He's His Match.

He has fought the polar bear,
And the lion in his lair,
He had monkeyed with gorillas on the shores of Bengula;
With a boa constrictor big
He had often danced a jig,
And he kept a petted monster of the dreaded name of Gila.

He had ridden on the tail
Of a North Pacific whale,
He'd attended shark re-unions off the coast of Madagascar;
He had flipped the heel and toe
With an elephant or so,
And had fought a dozen duels with the deep and deadly Lascar.

But he took himself a wife
And he sent him out for ribbons and some things that he might fetch her;
And he started on a hop
To the very nearest shop,
But just fifty minutes later he was brought home on a stretcher.

Natural Born.

Rather inclined to be pretty,
Rather inclined to be good;
Rather inclined to a vague, undefined
Feelin' of sweet sisterhood
Toward he young fellows who love her;
When they have asked for her hand,
Rather inclined to a vague, undefined
Feeling they don't understand.
Fact is, this maiden can't help it;
Natural born coquette.
Rather inclined not to make up her mind
To marry, that is, not just yet.
Sister she'll be to them all, and
Loving and faithful and true;
Rather inclined round her finger to wind
About—say a dozen or two.

A BARITONE'S DEVOTION;

OR A TALE OF SUNNY ITALY.

"No one but you!—no one but you!" The words haunted him as he turned to go to Nita. His mother had trusted all to him; Francesca, too, seemed to think that with him lay the sole chance of reaching his sister. Their very confidence seemed to crush him; he was utterly at a loss to know what he should do or say; he could not even feel acutely, sympathy seemed dead, his heart cold and numb with suffering, and yet, impelled by the truth of those words, "No one but you!" he entered Nita's room. Her face was buried in the pillow, she was sobbing aloud, and took no notice of his presence. He sat down by the bed and mechanically took her hand in his; her sobs did not move him, and no words of comfort came to his lips.

But all at once, as he watched the little hand which lay in his, a keen pang of pain shot through his heart. The hand was like his mother's hand, so much like that he could hardly believe it was not hers; he pressed it to his lips with love and reverence, for the first time in his life fully realizing the meaning of brotherhood. With that pain and that new vision his heart awoke once more, his work lay before him, his perplexity melted in a rush of love and pity, and that eager longing to help which swallows up diffidence and proves its own guide.

"Nita *mia!*" he said, his tears falling fast on the little white hand, "do not cry like that. She is at rest, and very happy; we dare not wish her back again."

"But I—but I have killed her!" sobbed Anita.

"No, never say that—never think it," he cried; "you did right to come home, quite right. It is the will of God."

No contact with Enrico's skeptical philosophy had been able to mar that wonderful childlike faith which is one of the most beautiful characteristics of an Italian. *E solete di Dio.* True words were spoken with such a simplicity which would have startled an Englishman. He did not pause to think of the proper thing to say, or reflect for one instant how his words would affect others, he just spoke out the perfect assurance which in his terrible grief had been his own refuge.

"You must know, Nita," he resumed, as she grew more quiet, "that I have heard all; she told me; and she died happy because she was sure you would be saved from this. You will not let her hope be vain."

"If you would help me," faltered Anita.

"I will—I will!" he cried, eagerly. That was no time to think of details or of difficulties, he could only give her his unqualified promise. Then, when the two had discussed things a little more, it was arranged that Carlo should write a note to Merlino, and tell him that Anita would remain for a few days at the Villa Bruno.

"And oh, write carefully!" exclaimed Nita; "see that you do not offend him."

Carlo wrote a cautiously worded letter, and sent it into Naples by old Florestano, who also bore the ill news to Guido Donati and to the Ritters, and, that he might make all the more speed, was prevailed on to accept a seat in the carriage which had brought Nita that morning.

Thus in a weary round of petty duties the time wore on, and at length night came. Carlo slept little, however, and rose the next day but ill prepared for the work before him. Nothing but the lifelong habit of making his own needs stand second to the needs of others kept him up. With regard to the funeral there was little for him to arrange, as all was managed after the usual custom by one of the *congregazione*, the relatives not even going to the church or the grave. But he had to interview Father Cristoforo, to talk to Captain Britton, to receive Uncle Guido, who drove over from Naples at noon, and to do his best to shield Anita from reproaches, taking good care that the elder Donati should not hear one word about Comerio.

And always through the livelong day, above his grief, above the well-meant condolences of his friends, there rang in his head one unanswerable question—how to save Nita; and with that Francesca's words, "No one but you!" In the evening, when all was over, and the bad coming and going had given place to a terrible, oppressive quiet, his grief and perplexity made him turn to Enrico Ritter, with the feeling that unless he unburdened his mind to some one he should lose his senses. It was true that Francesca partly divined his trouble, but he could not discuss his difficulties with her, could not bear to unfold to her so dark a page. Sardoni, his informant, was a total stranger; Captain Britton was the last man to whom he could turn; while Uncle Guido, with his uncertain temper, and his wrath at the stain which Anita had already brought upon the family name, was little likely to give helpful counsel in this matter. Enrico, "purely to please himself," had hastened over to Villa Bruno, and now inevitably Carlo turned to him, and exacting a promise of secrecy, told him everything that had happened since their last meeting.

