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HOLMBY HOUSE.

"It was a sight to do your eyes good, my dear," said Hugh, stroking the horse's nose, "to see him break away from me and gallop all round the miller's close, as if he'd never be caught or tamed again, and then trotting up to Major Humphrey as if he'd been a dog, and neighing for joy, and rubbing his head against his master, and the Major looked a'most as pleased as the horse. They've more sense and more affection too than many human beings," added Hugh, impressively; "and now you needn't to be told, my dear, why I gave him this bit of a turn to keep his pipes clear in case of accidents. He might be wanted to-morrow, or he might not; but if so be that he were, it shall never be said that he came out of this stable and wasn't fit to save a man's life. They're like the female sex, my dear, in many particulars, but in none so much as this. It's ruling them well and working of them hard that makes them better."

With this philosophical axiom, the result, doubtless, of much attentive observation, Dymocke clothed up the sorrel, and led him into the stable, whilst Faith, with an expression of deeper anxiety than often troubled her pretty face, tripped away to her mistress's room, and to the best of our belief never visited the laundry after all.

Grace had to dress for supper. In those simple days people supped by daylight in the summer, and revised their toilets carefully for the meal, much as they dress for dinner now; and in those days, as in the present, a lady's "back hair" was a source of much manual labor to her maid, and much mental anxiety to herself.

Though Faith worked away at the ebon masses with an unmerciful number of jerns and twiches and an unusually hard brush, she did not succeed in exciting the attention of the sufferer, who sat patient and motionless in her hands—not even looking at herself in the glass.

Faith heaved one or two surprisingly deep sighs, and even ventured upon a catching of the breath, such as with ladies of her profession is the usual precursor to a flood of tears, but without the slightest effect. Grace never lifted her eyes from the point of her foot, which peeped out beneath her robe.

At length the waiting-maid pressed her hand against her side, with an audible expression of pain.

"What's the matter, Faith?" said her mistress, turning round, with a wondering abstracted gaze, which brightened into one of curiosity, as she marked the excited expression of her attendant's countenance.

"Nothing, ma'am," replied Faith, with another catching of the breath, real enough this time; "leastaways nothing's the matter at present, though what's to come of it, goodness only knows. Oh, Mistress Grace! Mistress Grace!" she added, letting all the "back hair" down *en masse*, and clasping her two hands upon her bosom, "who d'ye think's come back again? who d'ye think's within a mile of this house at this blessed minute? who d'ye think's been disguised and fishing by Brampton mill this very day? and the sorrel knew him though nobody else didn't, and all the troubles that have come over us since then." And Faith, in her way, related to her mistress all the news that Dymocke had told her in the stable yard.

After Faith had retired Grace sat and dreamed of the days gone by when Bosville was lying ill in her father's house, and how she wished, till her heart ached, that she could live those few days over again! As month after month passed on without further tidings, she seemed to feel her loss more and more. Self-reproach, curiosity, and pique combined to make her think and ponder on the absent one, whose merits, both of mind and body, seemed to come out so vividly now that it was possible they belonged to her no longer. Mary was no dull observer of human nature, and she knew well that if she really cared to retain his affections, she had been playing a somewhat dangerous game. Had he been employed in the alarms and excitement of warfare, subjected day by day to the ennobling influence of danger, his higher and better feelings kept awake by the inspiring stimulus of military glory, and the deepest, truest affections of his heart, enhanced as they always are by the daily habit of looking death in the face, she felt she would have reigned in that heart more imperiously than ever; but the case was quite different now. He was living in the atmosphere of a pleasure-loving and profligate court. He was subjected to just so much excitement and dissipation as would serve to distract his thoughts, just so much interesting employment as would forbid his mind from dwelling continuously upon any single topic. From his position he was sure to be courted by the great, and with his person to be welcomed by the fair. To do him justice, he had ever shown himself sufficiently callous to the latter temptation, and yet——Mary remembered the wit and the attractions of those French ladies amongst whom she had spent her youth; she even caught herself recalling his admiration of one or two of her own accomplishments derived from that source. He might find others fairer than she was now—kinder than she had ever been; some gentle heart would be sure to love him dearly, and the very intensity of its affection would win his in turn; and then indeed he would be lost to her altogether; she would rather he was lying dead and buried yonder on Naseby field! And yet, no! no!—anything were better than that. Mary was startled at the bitterness and the strength of her own passions. It was frightful! it was humiliating! it was unwomanly! to feel like this. Was she weaker as she grew older, that she could thus confess to herself so deep an interest in one who might perhaps already have forgotten her? She had not loved Falkland so—that was a pure, lofty, and ennobling sentiment—there was much more of the earthly element in this strange, wild fascination. Perhaps it was none the less dear, none the less dangerous on that account.

