Signal.

"THE GREATEST POSSIBLE GOOD TO THE GREATEST POSSIBLE NUMBER."

TEN SHILLINGS IN ADVANCE. | TWELVE AND SIX PENCE AT THE END OF THE YEAR.

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Literature.

THE FRENCH FLOWER-GIRL.

From Dickens' Household Words.

I was lingering listlessly over a cup of coffee on the Boulevard des Italiens, in June last, with my head neither profound nor vacant, but filled with those light, irresponsible reflections of thought, which I rate simply as the delicious cool air, the blue sky, the white lights, and the guns, which universally pleasant under that universally pleasant designation as 'after dinner,' so peculiarly eligible in the city of Paris.

In this mood my eyes fell upon a pair of eyes fixed intently upon me. Whether the process was effected by the eyes, or by some pretty little finger, simply, I cannot say; but, at the same moment, a rose was insinuated into my button-hole, a gentle voice addressed me, and I beheld, in connection with the eyes, the fingers, and the rose, a girl. She carried on her arm a basket of flowers, and was, literally, nothing more nor less than one of the *Bouquetières* who fly along the Boulevards like birds, with the difference that the birds carry their favourite flowers to a more private market.

Following the example of some other damsels, who I found were sharing the profits of the theatres, they exhibited the most appropriate amount of madness on account; and I believe that at several of the theatres. Hermance might have commanded her own terms. But only of these miserable men succeeded in making a tangible proposal, and he was treated with most glorious contempt. There was indeed, something doubly dramatic in the *Bouquetière's* disdain of the drama. She who *lived* a romance could never descend to act one. She would rather be Rosalind than Rachel. She refused the part of Cerito, and chose to be an alma on her own account.

It may be supposed that where there was so much mystery, imagination would not be idle. To have believed all the conflicting stories about Hermance, would be to come to the conclusion that she was the stolen child of noble parents, brought up by an *ouvrier*; but that some how her father was a tailor of dissolute habits, who lived a contented life of continual drunkeness, on the profits of his daughter's industry; that her mother was a deceased duchess—but, on the other hand, was alive, and carried on the flourishing business of a *blanchisseuse*. As for the private life of the young lady herself, it was reflected in such a magic mirror of such contradictory impossibilities, in the delicate discussion held upon the subject that one had no choice but to disbelieve everything.

One day a new impulse were given to this gossip by the appearance of the *Bouquetière* in a sterling hat of some expensive straw, and of a make bordering on the ostentatious. It could not be doubted that the profits of her light labours were sufficient to enable her to multiply such finery to almost any extent, had she chosen; but in Paris the adoption of a bonnet or a hat, in contradistinction to the little cap or the *grizzette*, is considered an assumption of a superior grade, and unless warranted by the "a position" of the wearer, is resented as an impertinence. In Paris, indeed, there are only two classes of woman—those with bonnets, and those without; and these stand in the same relation to one another as the two great classes into which the world may be divided—the powers that be, and the powers that want to be. Under these circumstances, it may be supposed that the surmises were many and marvelous. The little *Bouquetière* was becoming proud—becoming a lady; but how? why? and, above all, where? Curiosity was never more rampant, and scandal never mote inventive.

For my part, I saw nothing in any of these appearances worthy, in themselves, of a second thought; nothing could have destroyed the strong interest which I had taken in the girl; and it would have required something more potent than a straw hat—however coquettish in crown, and audacious in brim—to have shaken my belief in her truth and goodness. Her presence, for the accustomed few minutes, in the afternoon or evening, became to me—I will not say a necessity, but certainly a habit; and a habit is sufficiently despotic when

A fair face and a tender voice have made me—I will not say "mad and blind," as the remainder of the line would insinuate but most deliciously in my senses, and most luxuriously wide awake!

But to come to the catastrophe—

"One morn we *missed* her in the accustomed spot"—

Not only, indeed, from 'accustomed' and probable spots, but from unaccustomed, improbable, and even impossible spots—all of which were duly searched—was she missed. In short, she was not to be found at all. All was amazement on the Boulevards. Hardened old *flaneurs* turned pale under their rouge, and some of the younger ones went about with dropping moustaches, which for want of the *cire*, had fallen into the 'yellow leaf.'