He had chosen his confidant well. Enrico could be trusted to keep perfect silence; moreover, his sound common-sense, his cool, calm, practical way of looking at things, was precisely what Carlo needed. His own brain was so overwrought, so confused with the sudden calamity which had befallen him, that he was not in the least capable of seeing any matter in its true light. And then, too, the mere relief of sharing his perplexities with another was an inexpressible comfort. Not that Enrico had many suggestions to offer; he listened for the most part in silence. But then there are times in life when the silence of a friend is the one thing for which we crave; and Carlo turned to the unspoken sympathy of the man who really cared for him when wearied with the condolence of outsiders. Guido Donati had spoken of returning the next day to discuss the future, but the really perplexing future was discussed with the German pessimist.

"There is only one thing I would advise you, and that is, have no personal communication with Comerio," said Enrico at length. "I have seen him, and, into the bargain, know a good deal about him, and he's the veriest devil you can conceive. Pay him back the money, but do so through some third person."

"I'm sure I have no wish to see him," said Carlo, sighing. "If only I could think of some way of getting rid of him."

That there would be any difficulty in raising the money had not as yet occurred to Carlo. He had been extremely careless about money matters all his life; and though leading too secluded a life to be precisely extravagant, he had allowed things to drift, well content so long as he received his small annual allowance from his mother, and never troubling his head about the amount of their actual income. He knew that he was to be his uncle's heir, and to receive a very comfortable allowance from him on his marriage, therefore, he left all details to his mother, took what came to him, and lived on in serene comfort. Compelled now to face the situation, he was startled to find how entirely dependent he was upon his uncle; the income upon which they had lived had been derived from an annuity, and of course ceased at his mother's death; the Villa Bruno was only rented by the year, and though its furniture belonged to him it was worth but little. His only other possession was his horse, and he could not well part with that to raise the necessary money, for not only would it at once have provoked a question from his uncle, but it was indispensable to him so long as he lived in that remote country place. In the end Enrico, becoming aware of his embarrassment, said that he should ask his father to advance him the money; and as the deed of a loan was quite comprehensible to Herr Ritter at such a time, he very willingly acceded to the request, and Enrico himself was charged with the disagreeable errand of conveying the money to Comerio.

This was one step in the desired direction, and one care off Carlo's mind, but his perplexity about Anita only increased, for, as each day he learned to know her better, he was forced to own to himself how utterly [illegible] she was for the difficult life before her. Her beauty, her weakness, her moral cowardice, her miserable marriage, all were against her. She seemed incapable of really loving, capable only of a sort of desire to be caressed and shielded. Carlo gained a certain amount of influence with her, just because she trusted like a child to his strength, and was quite certain that he would do what he could with her; but she left everything to him, and, in those bitter days of his grief and perplexity, lived on in a placid, restful state which was almost happiness.

At length an interruption came to this state of things. One afternoon Sardoni drove over from Naples; Carlo was heartily glad to see him, and received him with a warmth which seemed to please the Englishman.

"I was afraid you would always dislike me as the bearer of ill news," he said; "I came partly to give you back your letter, which, of course, I have not had a chance of giving to Madame Merlino. She is still with you?"

"Yes, she is still here," said Carlo, tearing the letter in pieces, and stifling a sigh as he remembered how different all had been when he wrote it.

"I came partly to warn you that Merlino intends soon to send for your sister," said Sardoni; "indeed, it is really a necessity that she should come back, for the first rehearsal is on Monday, and the theatre is to open next Thursday."

"So soon! And as yet I have done nothing!" exclaimed Carlo.

"Are you sure of that?" asked Sardoni, with a keen glance at him. "You have at any rate succeeded in making Comerio your bitter enemy; and, by the bye, I have discovered one thing which may, perhaps, be of service to you: Comerio's engagement was for three years, but may be terminated in half that time either at Merlino's option or at his own."

"When does the first half expire?"

"In three weeks' time," said Sardoni.

Carlo thought for a few minutes in silence; then he said, somewhat abruptly:

"I wish you would just tell me plainly what sort of a man Merlino is; I can gather but little from what my sister lets fall about him."

"I can't draw a very pleasing picture of him," said Sardoni, with a smile, "for, truth to tell, there is no love lost between us. He has very little education, but that is a subject of regret to him; since his marriage he has become moral and respectable, but he is the most awful tyrant I ever had the misfortune to meet with. Of course his position tends to foster a love of power; for, don't you see, the manager of an operatic company is like a king—not a constitutional one, but a despot—an autocrat! Then your sister, if you will pardon my bluntness, was the very last sort of a wife he ought to have had. She is afraid of him, and he is not notice of holding her own, and he—great brute—treats her abominably. Why don't you persuade her to try for a separation?"