So she resolved that whatever cause had brought him back at last (for too surely she felt the disguised fisherman was no other than Bosville) *she* at least would appear to be ignorant and careless of his movements. Till his long silence was explained, of course he could be nothing to her; and even then, if people could forget for two whole years, *other* people could forget altogether. Yes, it would be far better so. He must be changed indeed not to have spoken to her that very day by the water side. Then she remembered what Grace had said about the knot of pink ribbon: and womanlike, after judging him so harshly, her heart smote her for her unkindness, and she wept.

The sun was sinking below the horizon when Grace stepped out upon the terrace at Boughton, and wrapping a scarf around her shoulders, paced slowly away for a stroll in the cool atmosphere and refreshing breezes of the park. It was delicious to get into the pure evening air after the hot drive and the crowded court, and Sir Giles's interminable supper; to be alone once more under God's heaven, and able to think undisturbed. The deer were already couching for the night amongst the fern, the rooks had gone home hours ago, but a solitary and belated heron, high up in the calm sky, was winging his soft, silent way towards the flush of sunset which crimsoned all the west. It was the hour of peace and repose, when nature subsides to a dreamy stillness ere she sinks to her majestic sleep, when the ox lies down in his pasture, and the wild bird is hushed on the bough, when all it at rest on earth save only the restless human heart, which will never know peace but in the grave.

Grace threaded the stems of the tall trees, her foot falling lightly upon the mossy sward, her white figure glancing ghostlike in and out the dusky avenues, her fair brow, from which she put back the masses of hair with both hands, cooling in the evening breeze.

What did she here? She scarce knew herself why she had sought this woodland solitude—why she had been so restless, so impatient, so dissatisfied with everything and everybody, so longing to be alone. Deeply she pondered on Faith's narrative, though indeed she had guessed the truth long before her hand-maiden's confidences. Much she wondered what he was doing here—whence had he come?—when was he going away?—what was this political mystery in which foolish Faith believed so implicitly? Why was he in Northamptonshire at all? Was there a chance of his wandering here to-night to visit his old haunts?—and if he should, what was that to her? The girl's cheek flushed, though she was alone, with mingled pain and pride as she reflected that she had given her heart unasked. No! not quite given it, but suffered it to wander sadly out of her own control; and that though she was better now, there had been a time when she cared for him agreat deal more than was good for her. Well, it was over, and yet she should like to see him once again she confessed, if it were only to wish him good-bye. Were there fairies still on earth? Could it be possible her wish was to be granted? There he was!

Grace's heart beat violently, and her breath came and went very quick as the dark figure of a man emerged from the shade of an old oak under which he had been standing, not ten paces from her. She almost repented of her wish, that seemed to have been accorded so readily. Poor Grace! there was no occasion for penitence; ere he had made three strides towards her she had recognized him; and it was a voice in which disappointment struggled with unfeigned surprise, that she exclaimed, "Captain Effingham!"

He doffed his hat, and begged her, with the old manly courtesy she remembered so well, not to be alarmed. "His duty," he said, "had brought him into the neighborhood, and he could not resist the temptation of visiting the haunts of those who had once been so kind to him before these unhappy troubles, had turned his best friends to strangers, if not to enemies." His voice shook as he spoke, and Grace could not forbear extending her hand to him; as she touched his it was like ice, and he trembled, that iron soldier, as if he was cold.

Darkness was coming on apace, yet even in the fading light Grace could not but see how hardly Time had dealt with her old admirer—an admirer of whom, although undeclared, her womanly instinct had been long conscious as a very devoted and a very worthy one.

George's whole countenance had deepened into the marked lines and grave expression of middle age. The hair and beard, once so raven black, were now grizzled; and although the tall strong form was square and erect as ever, its gestures had lost the buoyant elasticity of youth, and had acquired the slow and somewhat listless air of those who have outlived their prime.

