

ECHO AND THE TOPER.

BY HRO. J. OLIVER.

A toper once returning from potatoes,
 Imbibed with freedom at the Dog and
 Gun—
 Where jovial comrades on the laws of nations
 Allowed their thirsty tongues to glibly
 run—
 Was passing through a valley where 'twas
 said,
 Though he had never put it to the test,
 That Echo answered when'er questioned.
 Quoth he, "I'll see whether 'tis truth or
 jest."
 He paused a moment, hiccupped, scratched
 his head,
 His trembling fingers passed across his
 vest
 To feel that he was there and not in bed,
 And then and there the Echo thus ad-
 dressed:—
 "The place we left, say Echo, dost thou
 know?"
 Echo—"No."
 "The public-house where folks like thee
 don't go."
 Echo—"Don't go."
 "'Tis after ten, my mates still at their
 drinks."
 Echo—"Asses."
 "The drink they love before all else is
 wine."
 Echo—"Swine."
 "Good liquor I enjoy in any shape."
 Echo—"Ape."
 "I wonder what's the end of all this brew-
 ing."
 Echo—"Ruin."
 "Would'st have me take the pledge, all
 drink resign?"
 Echo—"Sign."
 "Methinks I could not live without such
 stuff."
 Echo—"Such stuff."
 "You may be right, at any rate I'll try it."
 Echo—"Try it."
 He signed the pledge, and very soon he
 found
 That, like the eagle, he'd renewed his
 youth;
 He keeps it still, and furthermore has
 owned
 That what the Echo said was but
 truth.
 —The Good Templar's Watchword.

HOW IT ALL CAME ROUND.

(L. T. Meade, in "Sunday Magazine.")

CHAPTER VI.—IN PRINCE'S GATE.

Having arranged her household matters,
 been informed of another pair of boots
 which could not last many days longer, seen
 to the children's dinner, and finally started
 the little group fairly off for their walk with
 Anne, Charlotte ran up-stairs put on her
 neat though thin and worn black silk,
 best jacket and bonnet, and set off to Ken-
 sington to see Miss Harman.
 She reached the grand house in Prince's
 Gate about twelve o'clock. The day had
 indeed long begun for her, but she reflected
 rather bitterly that most likely Miss Harman
 had but just concluded her breakfast. She
 found, however, that she had much wronged
 this energetic young lady. Breakfast had
 been over with her some hours ago, and
 when Mrs. Home asked for her, the footman
 who answered her modest summons said
 that Miss Harman was out, but had left di-
 rections that if a lady called she was to be
 asked to wait.
 Charlotte was taken up to Miss Harman's
 own private sitting-room, where, after stir-
 ring the fire and furnishing her with that
 morning's *Times*, the servant left her
 alone.
 Mrs. Home was glad of this. She drew
 her comfortable easy-chair to the fire, placed
 her feet upon the neat brass rail, closed her
 eyes and tried to fancy herself alone. Had
 her father lived, such comforts as these
 would have been matters of every-day oc-
 currence to her. Common as the air she
 breathed would this grateful warmth be
 then to her thin limbs, this delicious easy-
 chair to her aching back. Had her father
 lived, or had justice been done, in either
 case would soft ease have been her portion.
 She started from her reclining position and
 looked round the room. A parrot swung
 lazily on his perch in one of the windows.
 Two canaries sang in a gilded cage in the

other. How Harold and Daisy would love
 these birds! Just over her head was a very
 beautifully-executed portrait in oils of a
 little child, most likely Miss Harman in her
 infancy. Ah, yes, but baby Angus at home
 was more beautiful. A portrait of him
 would attract more admiration than did that
 of the proud daughter of all this wealth.
 Tears started unbidden to the poor perplexed
 mother's eyes. It was hard to sit quiet with
 this burning pain at her heart. Just then
 the door was opened and an elderly gentle-
 man with silver hair came in. He bowed
 distantly to the stranger sitting by his hearth,
 took up a book he had come to seek, and
 withdrew. Mrs. Home had barely time to
 realize that this elderly man must really be
 the brother who had supplanted her, when
 a sound of feet, of voices, of pleasant laugh-
 ter, drew near. The room door was again
 opened, and Charlotte Harman, accompanied
 by two gentlemen, came in. The elder of
 the two men was short and rather stout,
 with hair which had once been red, but was
 now sandy, keen, deep-set eyes and a shrewd,
 rather pleasant face. Miss Harman ad-
 dressed him as Uncle Jasper, and they con-
 tinued firing gay badinage at one another
 for a moment without perceiving Mrs.
 Home's presence. The younger man was
 tall and square-shouldered, with a rather
 rugged face of some power. He might
 have been about thirty. He entered the
 room by Miss Harman's side and stood by
 her now with a certain air of proprietor-
 ship.
 "Ah! Mrs. Home," said the young lady,
 quickly discovering her visitor and coming
 forward and shaking hands with her at once,
 "I expected you. I hope you have not
 waited long. John," turning to the young
 man, "will you come back at four? Mrs.
 Home and I have some little matters to
 talk over; and I dare say her time is pre-
 cious. I shall be quite ready to go out with
 you at four. Uncle Jasper, my father is in
 the library; will you take him this book
 from me?"
 Uncle Jasper, who had been peering with
 all his might out of his short-sighted eyes at
 the visitor, now answered with a laugh, "We
 are politely dismissed, eh? Hinton," and
 taking the arm of the younger man they
 left the room.