"I could not be a party to that," said Carlo, "so long as he is faithful to her. That a man has a bad temper is no fit reason for breaking the marriage vow."

"These notions are old-fashioned," said Sardoni, with a rather pitying smile.

But the smile quickly died away; for Carlo, with a dignity indescribable, made him a little bow, and dismissed the subject with a calm—"That is very possible, signor."

There was a world of expression both in tone and gesture, and Sardoni saw that to argue about his suggestion would be useless.

"If you reject that idea," he said, after a silence, "there is only one alternative—Comerio must be got rid of. I have thrown out as many hints as I dare to Merlino, all to no purpose. To tell him the truth plainly would make him ten times more brutal to your sister, and is altogether out of the question, even if one had the right. Why, he would be a fiend incarnate. You know what Italian husbands are when once their jealousy is stirred up."

Carlo involuntarily smiled then tickled by the speaker's ingenuous remark, fairly laughed.

Sardoni looked confused.

"I beg your pardon," he said; "but indeed I had forgotten that I was not talking to a fellow-countryman—a compliment to your accent, you see. Where did you become such a proficient?"

"Our nearest neighbors are English," said Carlo, not caring to explain any further, though instinctively his eyes turned toward a photograph of Francesca which stood on the mantel-piece. Sardoni's keen eyes noted this. He observed the photograph with secret admiration, and drew his own conclusions.

"Then how do you propose that Comerio shall be got rid of?" said Carlo, breaking the silence. "You do not imagine, signor, that we Italians, about whom, it appears, you are in the habit of generalizing—carry stilettos, and conveniently dispose of our foes by a stab?"

"There is only one way of getting rid of him," said Sardoni. "Merlino is always trying to cut down expenses, and with very good reason, for, a I told you before the opera is not always a paying concern. Now, if before the agreement with Comerio is renewed you can find a baritone with as good a voice who will sing on lower terms, then I have little doubt that Merlino would settle with him and give Comerio his *congé*."

"You must have been talking with Piale, signor," said Carlo, conscious of a vague feeling of discomfort.

"Piale?" said Sardoni, looking puzzled; "I do not know anyone of the name."

"Ah! then it was only an odd coincidence. But he is a well-known professor, and he has a pupil—a baritone—whom he is very anxious to bring out; he was talking to me about it only a few days ago."

"Why, then, there is good hope for our plans," said Sardoni. "A beginner would expect far less than Comerio, and if he really has a good voice and some dramatic power, no doubt Merlino would catch at him. What sort of looking fellow is he? Have you seen him? Is he presentable?"

A bright, sudden smile lit up Carlo's sad face for a minute.

"Of that I am no fit judge," he said, demurely, "for I am the pupil in question."

"You!" ejaculated Sardoni, in amazement. Then, recollecting his question, he began to laugh. "Well, I have my answer in an unmistakable form. There can be no doubt that you are well fitted for the stage."

Again his companion made that funny little Italian bow, in which there lurked so much dignity. There was just a shade of irony in his expression.

"I see the prospect does not attract you," said Sardoni, "yet I should fancy you might do great things on the stage, from the look of you."

"But I hope for a very different life, signor."

"I see. Well, I would be the last to tell you that our life is an enviable one. Some people seem to fancy that an actor's life is 'all beer and skittles'—I thought so once myself, but I can tell you that's a confounded mistake."

Carlo had never felt less inclined to discuss the merits of theatrical life; he devoutly wished that Sardoni would go; that feeling of vague discomfort grew upon him.

"Well," he said, "I will see if possibly Piale may know of someone else capable of taking Comerio's place; and I am greatly obliged to you, signor, for your suggestions and your help."

Sardoni perceived that he wished to be alone, and leaving a message of inquiry for Madame Merlino, took his departure.

But the discomfort which his presence had kept vague and undefined broke into a clear, torturing perception when Carlo was once more alone. Over and over the words rang in his head—"No one but you!—no one but you!" He tried to stifle them, he argued with himself on the folly of the idea—he said it was impossible, quixotic, preposterous. Finally he hurried off to Casa Bella.

CHAPTER VIII.

PIALE SCHEMES.

"Wilt thou go forth into the friendless waste
That last this Paradise of pleasure here?"

The Light of Asia.

There are some who consider that a hero must be practically immaculate, and who grumble sorely if called upon to study the life of an ordinary mortal who often stumbles when the road is rough, who shrinks from the Valley of Humiliation and takes a foolish, fleeting delight in By-path Meadow. But if the functions of all art is to picture life—not to photograph, but to paint it—then, without doubt, the typical hero of romance, with his faultless features and his preternatural nobility, must disappear for ever from the canvas; for where are these perfect beings who, in spite of cruel circumstances, never fall, who never harbor selfish thoughts—never speak hasty words.

Thank God one meets plenty of good men, but the best of them certainly owns that there had been times when they had felt ready to tear their tongues out in vain regret for irrevocable words—that they would give almost anything to live over again some misguided bit of their lives.