He seemed to have got something to communicate, yet he walked by her side without uttering another syllable. Grace looked down at the ground, and could not mark the side-long gaze of deep, melancholy tenderness with which he regarded her beautiful profile and shapely form. The silence became very embarrassing; after the second turn she began to get quite frightened.

He spoke at last as it seemed with a mighty effort, and in a low, choking voice.

"You are surprised to see me Mistress Grace, and with reason; perhaps I am guilty of presumption in even entering your kinsman's domain. Well it is for the last time. Forgive me if I have startled you, or intruded on your solitude. May I speak to you for five minutes? I will not detain you long. Believe me I never expected to see you hear to-night."

"Then why on earth did you come!" was Grace's very natural reflection, but she only bowed and faltered out a few words expressive of her willingness to hear all he had to say.

"I only arrived to-day at Northampton," he proceeded, calming as he went on; "I have been appointed to the command of a division of the army, to watch this district, and preserve the peace of his Majesty and his Parliament. We have reason to believe that a conspiracy has been organized to plunge this country once more into civil war. Suspicious persons are about."

Grace glanced sharply at him.

"My troopers are even now scouring the country to arrest a messenger from France, of whom I have received information. It is sad work; my duty will compel me to hang him to the nearest tree."

It was fortunate that the failing light prevented his seeing how pale she had turned.

"Believe me, Mistress Grace, it is hopeless for the 'Malignants' to stir up civil war again. His Majesty's Parliament will act for the safety of his Majesty's person, and it will be my duty, with the large force I command, to escort him in security to the neighborhood of London."

Grace listened attentively—the little Royalist was half frightened, and half indignant at the calm tone of conscious power in which the successful soldier of the Parliament announced his intentions.

Effingham paused, as if to gather courage, then proceeded, speaking very rapidly, and looking studiously away from the person he addressed.

"You have never known, Mistress Grace—God forbid you ever should know—such suffering and such anxiety as I have experienced now for many long months. I did not come here to-night to tell you this. I did not come here expecting to see you at all. It was weak, I grant you, and unmanly; but I could not resist the temptation of wandering near your home once again, of watching the house in which you were, and perhaps looking on the light that shone from your window. I am no love-sick swain, Mistress Grace," he added smiling bitterly, "with my rough soldier's manners and my gray hair; but I plead guilty to this one infatuation, and you may despise me for it if you will. Well! as I have met you to-night I will tell you all—listen. Ever since I have known you, I have loved you—God help me!—better than my own soul. You will never know, Grace, you shall never know, how truly, how dearly, how worse than madly—I feel it is hopeless—I feel it is no use—that I can never be more to you than the successful rebel, the enemy that is only not hated because you are too gentle and kind to hate any human being. Many a weary day have I longed to tell you this, and so bid you farewell, and see you never more. It is over now, and I am happier for the confession. God bless you, Grace! If you could have cared for me I should have been worthy of you—it cannot be—I shall never forget you—farewell!"

He raised her hand, pressed it once to his lips, and ere she had recovered from her astonishment he was gone.

Grace looked wildly around her, as one who wakes from a dream. It seemed like a dream indeed, but she still heard the tramp of his step as he walked away in the calm night, and listening for a few minutes after he had gone distinguished the clatter of a horse's hoofs on the hard road leading to Northampton. Grace was utterly bewildered and confused. There was something not unpleasant in the sensation too. Long ago, though she was a good deal afraid of it, she had hugely admired that stern enthusiastic nature, but the image of another had prevented the impression ripening into any feeling deeper than interest and esteem. And now to discover for a certainty that she had subjugated that strong, brave heart, that the rebel warrior had been worshipping her in secret all those long months, in the midst of his dangers and his victories, that her influence had softened his rigor to many a Royalist, and that he had saved her own dear old father at Naseby for her sake,—all this was anything but disagreeable to that innate love of dominion which exists in the gentlest of her sex, and such a conquest as that of the famous Parliamentary general (for to that rank George had speedily risen) was one that any woman might be proud of, and was indeed a soothing salve to her heart, wounded and mortified by the neglect of another. But then the danger to that other smote her with a chill and sickening apprehension. It could be none but Bosville that had been seen and suspected by the keen-eyed Parliamentarians. He might be a prisoner even now, and she shuddered as she reflected on that ghastly observation of Effingham's about the nearest tree. Word by word she recalled his conversation, and the design upon the King's liberty, which she had somewhat overlooked in the contemplation of more personal topics, assumed a frightful importance as she remembered that she was the depositary of this important intelligence. What ought she to do? Though Effingham had trusted her, he had extorted no promise of secresy, and as she had always been taught besides that her first duty was towards her Sovereign, there was no time for consideration. What was to be done? The King was in danger—Bosville was in danger—and she alone had the knowledge, though without the power of prevention. What was she to do? What could she do? She was completely at her wit's end!