CHAPTER VII.—IT INTERESTS HER.

"And now, Mrs. Home, we will have
 some lunch together up here, and then after-
 wards we can talk and quite finish all our
 arrangements," said the rich Charlotte, look-
 ing with her frank and pleasant eyes at the
 poor one. She rang the bell as she spoke,
 and before Mrs. Home had time to reply, a
 tempting little meal was ordered to be served
 without delay.
 "I have been with my publishers this
 morning," said Miss Harman. "They are
 good enough to say they believe my tale
 promises well, but they want it completed
 by the first of March, to come out with the
 best spring books. Don't you think we may
 get it done?—it is the middle of January
 now."
 "I dare say it may be done," answered
 Mrs. Home, rising, and speaking in a remon-
 strant voice. "I have no doubt you will work
 hard and have it ready—but—but—I regret
 it much, I have come to-day to say I cannot
 take the situation you have so kindly offered
 me."
 "But why?" said Miss Harman, "why?"
 Some color came into her cheeks as she
 added, "I don't understand you. I thought
 you had promised. I thought it was all ar-
 ranged yesterday."
 Her tone was a little haughty, but how
 well she used it; how keenly Mrs. Home
 felt the loss of what she was resigning!
 "I did promise you," she said; "I feel
 you have a right to blame me. It is a
 considerable loss to me resigning your situa-
 tion, but my husband has asked me to do
 so. I must obey my husband, must I
 not?"
 "Oh! yes, of course. But why should
 he object? He is a clergyman, is he not?
 Is he too proud?—I would tell no one. All
 in this house should consider you simply as
 a friend. Our writing would be just a secret
 between you and me. Your husband will
 give in when you tell him that."
 "He is not in the least proud, Miss
 Harman—not proud I mean in that false
 way."
 "Then I am not giving you money
 enough—of course thirty shillings seems too
 little; I will gladly raise it to two pounds
 a week, and if this book succeeds, you

shall have more for helping me with the
 next."
 Mrs. Home felt her heart beating. How
 much she needed, how keenly she longed
 for that easily earned money. "I must
 not think of it," she said, however, shaking
 her head. "I confess I want money, but I
 must earn it elsewhere. I cannot come
 here. My husband will only allow me to
 do so on a certain condition. I cannot
 even tell you the condition—certainly I
 cannot fulfil it, therefore I cannot come."
 "Oh! but that is exciting. Do tell it to
 me."
 "If I did, you would be the first to say I
 must never come to this house again."
 "I am quite sure you wrong me there. I
 may as well own that I have taken a fancy to
 you. I am a spoiled child, and I always
 have my own way. My present way is to
 have you here in this snug room for two or
 three hours daily—and I working in
 secret over something grand. I always get
 my way, so your conditions must melt into
 air. Now, what are they."
 "Dare I tell her?" thought Mrs. Home.
 Aloud she said, "The conditions are these;
 —I must tell you a story, a story about my-
 self—and—and others."
 "And I love stories, especially when they
 happen in real life."
 "Miss Harman don't tempt me. I want
 to tell you, but I had better not; you had
 better let me go away. You are very happy
 now, are you not?"
 "What a strange woman you are, Mrs.
 Home! Yes, I am happy."
 "You won't like my story. It is possible
 you may not be happy after you have heard
 it."
 "That is a very unlikely possibility. How
 can the tale of an absolute stranger affect my
 happiness?" These words were said eagerly
 —a little bit defiantly.
 But Mrs. Home's face had now become so
 grave, and there was such an eager, almost
 frightened look in her eyes, that her com-
 panion's too changed. After all what was
 this tale? A myth, doubtless; but she would
 hear it now.
 "I accept the risk of my happiness being
 imperilled," she said. "I choose to hear the
 tale—I am ready."
 "But I may not choose to tell," said the
 other Charlotte.
 "I would make you. You have begun
 —begin in such a way that you must finish."
 "Is that so?" replied Mrs. Home. The
 light was growing more and more eager in
 her eyes. She said to herself, "The die is
 cast." There rose up before her a vision of
 her children—of her husband's thin face.
 Her voice trembled.
 "Miss Harman—I will speak—you won't
 interrupt me?"
 "No, but lunch is on the table. You
 must eat something first."
 "I am afraid I cannot with that story in
 prospect; to eat would choke me!"
 "What a queer tale it must be!" said the
 other Charlotte. "Well, so be it." She
 seated herself in a chair at a little distance
 from Mrs. Home, fixed her gaze on the glow-
 ing fire, and said, "I am ready. I won't
 interrupt you."
 The poor Charlotte, too, looked at the
 fire. During the entire telling of the tale
 neither of these young women glanced at
 the other.
 "It is my own story," began Mrs. Home;
 then she paused, and continued, "My father
 died when I was two years old. During my
 father's lifetime I, who am now so poor,
 had all the comforts that you must have had,
 Miss Harman, in your childhood. He died,
 leaving my mother, who was both young and
 pretty, nothing. She was his second wife.
 For five years she had enjoyed all that his
 wealth could purchase for her. He died,
 leaving her absolutely penniless. My mother
 was, as I have said, a second wife. My
 father had two grown-up sons. These sons
 had quarrelled with him at the time of his
 marrying my young mother; they came to
 see him and were reconciled on his death-
 bed. He left to these sons every penny of
 his great wealth. The sons expressed sur-
 prise when the will was read. They even
 blamed my father for so completely forget-
 ting his wife and youngest child. They
 offered to make some atonement for him.
 During my mother's lifetime they settled
 on her three thousand pounds; I mean
 the interest, at five percent, on that sum.
 It was to return to them at her death, it was
 not to descend to me, and my mother may
 only enjoy it on one condition. The con-

