

GOOD CHEER.

WHAT time Life's weary tumult and turmoil
Threaten my feeble struggling soul to foil,
Which, faint and desolate, slinks with my sorrow's
weight,

Thus sings my heart to cheer me for the toll:

"The threatening thorn is mother of the rose,
The sternest strife is herald of repose,
And they who labour best amid this world's unrest
Claim the best guerdon at life's welcome close.

The greenest herbago owes its hue to rain,
'Tis tedious toil that lends the worth to gain;
Is it a strange thing, then, that in lives of men
The sweetest sweetness is the dower of pain?

The safest bays nestle round dangerous capes,
The clearest spring from prisoning granite's scapes:
Toit on—and understand, 'tis honest Labour's hand
Presses the richest wine from Life's full grapes!"

T. Hood.

HALF A MILLION OF MONEY

WRITTEN BY THE AUTHOR OF "BARBARA'S HISTORY,"
FOR "ALL THE YEAR ROUND," EDITED BY
CHARLES DICKENS.

Continued from page 121.

"I could not have borne to do harm," said Saxon; "but now that you explain the matter so fully, I am quite willing—"

But Mr. Trefalden would not hear of it.

"No, no," he said, coldly, gathering up his papers and folding his map. "I was anxious to do all that was possible for your interest; but it is, perhaps, better that you have nothing to say to the New Route."

"Yet, if you think well of it—"

"I think so well of it, that I am about to invest all I possess in the Company's shares; but that need not influence you. In point of fact, Saxon, I had rather leave your money in the funds. You will get only three per cent; but you can reinvest when you please, and the responsibility of advising you will be mine no longer."

"You are vexed with me, cousin William!"

"I regret that you think me capable of advising you to do what would not be right," replied Mr. Trefalden, somewhat stiffly.

"But I think nothing of the kind! I was in error; but, as you said only a moment before, I know nothing of life, so pray do not hold me accountable for the sins of my ignorance."

"Tush! not another word," said the lawyer, kindly. "You have said more than enough."

"And the investment?"

"With regard to the investment, I think the most satisfactory course will be for me to leave your money in government stock, at three per cent. Even so, it will bring you one hundred and thirty-five thousand per annum."

"As you please. It will be less trouble to spend, and make me quite as happy!"

Mr. Trefalden looked very grave.

"It will also leave you with less to give, and less power to make others happy," said he.

The careless smile faded from Saxon's lip.

"I wish I knew what I ought to do!" he exclaimed, with an impatient sigh. "What do you really wish me to do, cousin William?"

"I had rather not say more than I have already said," replied Mr. Trefalden. "You have had my advice."

"So I have—and of course I ought to follow it. You won't refuse to help me to do so?"

"Certainly not. You need only make your decision, and give me your instructions."

"I have decided. Invest the money, by all means, and let there be an end of it."

"And how do you wish me to invest it, Saxon?" asked Mr. Trefalden, with his pen in the ink.

"In the New Route, of course!"

"In one hundred pound shares, in the New Overland Route Steam-packet and Railway Company, Limited," said the lawyer, scribbling rapidly. "And to what amount?"

"To whatever amount you think proper."

"Shall we say to the extent of two millions?"

"Why only two? What is to be done with the rest?"

Mr. Trefalden stooped over his writing, and a keen observer might have seen that he changed colour.

"I do not recommend you," he said, "to invest more at present. As it is, you will be the largest shareholder on the list; and by-and-by, if the company should see fit to raise further capital, you can purchase additional shares. I must trouble you to sign this paper, Saxon—it is a power of attorney, which gives me authority to sell out your two millions."

The young fellow took his cousin's pen, and scrawled his name as carelessly as if he were signing away a couple of pounds.

"You ought never to subscribe your name to a paper without reading it," said Mr. Trefalden. "Remember that. By the way, Saxon, I shall see that you are entered as a director."

"As a director, if you please, then, who is not expected to do anything," replied Saxon, laughing. "Are you also a director?"

"No; I am only solicitor to the company. But now that our business is settled, would you not like to glance over these tables of estimates? Here, you see, is a plan of the Route, and here the probable cost per mile, including—"

"I beg your pardon, cousin William," interrupted Saxon, "but if our business is settled, I protest against hearing another word about the Route. For pity's sake, let us go out, and forget all about it!"

"I fear," said Mr. Trefalden, "that you are utterly incorrigible."

"I know I am. Do you ride?"

"Yes; now and then."

"Then we will go in search of the hunting party."

So Mr. Trefalden put his tables of estimates back into his pocket-book, and business was banished beyond recall. Then they went round to the stables, and Saxon ordered out his two thorough-breds.

"I trust you have not forgotten what I said to you at Reichenau on the subject of fetters, Saxon," said Mr. Trefalden, as they cantered across the park. "Mademoiselle Colonna is a dangerous neighbour. Beware of her."

Saxon laughed gaily.

"Fear nothing on my account, cousin William," said he. "I have the advantage of Achilles—there isn't a vulnerable point about me."