In this predicament Grace's proceedings were characteristic, if not conclusive; she first of all began to cry, and then resolved upon consulting Mary, and making a "clean breast of it," which she felt would be an inexpressible relief. With this object, she returned at once to the house, and hurried without delay to her friend's chamber.

That lady's indisposition had apparently not been severe enough to cause her to go to bed. On the contrary, she was sitting up, still completely dressed, and with a wakeful, not to say harassed, expression on her countenance, which precluded all idea of sleep for many hours to come. She welcomed Grace with some little astonishment, "her headache was better, and it was kind of dear Gracey to come and inquire after her—she was just going to bed—she had been sitting up writing," she said.

There was a sheet of paper on the table, only it was blank.

Grace flung herself into her arms, and had "the cry" fairly out, which had been checked whilst she ran into the house.

"And the thing must be told," sobbed the agitated girl, when she had detailed her unexpected meeting with Effingham, and its startling results; "and father mustn't know it, or it will all be worse than ever; he'll be arming the servants and the few tenants that have got a horse left, and all the horrors will have to begin again, and he'll be killed some day, Mary, I know he will. What shall I do? What shall I do?"

Mary's courage always rose in a difficulty; her brow cleared now, and her head went up.

"He must not be told a word, and the King must! Leave that to me, Gracey."

Grace looked unspeakably comforted for a moment, but the tide of her troubles surged in again irresistibly, as she thought of the suspected fisherman and the noose at the nearest tree.

"But Bosville, Mary—Bosville—think of him, close by here, and those savages hunting for him and thirsting for his blood. Oh! Mary, I *must* save him, and I *will*. What can be done? advise me, Mary—advise me. If a hair of his head is hurt, I shall never sleep in peace again."

"I wish we had stopped and spoken to him to-day," observed Mary, abstractedly; "and yet it might only have compromised him, and done no good."

Grace looked up sharply through her tears. "Did you know it was Bosville, Mary, in that disguise? So did I!"

Notwithstanding Mistress Cave's self-command, a shadow as of great pain passed over her countenance. It faded, nevertheless, as quickly as it came. She took Grace's hand in her own, and looked quietly and sadly in the girl's weeping face.

"Do you love him, Gracey?" she said, very gently, and with a sickly sort of smile.

Grace's only answer was to hide her face between her hands and sob as if her heart would break.

Till she had sobbed herself to sleep in her chamber, her friend never left her. It was midnight ere she returned to her own room, and dotted the blank sheet of paper with a few short words in cipher. When this was done, Mary leaned her head upon her hand, and pondered long and earnestly.

We have all read of the pearl of great price in the holy parable, and how when the seeker had found it, he went and sold all that he had, and bought it and made it his own. Lightly he thought of friends, and fame, and fortune, compared to the treasure of his heart. We have often imagined the weary look of utter desolation which would have overspread his features, could he have seen that pearl shivered into fragments, the one essential object of his life existent no more—the treasure destroyed, and with it the heart also. Such a look was on Mary's pale face as she sat by her bedside watching for the first flush of the summer dawn.

CHAPTER XXIX.

"THE FALCON GENTLE."

The sun shone bright on the level terraces of Holmby House — huge stone vases grotesquely curved and loaded with garden-flowers studded the shaven lawns and green slopes that adorned the southern front of the palace—here and there a close-clipped yew or stunted juniper threw its black shadow across the sward, and broke in some measure the uniformity of those long formal alleys in which our forefathers took such pleasure. Half way down the hill, through the interstices of their quivering screen of leaves, the fish-ponds gleamed like burnished gold in the morning light; and far below the sunny vale, broken by clumps of forest timber, and dotted with sheep and oxen, stretched away till it lost itself in the dense woodlands of Althorpe park.