A few days sufficed, however, for the cure of these sentimentalists. A clever little monkey at the Hippodrome, and a gentleman who stood on his head while he ate his dinner, became the immediate objects of interest, and Hermance seemed to be forgotten. I was one of the few who retained any hope of finding her, and my wanderings for that purpose, without any guide, clue, information, or indication, seem to me now something absurd. In the course of my walks, I met an old man, who was pointed out to me as her father, whom I met frequently, alone. The expression of his face was quite sufficient to assure me that he was on the same mission—and with about as much chance of success as myself. Once I tried to speak to him, but he turned aside, and avoided me with a manner that there could be no mistaking. This surprised me, for I had no reason to suppose that he had ever seen my face before.

A paragraph in one of the papers at last threw some light on the matter. The *Bouquetiere* had never been so friendless or unprotected as people had imagined. In all her wanderings she was accompanied or rather followed by her father; whenever she stopped, then he stopped also, and never was he distant more than a dozen yards. I wonder that he was not recognized by hundreds, but I conclude he made some change in his attire or appearance, from time to time. One morning this strange pair were proceeding on their ramble, as usual, when, passing through a rather secluded street, the *Bouquetiere* made a sudden bound from the pavement, sprang into a post chaise, the door of which stood open, and was immediately whirled away, as fast as four horses could tear—leaving the old man alone with his despair, and the basket of flowers.

Three months have passed away since the disappearance of the *Bouquetiere*; but only a few days since I found myself one evening very dull at one of those "brilliant receptions" for which Paris is so famous. I was making for the door, with a view to an early departure, when my hostess detained me, for the purpose of presenting me to a lady who was monopolizing all the admiration of the evening—she was the newly married bride of a young German Baron of great wealth, and noted for a certain wild kind of genius, and utter scorn of conventionalities. The next instant I found myself introduced to a pair of eyes that could never be mistaken. I dropped into a vacant chair by their side, and entered into conversation. The Baronne observed that she had met me before, but could not remember where, and in the same breath asked me if I was a lover of flowers.

I muttered something about loving beauty in any shape, and admired a boquet which she held in her hand.

The Baronne selected a flower, and asked me if it was not a peculiarly fine specimen. I assented; and the flower, not being redemanded, I did not return it. The conversation changed to other subjects, and shortly after the Baronne took her leave with her husband. They left Paris next day for the Baron's family estate, and I have never seen them since.

I learned, subsequently, that some strange stories had obtained circulation respecting the previous life of the Baronne. Whatever they were, it is very certain that this or some other reason has made the profession of *Bouquetiere* most inconveniently popular in Paris. Young ladies of all ages that can, with any degree of courtesy, be included in that category, and of all degrees of beauty short of the hunch-back, may be seen in all directions intruding their flowers with fatal pertinency upon inoffensive loungers, and making war upon button holes that never did them any harm. The youngest of the young girls, I find, are being trained to the calling, who are all destined, I suppose, to marry distinguished foreigners from some distant and facetious country.

I should have mentioned before, that a friend, calling upon me the morning after my meeting with the Baronne, saw the flower which she had placed in my hand standing in a glass of water on the table.—An idea struck me: "Do you know anything of the language of flowers?" I asked.

"Something," was the reply.

'What, then, is the meaning of this?'

'SECRECY.'

THE GRAVE OF SHIEL.