Carlo Donati was not an immaculate hero of romance, but a nineteenth century man of [illegible] blood, with a quick, ardent, sanguine temperament and strong passions. When those words which the English tourist let fall in the Neapolitan cafe had arrested his attention, he had been pricked at heart, and for the time vaguely disquieted. A yet deeper impression had been made upon him by his promise to his mother on her death-bed. Still, all had been vague and formless. Now Sardoni's bald, matter-of-fact statement had plunged the sword much further, had called up before him a plain, unmistakable way of helping Anita. The typical hero would of course have flung himself into the breach without an instant's hesitation; but Carlo did no such thing; he did not even allow his thoughts to dwell on the possibility, but just turned his back on the whole matter, tried to make Anita's visit as pleasant as might be, and sought refuge from his own sad memories in daily meetings with Francesca.

He did, however, to some extent, follow Sardoni's advice, and intrusting Piale with as much of the truth as he deemed necessary, wrote to ask him whether he knew of any singer who might be found to take Comerio's place. He also wrote to Merlino, obtaining further leave of absence for his sister, on condition that she drove in to Naples each day next week for rehearsal, and finally returned when the performances began. The days sped by rapidly enough, and on the Thursday, true to his promise, Carlo took his sister back, parting with her at the entrance to the Palazzo Forti, not without regret and apprehension. Mingled, however, with these came a sense of deep relief, for, from a selfish point of view, he could not but revel in his regained freedom; his life could never again be what it had been before Anita's return, but a sort of after-glow of the old times seemed to rise in his sky when the cloud of poor Nita's immediate presence was removed. He felt hopeful, too, for Piale had written to ask him to call at 12 o'clock, and he thought that perhaps he had found a desirable baritone.

The old maestro received him very kindly, but soon dashed his expectations to the ground.

"I know of no one," he said, emphatically—"no one. You speak as if your baritones were as rife as mushrooms. And, look you, Comerio is a clever actor, and has a fine voice; you'll not easily find any one to beat him, and if you did it is unlikely enough that they would take lower terms. Besides, Merlino is extremely unpopular as a manager; only just now I had his conductor in, a capital young fellow—Marioni—and he says that they all find it almost impossible to work with him. You must give up that idea; I, at any rate, cannot help you in it."

Carlo sighed and fell into deep thought. He did not hear footsteps on the stairs, nor notice that some one entered the inner room, which was divided from the front one only by a curtain. But Piale heard, and abruptly changed the subject.

"You have been neglecting your voice, I fear," he said, looking critically nto his pupil's face, and grieving to see what a change trouble wrought in it. "Not that I blame you in the least; there are times, of course, when even music must go to the wall. Let me hear you."

He made him work for a time at *solfeggi*, then broke into an impatient exclamation, forgetting everything but his art. "Out of practice—shockingly out of practice," he said, with a portentous frown; "try this."

He took down a copy of "Faust," and played the opening bars of "Dio Possente." The frown and the impatient ejaculation incited Carlo; he cared intensely to please his old master, and, throwing his whole soul into the music, and losing his own identity in that of Valentino, he gave an almost perfect rendering of the song.

Suddenly the curtain between the two rooms was torn back, and a black-bearded man, with a swarthy face and extremely small, dark eyes, with a restless, irritable look in them, hastened forward.

"Signor Piale, I congratulate you!" he exclaimed; "you have produced the most promising singer of the day! No wonder you are proud of your pupil!"

He was evidently carried away by the excitement of the moment, for his face, naturally most disagreeable, was illuminated with the same glow of artistic delight which, as the song proceeded, had softened Piale's rugged features.

For a minute an observer would have noticed that the two listeners had forgotten everything but their art, while Carlo was still Valentino, not himself. There was a silence; the old maestro looked triumphantly happy, the stranger turned his small, restless eyes on the singer, and Carlo gradually awoke to the recollection that he was not Valentino going off to the war and praying for the safety of his sister, but Anita's brother, with far greater cause for anxiety, and with his hopes for assistance from Piale dashed to the ground.

All at once he came to full consciousness of the actual present, and found the stranger unabashedly taking stock of him, looking him over from head to foot with interest and curiosity. Carlo, unaccustomed to this sort of appraising stare, felt the blood rush to his cheeks, yet it was no sense of the stranger's rudeness which aroused his strong antipathy. He looked hastily at the black-bearded visitor, looked again, angry with himself at being so much moved, then instinctively he recoiled a pace.

"The likeness is extraordinary!" exclaimed the new-comer, turning to Piale and startling him from his reverie.

"Likeness!" ejaculated the old musician, still half in the clouds, but dimly perceiving that sublunary affairs were somehow gone awry. "Likeness! Not at all, signor, not at all; there's not a voice like that in all Italy."

"I don't speak of the voice," said the stranger, impatiently, "but the face is like my wife's—curiously like it."

The old musician looked dismayed; he was fully awake now, art was forgotten, and a perilous bit of real life lay before him. In two strides Carlo was beside him, his face flushed, his eyes full of suppressed anger.

"Maestro," he panted, "what is this? what is this that you have done *co* me?"