Two figures paced the long terrace that immediately fronted the mansion. To and fro they walked with rapid strides, nor paused to contemplate the beauties of the distant landscape, nor the stately magnificence of the royal palace—shafted, mullioned, and pinnacled like a stronghold of romance. It was Charles and his attendant, the Earl of Pembroke, taking their morning exercise, which the methodical King considered indispensable to his health, and which was sufficiently harassing to the old and enfeebled frame of the noble commissioner. Charles, like his son, was a rapid and vigorous pedestrian. His bodily powers were wonderfully unsusceptible to fatigue; and perhaps the concentrated irritation awakened by a life of continuous surveillance and restraint may have found vent in thus fiercely pacing like some wild animal the area of his cage. Poor old Pembroke, on whom the duty of a state-gaoler to his Sovereign had been thrust, sorely against his will, and for whom "a good white pillow for that good white head" had been more appropriate than either steel headpiece or gilded coronet, had no such incentive to exertion, and halted breathlessly after the King, with a ludicrous mixture of deference and dismay, looking wistfully at the stone dial which stood midway in their course every time they passed it, and ardently longing for a time of his dismissal from this the most fatiguing of all his unwelcome duties.

The King, whose lungs, like his limbs, were little affected by accustomed exercise, strode manfully on, talking, as was his wont, upon grave and weighty subjects, and anon waiting with mental patience for the answers of the lagging courtier. His Majesty was this morning in a more than usually moralizing mood.

"Look yonder, my Lord Earl," said he, pointing to the beauteous scene around him—the smiling valley, the trim pleasure-grounds, the sparkling waters, with the lazy pike splasing at intervals to the surface, and the blossoms showering pink and white in the soft summer breeze. "Look yonder, and see how the sun penetrates every nook and cranny of the copsewood, even as it floods the open meadows in its golden glory. That sunlight is everywhere, my lord, in the lowest depths of the castle vaults, as on yon bright pinnacle, around which the noisy daws are wheeling and chattering even now. 'Tis that sunlight which offers day, dim though it be, to the captive in the dungeon, even as it bathes in its lustre the eagle on the cliff. Is there no moral in this, my lord? Is there no connexion, think you, between the rays which give warmth to the body, and the inner life which gives light to the soul?"

Lord Pembroke was out of breath, and a little deaf into the bargain. "Very true, your Majesty," he assented, having caught just enough of the King's discourse to be aware that it related in some measure to the weather. "Very true, as your Majesty says, we shall have rain anon!" And the old Earl looked up at the skies, over which a light cloud or two were passing, with a sidelong glance, like some weatherwise old raven, devoutly hoping that a shower might put an end at once to the promenade and the conversation.

"Ay! it is even so," proceeded the King, apparently answering his own thoughts, rather than the inconsequent remark of his attendant. "There is indeed a cloud athwart the sun, and yet he is shining as brightly behind it upon the rest of the universe, as though there were no vail interposed between our petty selves and his majestic light. And shall we murmur because the dark hour cometh and we must grope in our blindness awhile, and mayhap wander from the path, and stumble and bruise our feet till the day breaks in its glory once more? Oh man! man! though thou art shaking and shivering in the storm, the sun shines still the same in its warmth and dazzling light; though thou art cowering in adversity, God is everywhere alike in wisdom, power and goodness."

As the King spoke, he turned and paced the length of the terrace once more. The clouds passed on, and the day was bright as ever. It seemed a good omen; and as the unhappy are prone to be superstitious, it was accepted as such by the meditative monarch. In silence he walked on, deeply engrossed with many a sad and solemn subject. His absent Queen, from whom he had been long expecting tidings, whom he still loved with the undemonstrative warmth of his deep and tender nature—his ruined party and proscribed adherents—his lost Crown, for he could scarce now consider himself a Sovereign—his imperilled life, for already had he suspected the intentions of the Parliament, and resolved to oppose them if necessary, even to the death—lastly, his trust in God, which, weak, imprudent, injudicious as he may have been, never deserted Charles Stuart even in the last extremity—which never yet failed any man who relied upon it in his need, from the King on the throne to the convict in the dungeon.