"We are all apt to think so till the arrow finds us out. However, if even your heart is safe, I still say beware—for your cheque-book. Has the signora levied no patriotic tax upon you yet?"

"None whatever."

"That's ominous, with a revolt actually in progress. She is restoring her strength, that the blow may fall the heavier when it comes. All I implore is, Saxon, that when Mademoiselle Colonna, or her father, shall solicit your support you will confine yourself to a money contribution—and pledge yourself to nothing foolish."

"Of course not; but what else could I pledge myself to?"

"Heaven knows! She is capable of asking you to take the command of a troop."

CHAPTER XXIX. THE RICH MISS HATHERTON.

An evening party at Castletowers was a momentous affair. It involved a good deal of expense, and a vast amount of anxiety; for the hereditary coffers were ever but scantily furnished, and the hereditary hospitality had to be kept up at any cost. How some of Lady Castletowers' few but elegant entertainments were paid for, was a secret known only to her son and herself. Sometimes an oak or two was felled in some remote corner of the park; or the Earl denied himself a horse; or the carriage was left unrenovated for half a year longer; or her ladyship magnanimously sacrificed her own brief visit to London in the season. Anyhow, these extra expenses were certain to be honourably met, in such a manner that only the givers of the feast were inconvenienced by.

On the present occasion, however, Lord Castletowers had been compelled to apply to his solicitor for an advance upon his next half-yearly

receipts; and when William Trefalden went down that Thursday morning to see his cousin Saxon, he brought with him a check for the Earl. The party was fixed for the following evening; but Mr. Trefalden could not be prevailed upon to stay for it. He was obliged, he said, to go back to town the same night by the last train; and he did go back (after making himself very pleasant at dinner), with Saxon's signature in his pocket-book.

It was a very brilliant party, consisting for the most part of county magnates, with a sprinkling of military, and a valuable reinforcement of dancing men from town. Among the magnates were Viscount and Lady Esher, a stately couple of the old school, who, being much too dignified to travel by railway, drove over with four horses from Esher Court, a distance of eighteen miles, and remained at Castletowers for the night. The Viscount was lord-lieutenant and Custos Rotulorum of the county, and had once held office for three weeks as President of the Board of Perquisites; a fact to which he was never weary of alluding. There, too, were Sir Alexander and Lady Hankley, with their five marriageable daughters; the Bishop of Betchworth and Mrs. Bunyon; Mr. Walkingshaw of Aylsham, one of the richest commoners in England, with Lady Arabella Walkingshaw, his wife, and their distinguished guest, Miss Hatherton of Penzance, whose father had begun life as a common miner, and ended it with a fortune of two hundred and fifty thousand pounds. These, together with Lord Boxhill; His Responsibility Prince Quart Potz, the Prussian Envoy; a few local baronets and their families; an ex-secretary of legation; and a number of lesser stars, parliamentary, clerical, and official, made up the bulk of the assembly. There were also three or four celebrities from the lower paradise of arts and letters—Sir Jones de Robinson, the eminent portrait-painter; Signor Katghuttini, the great Dalmatian violinist; Mr. Smythe Browne, the profound author of "Transcendental Eclecticism," and Mrs. Smythe Browne, who wrote that admirable work on "Woman in the Camp, the Council, and the Church"—a very remarkable couple, whose distinguishing characteristics were, that Mrs. Smythe Browne wore short hair and shirt collars, while the sandy locks of Mr. Smythe Browne floated upon his shoulders, and he displayed no vestige of linen whatsoever.

By nine o'clock the guests began to arrive. By ten, the reception-rooms were well filled, and dancing commenced in the great hall. Though rarely thrown open to the light of day, the great hall, with its panellings of dark oak, its carved chimney-piece, its Gothic rafters, and its stands of rusty armour, some of which dated back to the field of Agincourt, was the glory of Castletowers. Brilliantly lighted, decorated with evergreens and flowers, and echoing to the music of a military band, it made such a ball-room as one might vainly seek in any country but our own.

Lady Castletowers received her guests near the door of the first reception-room, looking very stately, and more like Marie Antoinette than ever, in her glitter of the old family diamonds. Gracious to all, as a hostess should be, she nevertheless apportioned her civilities according to a complex code of etiquette. The smile with which she greeted Viscount Esher differed by many degrees from that with which she received Sir Jones de Robinson; and the hand extended to Mrs. Smythe Browne was as the hand of an automaton compared with that which met, with a pressure slight yet cordial, the palm of the rich Miss Hatherton.

"But where is the noble savage?" said this latter, surveying the room through her double eye-glass. "I have heard so much about him, my dear Lady Castletowers, and I am dying to see him!"

Miss Hatherton was a tall, handsome young woman of about five or six-and-twenty, with black eyes, fine teeth, a somewhat large, good-natured mouth, and a very decisive manner. She made one of a little privileged knot that was gathered behind Lady Castletowers; and amused herself by criticising the guests as they came up the stairs.