"Forgive me," said the old man, "I am not so much to blame as you think. I did indeed invite Signor Merlino to hear you sing, but with the understanding that he should not appear. You broke faith with me, signor."

"A thousand pardons," said Merlino, coolly, "but in truth your pupil ought to be pleased with the compliment. I was so carried away by his singing that I forgot all. I don't understand what all this fuss is about."

He glanced at Carlo, who had turned away at his first words, and stood now at the window with his back to them, evidently struggling to restrain an outburst of passion. Piale looked at him too with compunction, but with great bewilderment. How was he to get matters set right? how disentangle himself from the confusion into which Merlino's impulsive entrance had plunged everything?

Carlo stood looking out into the busy street, but he saw nothing, was conscious of nothing but that Merlino was in the room with him—Merlino, the cause of all his sorrow and perplexity. He had conquered by a supreme effort the first savage impulse to fly at the throat of the man who had caused his mother so much grief, but fierce anger still burned in his heart and sent fiery blood coursing through his veins. A storm of wrathful indignation consumed him as he thought of Merlino's misdeeds; he was angry, too, with Piale, feeling, naturally enough, that a snare had been laid for him; and he was angry with himself because, even in this moment of confusion, he was aware that he had deliberately turned his back on the question now forced upon him, and that want of preparation was his own fault.

For, moments of what seem to us sudden temptation are seldom really sudden. God has given us our times of preparation, and if we have willfully neglected them the conflict is severer or perhaps ends in defeat.

How was he now to think out the frightfully involved question at issue? How decide on the right course of action? And yet a false step might prove Nita's ruin. The anguish of that thought, and the loathing of his own selfish procrastination, calmed his anger. With an effort he yielded up his will, and therewith forgot Merlino's presence, because another presence absorbed him wholly.

He was interrupted by a touch on his arm. Piale stood beside him, with a look of deep concern on his kind old face.

"Carlo *mio*," he said, in a low voice, "I apologize to you, and beg your forgiveness but since things have so fallen out, perhaps you will permit me to introduce you to Signor Merlino, who will then understand us better."

Carlo assented, subduing the angry thoughts which yet struggled to find place in his heart.

"Signor," said the old musician approaching Merlino, there is nothing extraordinary in the likeness you observed. Permit me to introduce you to Signor Donati."

Merlino started violently, and for a minute looked abashed and greatly confused. Piale, with much curiosity, watched his [illegible] he spoke, and now, with a face as pale as death, bowed gravely.

There was an awkward pause, broken presently by Carlo.

"I brought my sister to Palazzo Forti an hour ago, signor," he said, speaking to Merlino with grave courtesy; "I am much obliged to you for sparing her to me so long."

The speech cost him a great deal, but he was glad that he had brought himself to make it, for he had no wish to quarrel with Nita's husband; indeed he fully recognized Merlino's rights, though unable to think patiently of the way in which he had acquired them, or the manner in which he now abused them.

"A few days' rest will doubtless have been good for Anita," said Merlino, complacently, speaking of his wife much as he might have spoken of an overworked horse; "she has had hard work in America; nor can we afford now to be idle. It is a pleasure to me to make your acquaintance, signor. If I could induce you to follow your sister's example, and use your great talents professionally, it would give me the greatest satisfaction."

Carlo's heart began to throb painfully. Could it be that he was called to this? Could it be that this man—this coarse brutal tyrant—was to prove the arbiter of his destiny? The words, which a few day, before he had used so emphatically to Sardoni, trembled on his lips, "I hope for a very different life." But he managed to strangle them. Had he not offered up his will? He stood silent, waiting for guidance, hoping against hope, as is the way with poor mortals, that, after all, his own will might be done. He waited. At length Piale spoke; the words fell on him like blows.

"I have long urged upon my pupil, signor, the duty of going on the stage, for which he is admirably fitted. I am not without hope that circumstances may prompt him at length to consent. But there is as yet no vacancy in your troupe, I think, so I fear that you will not have the honor of introducing to the public both Madame Merlino and Carlo Donati."

Carlo stood silently listening to the discussion of his fate, looking now at Piale's brown, wrinkled face, with its parchment-like skin, furrowed brow, and crown of bushy, grizzled hair, now at the disagreeable face of Merlino. He knew that when the impresario spoke next he would say that Comerio's engagement might be terminated very shortly if he so willed; knew that Merlino was once more appraising him, observing the symmetry of his face and figure, calculating whether he would "draw." He felt like a slave in the market, but still he waited and held his peace.

"It shall not be my fault if I lose the honor," said Merlino at length; "by good luck Comerio's engagement is terminable at eighteen months if I so please; may be ended, that is, in a fortnight's time. What say you, Signor Piale? Could you have your pupil fit to fill the vacancy in so short a time as that?"

Piale was not to be daunted, though he knew well enough that the time was very short indeed for the preparation which would be necessary.

"Whether Comerio's costumes could be altered for him so soon is perhaps doubtful," he replied proudly; "they might or might not be ready in a fortnight's time; but my pupil will be ready—quite ready."