But the monarch's walk was doomed to be interrupted, and Lord Pembroke's penance brought to an earlier close than usual, by a circumstance the origin of which we must take leave to retrograde a few hours to explain, affecting as it does the proceedings of a fair lady, who, in all matters of difficulty or danger, was accustomed to depend on no energies and consult no will but her own.

We left Mary Cave in her chamber at Boughton, watching wearily for the dawn, which came at length as it comes alike to the bride, blushing welcome to her wedding morn, and to the pale criminal, shrinking from the sunlight that he will never see more—which will come alike over and over again to our children and to our children's children, when we are dead and forgotten, but which shall at last be extinguished too, or rather swallowed up in the Eternal Day, when Darkness, Sin and Sorrow shall be destroyed for evermore.

Pale and resolute, Mary made a careful toilet with the first streaks of day. Elaborately she arranged every fold of her riding-gear, and with far more pains than common pinned up and secured the long tresses of her rich brown hair. Usually they were accustomed to escape from their fastenings, and wave and float about her when disordered by a gallop in provokingly attractive profusion; but on this occasion they were so disposed that nothing but intentional violence was likely to disturb their shining masses. Stealthily she left her apartment, and without rousing the household sought the servants' offices—no difficult task, as bolts and bars in those simple times were usually left unfastened, except in the actual presence of some recognized danger; and although such an old-fashioned manor-house as that of Boughton might be fortified securely against an armed force, it was by no means of impregnable to a single thief who should simply take the precaution of taking off his shoes. Not a single domestic did Mary meet, as she took her well known way towards the stables; and even Bayard's loud neigh of recognition, echoed as it was by the delighted sorrel, failed to disturb the slumbers of Dymocke and his satellites. With her own fair hands Mary saddled and bridled her favorite, hurting her delicate fingers against the straps and buckles of his appointments. With her own fair hands she jessed and hooded "Dewdrop," and took her from her perch in the falconer's mews, without leave asked of that still unconscious functionary; and thus dressed and mounted, with foot in stirrup and hawk on hand, Mary emerged through Boughton park like some female knight-errant, and took her well-known way to Bramptonford.

We are all more or less self-deceivers, and this lady was no exception to the rule of humanity. Secrecy was no doubt judicious on such an expedition as that which she had now resolved to take in hand; yet it is probable that Dymocke at least might have been trusted as far as to saddle her horse and hood her falcon; but something in Mary's heart bid her feel shame that any one, even a servant, should know whither she was bound; although other and unacknowledged motives besides the obvious duty of warning Charles of his danger prompted her to take so decided a step, she easily persuaded herself that zeal for the King's safety, and regard for his person, made it imperative on her to keep religiously secret this interview she proposed extorting from his Majesty; and that in so delicate and dangerous a business she ought to confide in no one but herself.

So she rode gently on towards Bramptonford, Bayard stepping lightly and proudly over the spangled sward, and "Dewdrop" shaking her bells merrily under the inspiriting influence of the morning air. A few short years ago she would have urged her horse into a gallop in the sheer exuberance of her spirits; nay, till within the last twenty-four hours, she would have paced along at least with head erect, and eye kindling to the beauties of the scene; but a change had come over her bearing, and her brow wore a look of depression and sadness, her figure stooped listlessly on her saddle; her whole exterior denoted that weary state of dejection which overcomes the player in the great game of life, who has thrown the last stake—and lost!

As she neared the river, she looked anxiously and furtively around, peering behind every tree and hawthorn that studded the level surface of the meadow. In vain; no fisherman disturbed the quiet waters of the Nene—no solitary figure trampled the long grass, wet with the dew of morning. There was no chance of a recognition—an explanation. Perhaps he avoided it on purpose—perhaps he felt aggrieved and wounded at her long silence—perhaps he had forgotten her altogether. Two years was a long time. Men were proverbially inconstant. Besides, had she not resolved in her own heart that this folly should be terminated at once and for ever? Yes, it was providential he was not there. It was far better—their meeting would have been painful and awkward for both. She could not be sufficiently thankful that she had been spared the trial. All the time she would have given her right arm to see him just once again.