dition was, that all communication must
 cease between my father's family and hers.
 On the day she renewed it the money would
 cease to be paid. My mother was young,
 a widow, and alone; she accepted the condi-
 tions, and the money was faithfully paid to
 her until the day of her death. I was too
 young to remember my father, and I only
 heard this story about him on my mother's
 death-bed; then for the first time I learned
 that we might have been rich, that we were
 in a measure meant to enjoy the good things
 which money can buy. My mother had
 educated me well, and you may be quite
 sure that, with an income of one hundred
 and fifty pounds a year this could only be
 done by practising the strictest economy. I
 was accustomed to doing without the pretty
 dresses and nice things which come as natu-
 rally to other girls as the air they breathe.
 In my girlhood, I did not miss these things;
 but at the time of my mother's death, at
 the time the story first reached my ears, I
 was married, and my old child was born.
 A poor man had made me a poor girl, his
 wife, and, Miss Harman, let me tell you,
 that wives and mothers do long for money.
 The longing with them is scarcely selfish, it
 is for the beings dearer than themselves.
 There is a pain beyond words in denying
 your little child what you know is for that
 child's good, but yet which you cannot give
 because of your empty purse; there is a pain
 in seeing your husband shivering in too thin
 a coat on bitter winter nights. You know
 nothing of such things—may you never know
 them; but they have gone quite through my
 heart, quite, quite through it. Well, that is
 my story; not much you will say, after all.
 I might have been rich, I am poor, that is
 my story."
 "It interests me," said Miss Harman,
 drawing a long breath. "It interests me
 greatly; but you will pardon my expressing
 my real feelings; I think your father was a
 cruel and unjust man."
 "I think my brothers, my half-brothers,
 were cruel and unjust. I don't believe that
 was my father's real will."
 "What! you believe there was foul play?
 This is interesting—if so, if you can prove it,
 you may be righted yet. Are your half-
 brothers living?"
 "Yes."
 "And you think you have proof that you
 and your mother were unjustly treated?"
 "I have no proof, no proof whatever,
 Miss Harman, I have only suspicions."
 "Oh! you will tell me what they are?"
 "Even they amount to very little, and yet
 I feel them to be certainties. On the night
 before my father died he told my mother
 that she and I would be comfortably off;
 he also said that he wished that I and his
 son's little daughter, that other Charlotte he
 called her, should grow up together as sis-
 ters. My father was a good man, his mind
 was not wandering at all, why should he
 on his death-bed have said this if he knew that
 he had made such an unjust will, if he knew
 that he had left my mother and her little
 child without a sixpence?"
 "Yes said Miss Harman slowly and
 thoughtfully, "it looks strange."
 After this for a few moments both these
 young women were silent. Mrs. Home's
 eyes again sought the fire, she had told her
 story, the excitement was over, and a dull
 despair came back over her face. Charlotte
 Harman, on the contrary, was deep in that
 fine speculation which seeks to succor the
 oppressed, her gray eyes glowed, and a faint
 color came into her cheeks. After a time
 she said—
 "I should like to help you to get your
 rights. You saw that gentleman who left
 the room just now, that younger gentleman,
 I am to be his wife before long—he is a
 lawyer, may I tell him your tale?"
 "No, no, not for worlds." Here Mrs.
 Home in her excitement rose to her feet.
 "I have told the story, forget it now, let it
 die."
 "What a very strange woman you are,
 Mrs. Home! I must say I cannot understand
 you."
 "You will never understand me. But it
 does not matter, we are not likely to meet
 again. I saw you for the first time yesterday,
 I love you, I thank you. You are a rich
 and prosperous young lady, you won't be too
 proud to accept my thanks and my love.
 Now good-bye."
 "No, you are not going in that fashion.
 I do not see why you should go at all; you
 have told me your story, it only proves that
 you want money very much, there is nothing