorn," she says, saucily, from the shelter of Archer's arms, "that Archer Darrell had an objection to marry a wealthy woman."

"Ah, I see!" returns the old gentleman, with a merry twinkle; "and you, Mrs. Darrell, have proved one too many for him!"

W. C. W.

A PEN PICTURE OF THE CZAR.

A correspondent who saw the late Czar at Ems in 1874, thus describes him as he appeared before Nihilism lifted its terrible front and when he could move about without fear: "He is now fifty-six years of age, hale and strong, with no signs of mental or bodily decay. The personal appearance of the Emperor is very pleasing. He has a good shapely head, well set upon his shoulders and indicating fair mental capacities, though a superficial observer might run some risk of under-rating him, because he is a slow and cautious thinker, whose idea does not flow readily into words, and his voice is harsh and hesitating when he first begins to talk. His forehead is frank and open, his eyes gray, and somewhat troubled in their look—they are sunk very deep in his head—and at times there seem to be awful meanings to them. They are eyes of the very sorrowful sort, not unfamiliar with tears, and in colour they are of that uncertain blue which denotes a melancholy temperament. Occasionally, very rarely, they have a gleam of solemn authority, half fearful, half touching, as though he had a painful consciousness of the tremendous responsibilities which weigh upon supreme power."

The lower part of the Emperor's face is well-bred, the nose fine and delicately chiselled, the mouth large but firm, affectionate and full of pleasant words. He is almost bald with the constant fretting of a military helmet which he wore habitually in early life, and the little hair he has left is of that undecided, neutral tint which is soon to become grey. He is very tall and large limbed, weighing perhaps seventeen stone in the saddle; but there is no awkwardness in his gait or manner. His disposition is gentle and good-humoured. He treats his intimates with an easy familiarity, very rare in a sovereign, and he has a determined, almost a dogged unwillingness to take offence. He is so brave, magnanimous and forgiving that he goes about alone and unattended, although many foolish attempts have been made to assassinate him; and he has repeatedly pardoned incorrigible rebels who would have found no grace before any other tribunal than his own merciful judgment. It is safer to offer him an affront than to displease the least of his servants. On one occasion it is known that he warned a Polish nobleman, against whom an order for arrest had been issued, to run away, and privately sent him means of support while he remained in exile. He was so unwilling to punish any of his revolted subjects in 1863-64 that he was called 'the chief of the Polish rebellion,' and he has shown a chivalrous generosity to those who endeavoured so resolutely to shake off his author-

ty. A literary man who had interpreted the new laws upon the liberty of the press rather too freely, and was threatened with imprisonment, made his way to the emperor, and his majesty on hearing that the literary man had got into trouble, quashed the proceedings against him, observing 'that he had better abuse him (the emperor) another time, and take to writing nothing against people who might hurt him.' He is so constant in his friendships and so open-handed with his friends that it is said some of them owe all their fortune to his munificence, and it is on record that once upon a time, when a man he loved was in straits, the emperor sat down to play cards with him—and didn't win the stakes. There was, perhaps, as much delicate generosity in the act as in any which is reported of Napoleon III."

A BLOODY FIGHT WITH CATS.

Several mornings ago a boy about fifteen years old, a nephew of Mr. Harrison's, an inmate of his family, went out to the barn to feed the horses. When he entered the loft he discovered two large cats lying on the straw asleep. Boy like he took up a bundle of fodder and creeping up struck both of them one blow. There was something of a disappointment in the result. The cats, instead of running away, sprang at the boy with a fury that startled him. Having nothing with which to defend himself he tumbled about, while the cats squalled, clawed and bit him unmercifully. His cries did not bring assistance, and the boy sprang toward the ladder leaning against the rafters, and ascended to the roof of the house. The cats followed him, and, despite his efforts to keep them away, bit and clawed him frightfully. Realising his ladder folly, he jumped down on the hay. The cats followed him. By this time he was bleeding very freely, and his coat was almost torn in threads. Seizing one of the cats by the hind legs, he attempted to beat it to death against the wall, but the animal doubled around and began tearing his arm. Shaking it off he ran to the ladder leading down. The animals followed him. Just as he reached the ladder he discovered a monkey-wrench lying on the floor. Seizing it he turned, dealt the foremost cat a blow between the eyes, and before it could recover mashed its head. The other animal fought with great fury. With a heavy blow the boy stretched out the remaining cat, and beat out its brains. Catching them by the tails he marched to the house to give an account of the battle.

HEARTH AND HOME.

COMMON-sense is symmetry of mind, of character, and of purpose in the individual combined. It represents man in completeness, harmony and equipoise. It clothes him with dignity, invests him with power, and stamps him with superiority. It is not genius, for that is often erratic; nor cunning in its sinuous course; nor tact, with its decline into trickery. Common-sense is the embodiment of true manhood. It confers a patent of royalty, though birth be plebeian, and exalts men from lowliest fears to the highest stations. Not by sudden freaks of fortune or a train of adventitious circumstances are they thus dignified; but step by step, through obstacle and hindrance, they overcome by the force of character and the proper direction of the will-power. Common-sense is a tremendous force in this lower world. Its power is felt and acknowledged through all the ramifications of governments, society, business, finance, science, and commerce. In fact it is the history as well as the true philosophy of the ages. It is the salt that has saved humanity from barbarism, and the moving power that has propelled the race onward in its march of progress and civilization.

THE MISER AND THE MOUSE.—The miser was counting his money when the mouse came out of her hole to look for a crumb of bread for her little ones. She was cold and hungry, for it was a very poor house for one that had a family to bring up. But the mouse was filled with happy expectations when she heard the miser say, "I am now happy; my soul is filled; the hunger I have suffered for years is satisfied; I will toil no more, but live in peace with my large possessions." The mouse thought there must be a lot of nice bread crumbs coming now, perhaps a little cheese, and maybe the small end of a delicious tallow candle. So she watched the miser, and, as he counted his money with trembling hands, he let a gold piece fall on the soft wool at his feet without knowing what had happened. The mouse was so overjoyed that she made more scuffling than was prudent in her haste to get the gold piece, but she got off clear with it, and in another second she was endeavouring to feed her young with it. But neither she nor they could make even so much as a mark with their teeth upon it; and when they were all dying of hunger she said, "If this is the miser's food, no wonder he looks thin and haggard, and never has a friend to dine with him. As for me and my babes, we must now perish, although we have a portion of that which this man declares has satisfied his hunger." Moral.—Money is but a curse to those who know not how to make use of it.

INTERESTING new discoveries have, *Nature* says, been made at Pompeii. A house has been excavated which was in course of construction when the terrible catastrophe occurred, and which differs materially from all other Pompeian houses in its plan.