"Well, I'll risk it," said Merlino, who was a keen eyed man of business, and knew that Carlo would prove a good speculation. "I am prepared to offer you, signor, an engagement of three years, terminable at the end of the first year at the wish of either party. As to the salary, we shall not quarrel, I think, '*Oro e che oro vale*,' let me see ——"

He began to make a calculation and to discuss money matters with Piale, who, in his delight at the prospect of at length inducing his pupil to go on the stage, was ready to accede to almost any terms.

Carlo, still with that thought of the slave market in his mind, watched the discussion like one in a dream, paying little heed to the details. It mattered nothing to him just then whether he received five pounds a week or fifty; it mattered supremely that he had prayed for guidance, and that immediately after there had come to him this definite offer. He dared not refuse, he hesitated to accept. Silencing the fiends' voices which urged him at once to decline Merlino's proposal, at once to seek the selfish peace which that decision would bring, he braced himself up for a reply. The haggling at length ended, and Merlino turned to him.

"Well, Signor Donati, you hear my offer, and Signor Piale approves of the terms; it rests with you now to accept them or not. It is not for me to advise you either one way or the other; but, in my own mind, I have little doubt that, if you work well, you will be one of the first singers of the day.

Piale's eyes shone; he could hardly contain himself, so great was his excitement. It dampened his ardor to see that this glorious prospect brought no faintest gleam of pleasure to his pupil's face. He scratched his parchment-like cheek ferociously—a trick which he had when anything annoyed him or tried his patience. At length Carlo spoke.

"I am obliged to you for your offer, signor, but you will understand that it is impossible for me to accept it on the spur of the moment. The decision will affect others; I must think of them as well as of myself. I must consult those who belong to me."

"Well, well," said Merlino, impatiently, "so long as you keep the matter quiet—so long as it does not come to Comerio's ears, I don't object to that; but I can't afford to be off with him till I am on with you."

"I promise you all shall be kept quiet," said Carlo. "How soon must you know my decision?"

"Meet me next Wednesday at the Mercadante—or, better still, if Signor Piale will permit, at this house, and I will have the contract ready. That leaves you nearly a week, and I shall quite hope for a favorable reply. I shall, in the meantime, not breathe a word of this to my wife, who, of course, will be charmed to have you in the troupe. Good-day, signor, and let me entreat you not to throw away this opportunity. A thousand thanks, Signor Piale, for your courtesy, and pray forgive my impetuous entrance."

He bowed himself out.

Carlo watched him as he walked down the street—watched him in a sort of stupor. When he had disappeared, his eyes turned to a heavily-laden mule just coming into sight, with waving green boughs tied about his head to keep off the flies; it toiled patiently on, the lazy boy in charge hanging on its tail with his right hand, while he devoured a great hunch of bread clasped fast in his left. Carlo watched with a sort of envy the placid calm of the sunburnt lad—that picture of lazy content contrasted so oddly with the state of his own mind. Piale soon added to the fierceness of the storm by urgent and almost piteous entreaties that he would accept Merlino's offer. With tears in his eyes the old musician paced to and fro, passionately declaiming upon the sacred calling, and the duty of not allowing such gifts to rest unused; and Carlo listened with the reluctant attention of one who does not wish to be persuaded. It was bad enough to fight against his own convictions; he did not want Piale's arguments to make the conflict yet more severe.

(To be continued.)

Not That Kind a Kid.

Life: Mrs. Callahan—I want to get a pair of shoes for the little bye.

Clerk—French kid?

Mrs. C (indignantly)—Indade not. He's me own son, born and bred in Amerikey.

Rev. Henry Philpott, who died in Worcester this week, was the oldest prelate of the Church of England. He was one of the leaders in the schemes of university reform and was a man of recognized ability in all affairs of the church and education.

Albinus, the Roman, at one breakfast ate 500 figs, 100 peaches, 10 melons, 100 small birds and 400 oysters.

Colors have been made to produce sounds by being passed through a prism. Green and red lights produced the loudest noises and yellow the faintest. How loud the noises were is not stated, but doubtless they were distinctly audible to people who can "hear the corn grow."

THE BUSY BACILLUS.

Something About the Grip That Preceded the Black Death.

THE WORLD HAS SNEEZED BEFORE.

Do Solar and Terrestrial Disturbances Produce Favorable Conditions for It?—Ancient Theories—Cultivating Bacilli—Blood Corpuscles and Germs—Parallel Disturbances—A Suggestion.

The preponderance of opinion in the medical profession places la grippe in the list of diseases explicable only by the science of bacteriology. Bacteria as destroyers of blood tissue are daily being made to account for more of the diseases which have to a greater or less extent baffled medical skill. The fact that influenza in its course cannot be traced uninterruptedly has misled many investigators, but it is to be borne in mind that the bacteria always exist and that the requirements for an epidemic outbreak are (1) conditions favorable to their multiplication, and (2) subjects whose debilitated blood corpuscles invite attack. The victims of the grip are those whose blood affords the conditions necessary to the propogation of the bacillus. Although existent bacilli cannot, in the normal condition of the atmosphere, be propagated in such quantities as to endanger the lives of healthy persons. Naegeli contends that the blood corpuscles themselves, when in a healthy condition, prevent the propagation of fungi, which is being constantly brought into contact with them by medium of the lungs. But whenever the blood corpuscles become broken down, unsound, danger may be feared.