Within six miles of Templemore, but nearer to the county of Kilkenny, is a small village called Templetuohy, which the casual visitor never enters, and which offers nothing to excite the interest of a stranger, either as regards its local situation or the attractions of the neighborhood. It is approached from the Kilkenny side, through a wild and extensive bog, where in winter a dull mist obscures the view, and makes it impossible to keep warm, even if wrapped up in a Russian dreadnought; and when at length some avenues of dark fir are approached, it is found that they still lead to desolate vistas of bog, and they only render the landscape even more desolate. However the road begins to assume more of a beaten appearance—the fog gets lighter—the isolation is not so extreme—and, turning an angle, a low demense wall to the left encircles a piece of rising ground, on which a comfortable but plain mansion-house stands. The lands are evidently farmed by an experienced agriculturist, and without being separated by any walls or ditches, the various species of modern scientific labour are carried on in the one property. A short drive brings the wayfarer to the village of Templetuohy, the appanage of "Long Orchard," and the dullness of the place is relieved by nothing either by the way of business or gossiping. The pigs that creep at rare intervals through the one street are more sedate and stolid than their kindred in livelier localities; the policeman at the barrack seems as if nothing but a decent murder could excite his professional feelings into activity; and the yawn on the face of the sleepy huxter, whose imagination must have have been originally very great to think he could drive a trade here, takes such an immense time in settling down, that one begins to fear for the safety of the victim to *ennui*. There is a parish church, a libel upon the art of Parladio, a mystery of ugliness, and without the charity of an ivy branch to cover its nakedness; and midway, in the line of dwellings, there is an open or lane on the left, which requires the open *sesame* of a local guide to bring a knowledge of the fact that this *cul de sac* is the site of a chapel. The building is small, the ground darkened by some trees and enclosed walls, and, when I entered, the first, and indeed the only principal object that struck the view was a spacious area, protected by an iron fence, and with a magnified headstone. There were two men down in a wide pit, and I feared to ask them what they were about, or for whom their offices were meant, remembering the courtesy of language of Shakspeare's clown, "Cudgel thy brains no more about it, for your dull ass will not mend his pace with beating." It was rather an anomaly that the greatest display of life should be in connection with the churchyard, and that the only subject of interest in the village should be the grave. And this is truly so, for in this quiet and secluded spot the remains of the dramatist, the orator, and the statesman, are destined to repose, and within a week from hence will have been transferred to Templetuohy all that is mortal of Richard Lalor Shiel. The grave-digger had his triumph when he, rudely moralising, said that his work made all classes equal, and yet there was a reverential tone in the way he alluded to the 'big house' and to 'the master' that was gone.—*Saunders.*

A LOAFER'S SOLILOQUY.—Oh dear! Oh, dear! What a world this is!—This world, as Shakspeare very beautifully remarks, "is all a cattle show, for man's dilution given-and-and woman's too." That's a fact. Shakspeare's right! This here is a very—a very checkered life.

This world is given to fault-finding, tremenjus.—Now here's my wife—kicked up a great row, just because I went to bed with my overcoat, boots and hat on, when she knew I wanted to get up very airly in the mornin,' and start off immejitly on 'portant business, She's very particular to inquire what business it is that calls me out so airly but I won't tell 'er. She's no right to interfere into my business.—I don't in'efere in hers. I don't never ask her where she buys groceries and provisions, and gets trusted for 'em. I don't care where she buys 'em—if she only gets 'em without throwing away the money for 'em. And then she finds fault wi' me for spendin' so much money for licker. But what am I goin' to dew?—Licker's cash. It can't be bort without the dimes.—She says it hurts me, and makes my hands peel—says that it would take a great deal of new milk to make a man's hand peel bad. What o' that? Hain't the men that sells licker got to live? How can they pay rent if nobody patronizes 'em? That's a question that goes to my heart like a' arrer. When I think of the high rents that tavern keepers have to pay, I al'ays go and take su'thing just to help 'em along.—I've thought a good deal about this lately,—they've riz on What's-his-name's rent across they way, and I'll just go over and give him a small lift. Oh dear! this is a checker'ed life.

VALUABLE.—A Yankee has just invented a method to catch rats. He says:—"Locate your bed in a room much infested by these animals, and on retiring put out the light. Then strew over your pillow some strong smelling cheese, three or four red herrings, some barley meal or new malt, and a sprinkling of dried codfish. Keep awake till you find the rats at work, *then make a grab.*"

RECOLLECTIONS OF A POLICE-OFFICER.