SCIENCE CANNOT AFFORD TO DOGMATISE;

the only certain way to fix bacilli as causing a disease is to separate the microbes from other matter and cultivate by innoculation under favorable conditions for propagation. This, in the case of the grip, or influenza, bacillus, has already been accomplished by Prof. Pfeiffer, of Berlin, and by two American physicians, Dr. Gentry, of Chicago, and Dr. Watkins.

Grip may be safely classed as a germ disease, its outbreak being dependent upon favorable atmospheric conditions, which predispose to its attacks while facilitating reproduction of the bacilli; and its victims—as in the case of other germ diseases—will be found in greatest numbers among those whose receptivity has been increased by a low vitality and abnormal condition of the blood corpuscles, affording a breeding ground and food for the influenza microbe.

FORMER GRIP EPIDEMICS.

To form any idea as to the conditions favorable to the spread of the disease we must study its history, for it is not a new visitation. Hippocrates was acquainted with it; Diodorus Siculus describes an epidemic, now believed to have been the grip, which caused great suffering in the Athenian army in Sicilly in the year 412, B. C. A. D., 327, it broke out in Europe again, accompanied with a violent cough. It spread from Italy over Europe, and in almost every century, notably before the outbreak of the black death, in 1348, it visited Europe, and at one time or another it has afflicted every habitable country on the globe. It has spread over all Europe in two months, but at times its progress is slower. In 1831 it afflicted Paris for nearly ten months. In the Caroline Islands it appears twice a year.

The theory that it is the result of solar and terrestrial disturbances whose effects on the atmosphere are favorable to the propagation of the disease germs finds many scientific defenders. It is noted that nearly all the great outbreaks of which we have any authentic accounts were subsequent to

IMPORTANT SOLAR OR TELLURIC DISTURBANCES.

The visitation of influenza in the 14th century (prior to the plague outbreak) was preceded by great convulsions of the earth; droughts, storms, floods, that have come down in the history of the times. In China, in 1333, fifteen years before the plague outbreak, 400,000 people perished in the great floods. In 1334 drought and disease swept off 5,000,000 people. A few months afterward a great earthquake followed, the mountains of Ki-ming-chan fell in and a lake more than 100 leagues in circumference was formed. In 1336 frequent winter thunderstorms alarmed the French, and Mount Etna burst in a eruption, the only one of the century. In 1337 about 4,000,000 Chinese perished by famine in the Kiang district. Deluges, earthquakes, droughts afflicted Europe. In 1343 Hong-tchang mountain fell in and caused a deluge. In that year three months' rain fell in Pien-tcheou and Leang-tcheou, destroying seven cities. Earthquakes shook Egypt, Syria and Turkey. On Jan. 25th, 1348, an unexampled earthquake shook Greece, Italy and surrounding countries, destroying cities and villages and killing many thousands; mountains were moved from their positions, the waters boiled, and great fissures opened in the earth from which deadly gases exhaled. For 26 years there had been a succession of terrestrial disturbances; then came the

GRIP OF THE 14TH CENTURY,

to be succeeded by the plague which desolated so many cities of the world. The science of medicine was in a crude state at that time, and, unfortunately, we have few writings of medical men of the time to refer to; but such as there are incline us to the belief that the disease was due to atmospheric conditions brought about by the solar and terrestrial disturbances which preceded the outbreak. As in the case of the present visitation, the influenza, which preceded the Black Death, and the plague itself, made its way from east to west. It was both epidemic and contagious; it affected the pulmonally weak most seriously; it was complicated with pneumonia in a fatal degree in many cases and its after-effects were markedly debilitating.

The accounts which come down to us regarding the plague itself are meagre, and even those of medical men exhibit such an admixture of superstition and ignorance as disposes us not to wonder that they failed to cope successfully with the scourge. Galeazzo di Santo Sofia carefully distinguishes between the plague proper, "pestilence," and epidemy and endemy. He points out that the influenza or cough, had been observed in all climates while the pestilence he assumed to come independent of telluric changes. Guy de Chaulac held that the influence of the conjunction of the planets had much to do with vitiating the air and rendering it poisonous. Gentilis, of Foligno, who himself fell a victim to the plague, ascribed it to atmospheric poisons, and advised the purification of the air by burning large fires of odoriferous woods.

SUPERSTITION AND PERSECUTION.