FLINT JACKSON.

Farnham hops are world-famous, or at least famous in that huge portion of the world where English ale is drunk and whereon, I have a thousand times heard and read, the sun never sets. The name therefore, of the pleasant Surry village, in and about which the events I am about to relate occurred, is, I may fairly pressume known to many of the readers. I was ordered to Farnham, to investigate a case of burglary, committed in the house of a gentlemen of the name of Hursley, during the temporary absence of the family, which had completely nonplussed the unpracticed Dogberrys of the place, albeit it was not a riddle at all difficult to read. The premises, it was quickly plain to me, had been broken not into, but out of; and a watch being set upon the motions of the very specious and clever person left in charge of the house and property, it was speedily discovered that the robbery had been effected by herself and a confederate of the name of Dawkins, her brother-in-law.—Some of the stolen goods were found secreted at his lodging; but the most valuable portion, consisting of plate, and a small quantity of jewellery, had disappeared; it had questionless been converted into money as considerable sums, in sovereigns, were found upon both Dawkins and the woman, Sarah Perdy. Now, as it had been clearly ascertained that neither of the prisoners had left Farnham since the burglary, it was manifest there was a receiver near at hand who had purchased the missing articles.—Dawkins and Perdy were however, dumb as stones upon the subject; and nothing occurred to point suspicion till early in the evening previous to the second examination of the prisoners before the magistrates, when Sarah Perdy asked for pen, ink, and paper for the purpose of writing to one Mr. Jackson in whose service she had formerly lived. I happened to be at the prison, and of course took the liberty of carefully unsealing her note and reading it. It revealed nothing; and save by its extremely cautious wording, and abrupt peremptory tone, coming from a servant to her former master, suggested nothing. I had carefully reckoned the number of sheets of paper sent into the cell, now on recounting them found that three were a missing. The turnkey returned immediately, and asked for the two other letters she had written.—The woman denied having written any other, and for proof pointed to the torn fragments of the missing sheets lying on the floor. These were gathered up, and brought to me, but I could make nothing out of them, every word having been carefully run through with the pen, and converted into an unintelligible blot. The request contained in the actually written letter was one simple enough in itself, merely, 'that Mr. Jackson would not on any account fail to provide her, in consideration of past services, with legal assistance on the morrow.' The first nine words were strongly underlined; and I made out after a good deal of trouble that the word 'pretence' had been partially effaced, and 'account' substituted for it.

'She need not have wasted three sheets of paper upon such a nonsensical request as that," observed the turnkey. 'Old Jackson wouldn't shell out sixpence to save her or anybody else from the gallows.'

'I am of a different opinion; but tell me, what sort of a person is this former master of her's?'

'All I know about him is that he's cross grained, old curmudgeon, living about a mile out of Farnham, who scrapes money together, by lending small sums upon notes-of-hand at short dates, and at a thundering interest. Flint Jackson folk about here call him.

'At all events, forward the letter at once, and to-morrow we shall see—what we shall see. Good-evening.'

It turned out as I anticipated. A few minutes after the prisoners were brought into the justice-room, a Guilford solicitor of much local celebrity arrived, and announced that he appeared for both the inculpated parties. He was allowed a private conference with them, at the close of which he stated that his clients would reserve their defence. They were at once committed for trial, and I overheard the solicitor assure the woman that the ablest counsel on the circuit would be retained in their behalf.

I had no longer a doubt that it was my duty to know something further of this suddenly generous Flint Jackson, though how to set about it was a matter of considerable difficulty. There was no legal pretence for a search-warrant, and I doubted the prudence of proceeding upon my own responsibility with so astute an old fox as Jackson was represented to be; for supposing him to be a confederate with the burglers, he had by this time in all probability sent the stolen property away—to London in all likelihood; and should I find nothing, the consequence of ransacking his house merely because he had provided a former servent with legal assistance would be serious. Under these circumstances I wrote to headquarters for instructions, and by return of post received orders to prosecute the injury thoroughly, but cautiously, and to consider time as nothing so long as there appeared a chance of fixing Jackson with the guilt of receiving the plunder. Another suspicious circumstance that I have omitted to notice in its place was that the Guilford solicitor tendered bail for the prisoners to any amount, and named Enoch Jackson as one of the securities. Bail was, however refused.