Medical skill, however, was pitiably unfit to cope with the great mortality of the plague, and, sad to say, it was overshadowed by superstition, and men, awed, dispossessed of reason by the great pestilence, failed to use the means at their command, and instead resorted to religious rites, processions, flaggellations and various forms of penance to appease a supposedly infuriated Deity; and as a part of the sacrifice to be offered, a bloody persecution of the Jews (who are now being persecuted in Russia!) was inaugurated, thousands being put to torture and executed, while mobs wreaked vengeance upon them with impunity in the most horrible manner. It is to be feared that in Europe superstition made the plague results much more serious than need have been the case, as in Turkey, where reasonable methods of medical treatment were followed, very many attacked were saved.

Now, if we consider the phenomena noted before the grip of the 14th century, and before the Great Plague we must concede that the solar and terrestrial changes going on were capable of producing variations in the atmospherical conditions upon which health or disease depends. Of course we have not the record, even were the demonstration possible, upon which to reach the conclusion that they and the disease which followed were cause and effect. But we have this data before us: The grip or influenza is

BOTH EPIDEMIC AND INFECTIOUS;

it is caused by a germ bacillus; the bacillus, while always existent, requires certain conditions and soil for its propogation. Before the great outbreak which preceded the plague in 1348 we read of great solar and terrestrial disturbances together with a conjunction of planets (supposed by the writers of that time to have caused these disturbances), and we have the epidemic taking a course similar to that taken by the grip in its spread—from east to west.

What have been the phenomena noted in the few years prior to the grip visitation? Have they been similar? Yes, to a degree. We have had solar and stellar disturbances; meteoric displays of peculiar grandeur. We have heard of great floods in China; terrific earthquakes bringing destruction in their train; wonderful volcanic activity; droughts; famines. The fact that, as in the 14th century, epidemic influenza follows these manifestations may not imply cause and effect, but the idea of connection is very suggestive.

ATMOSPHERIC EQUILIBRIUM.

That these great terrestrial disturbances have an important effect on the atmosphere is highly probable; that the solar disturbances exert a powerful influence on the air and earth seems a reasonable proposition. We have sufficient familiarity with the theory of electro-polar disturbances to make the connection easy. There is a certain normal condition of atmosphere most favorable to human life, least favorable to the multiplication of noxious germs. Any disturbance of that equilibrium involves danger to health. It has been found during severe cholera epidemics that no spark can be obtained with the Franklin apparatus, showing that the condition favorable to cholera is a

DEFICIENCY OF OXYGEN

in the air. The absence of the elements of statical electricity is one of the conditions favorable to the cholera bacillus; but it may not be the only one. Wet or dry weather does not seem to exert any great influence on the result. What causes this vitiation of the air? What abstracts or destroys the oxygen? And what are the other combinations existent in the atmosphere in which the cholera bacillus thrives? That is the problem before our scientific investigators.

If (and the facts lend color to it) the solar and telluric disturbances preceding the influenzas of the 14th century were the cause of the conditions that gave rise to it, or rather developed it from the latent germs, is it not probable that similar causes have combined to bring about the grip plague of 1890-2?

MASQUETTE.

A Traveler Rejoicing.

Summerside, P. E. I., Oct. 10th, 1888: "Having used St. Jacob's Oil for a badly sprained knee, I can testify to its peculiarly curative properties, as less than one bottle completely cured the sprain."—GEORGE GREGG, Traveler for J. C. Ayer & Co.

The Use of the Sermon.

Hebrew Standard: Some children were lately overheard discussing the Sunday services in the fashionable church, at which the family worshipped.

"Well, now," said the seven-year-old boy, "I should like to know what the sermon is for, anyway."

"Why, Harry, don't you know?" answered his five-year-old sister. "It's to give the singers a rest, of course."

Consumptives!

Do not give up until you have tried Miller's Emulsion of Cod Liver Oil, which makes flesh and blood, is a positive cure for coughs and colds, bronchitis, sore throats, and all lung troubles tending to consumption. Persons have been known to gain from five to ten pounds in weight by taking one bottle of Miller's Emulsion of Cod Liver Oil, which contains hypophosphates of lime and soda. In big bottles, 50c. and $1 at all drug stores.

Some Facts About Chili.

Chili is nearly as long as the United States is broad. Chili's population is 3,115,000. Santiago's population is 200,000; Valparaiso's, 105,000. The Chilian President holds office for five years; salary, $18,000. In Chili there are 1,020 public schools, with 84,385 pupils.

Women suffering from the ailments peculiar to their sex, and pale and sallow girls may be speedily cured and be restored to a fresh blooming complexion by the use of Dr. Williams' Pink Pills. W. J. Witter, Franklin, Mass., writes: "My sister had been ill for seven or eight years and looked as though she were going to the grave. Your Dr. Williams' Pink Pills completely restored her. Sold by all druggists. Beware of imitations.

Gallantry in the West.

Miss Lizzie Green met with a serious accident last Sunday afternoon while out sleigh-riding. The sleigh overturned and the lady was thrown to the ground with great violence, and there is a contusion on her alabastrian brow as long as a clothes-line. Miss Green has our sympathy in her misfortune and accident, and if it would do any good we would butt the Rocky mountain range of mountains out of existence.—*