There was no need for over-hurrying the business, as the prisoners were committed to the Surrey Spring Assizes, and it was now the season of the hop-harvest—a delightful and hilarious period about Farnham when the weather is fine and the yield abundant. I, however, lost no time in making diligent and minute inquiry as to the character and habits of Jackson, and the result was a full conviction that nothing but the fear of being denounced as an accomplice could have induced such a miserly, iron hearted rogue to put himself to charges in defence of the imprisoned burglars.

One afternoon, whilst pondering the matter, and at the same time enjoying the prettiest and cheerfulest of rural sights, that of hop-picking, the apothecary at whose house I was lodging—we will call him Mr. Morgan; he *was* a Welshman—tapped me suddenly on the shoulder, and looking sharply round, I perceived he had something he deemed of importance to communicate.

'What is it?' I said quickly.

'The oddest thing in the world. There's Flint Jackson, his deaf old woman, and the young people lodging with him, all drinking and bozzing away at yon ale house.'

'Show them to me, if you please.'

A few minutes brought us to the place of boisterous entertainment, the lower room of which was suffocatingly full of tipplers & tobacco-smokers. We nevertheless contrived to edge ourselves in; and my companion stealthily pointed out the group, who were seated together near the farther window, and then let me to myself.

The appearance of Jackson entirely answered to the popular prefix of Flint attached to his name. He was a wiry, gnarled-heavy-browed, iron jawed fellow of about sixty, with deep-set eyes aglow with sinister and greedy instincts. His wife, older than he, and so deaf apparently as the door of a dungeon, wore a simpering, imbecile look of wonderment, it seemed to me, at the presence of such unusual and abundant cheer. The young people, who lodged with Jackson, were really a very frank, honest, good-looking couple, though not then appearing to advantage—the countenance of Henry Rogers being flushed and inflamed with drink, and that of his wife's clouded with frowns, at the situation in which she found herself, and the riotous conduct of her husband. Their brief history was this:—they had both been servants in a family living not far distant from Farnham—Sir Thomas Lethbridge's, I understood—when about three or four months previous to the present time Flint Jackson, who had once been in an attorney's office, discovered that Henry Rogers, in consequence of the death of a distant relative in London, was entitled to property worth something like £1,500.—There were, however, some law-difficulties in the way, which Jackson, offered, if the business was placed in his hands, to overcome for a consideration, and in the meantime to supply board and lodging and such necessary sums of money as Henry Rogers might require. With this brilliant prospect in view service became at once utterly distasteful. The fortunate legatee had for some time courted Mary Elkins, one of the ladies' maids, a pretty, bright-eyed brunette; and they were both united in the bonds of holy matrimony on the very day the 'warnings' they had given expired. Since then they had lived at Jackson's house in daily expectation of their 'fortune,' with which they proposed to start in the public line.

Finding myself unrecognised, I called boldly for a pot and a pipe, and after some manœuvering contrived to seat myself within ear-shot of Jackson and his party.—They presented a strange study. Henry Rogers was boisterously excited, and not only drinking freely himself, but treating a dozen of fellows round him, the cost of which he from time to time called upon 'Old Flint,' as he courteously styled his ancient friend, to discharge.

'Come, fork out, Old Flint!' he cried again and again. 'It 'll be all right you know, in a day or two, and a few halfpence over. Shell out, old fellow! What signifies, so you're happy?'

Jackson complied with an affectation of acquiescent gaity ludicrous to behold. It was evident that each successive pull at his purse was like wrenching a tooth out of his head, and yet while the dis-

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"From nearly ... the brim of what the place where once stood was once a beaver, 'that look of your beautiful eye thanked me for both.'

...ecessful, and in a few years after an offer of marriage was made to her by a respectable ...ing, in the bark Neptune—Stan...