With a deep sigh she roused Bayard into a gallop; and the good steed, nothing loth, stretched away up the hill with the long, regular stride that is indeed the true "poetry of motion." A form crouching low behind a clump of alders watched her till she was out of sight, and a shabbily-dressed fisherman, with sad brow and heavy heart, then resumed his occupation of angling in the Nene with the same studious pertinacity that he had displayed in that pursuit for the last two days.

It would have required indeed all the instincts of a loving heart, such as the sorrel, in common with his generous equine brethren, undoubtedly possessed, to recognize in the wan, travel-stained angler the comely exterior of Humphrey Bosville. The drooping mustache had been closely shaved, the long lovelocks shorn off by the temples to admit the short flaxen wig which replaced the young Cavalier's dark, silky hair. His worn-out beaver too, slouched down over his eyes, and a rusty jerkin, with his high collar devoid of linen, completed the metamorphosis, while the small feet were encased in huge, shapeless wading boots, and the hands, usually so white and well kept, were now embrowned and stained by the influence of exposure and hard usage. His disguise, he flattered himself, was perfect, and he was not a little proud of the skill by which he had escaped suspicion in the port at which he landed, and deceived even the wary soldiers of the Parliament as to his real character, at several military posts which they occupied, and where he had been examined. Humphrey Bosville, as we know, had passed his parole never again to bear arms against the Parliament; but his word of honor, he conceived, did not prohibit him from being the prime agent in every hazardous scheme organised by the Royal Party at that intriguing time. True to his faith, he missed no opportunity of risking his life in the heart of an enemy's country to deliver an important letter from the Queen to her wretched and imprisoned husband.

For this cause he prowled stealthily about the river Nene, waiting for the chance of Charles's crossing the bridge in some of his riding expeditions, and the sport of fishing in which he seemed to be engaged enabled him to remain in the same spot for several hours, unsuspected of aught save a characteristic devotion to that most patience-wearing of amusements.

Though he saw his ladye-love ride by alone in the early morning, a feeling of duty, still paramount in his soldier's nature, prevented his discovering himself even to her. So he thought and persuaded himself there was no leaven of pique, no sense of irritation at long and merited neglect, embittering the kindly impulses of his honest heart. He watched her receding form with aching eyes. "Ay," thought poor Humphrey, all his long-cherished love welling up in that deep tide of "bitter waters" which is so near akin to hate, "ride on as you used to do in your beauty and your heartlessness, as you would do without drawing rein or turning aside, though my body were beneath your horse's feet. What care you that you have taken from me all that makes life hopeful and happy, and left me instead darkness where there should be light, and listless despair where there should be courage, and energy, and trust? I gave you all, proud, heartless Mary, little enough it may be, and valueless to you, but still my all, and what have I reaped in exchange? A fevered, worn-out frame, that can only rest when prostrated by fatigue, a tortured spirit that never knows a respite save in the pressure of immediate and imminent danger. Well, it will soon be over now. This last stroke will probably finish my career, and there will be repose at any rate in the grave. I will be true to the last. Loyalty before all. You shall hear of him when it is too late, but of his own free will, proud, heartless woman, he will never look upon your face again!"

Our friend was very much hurt, and quite capable of acting as he imagined. These lovers' quarrels, you see, though the wise rate them at their proper value, are sufficiently painful to the poor fools immediately concerned, and Major Bosville resumed his sport, not the least in the frame of mind recommended by old Izaak Walton to the disciple who goes a-fishing.

Meanwhile Mary Cave stretched on at Bayard's long easy gallop till she came in view of the spires and chimneys of Holmby House towering into the summer sky, when, with a gleam of satisfaction such as she had not yet displaced kindling on her beautiful face, she drew rein, and prepared for certain active operations, which she had been meditating as she came along.

Taking a circuit of the Palace, and entering the park at its westernmost gate, she loosed Dewdrop's jesses, and without unhooding her, flung the falcon aloft into the air. A soft west wind was blowing at the time, and the bird, according to the nature of its kind, finding itself free from restraint, but at the same time deprived of sight, opened its broad wings to the breeze and soared away toward the pleasure-grounds of the Palace, in which Charles and the Earl of Pembroke were taking their accustomed exercise.

Mary was no bad judge of falconry, and the very catastrophe she anticipated happened exactly as she intended. The hawk, sailing gallantly down the wind, struck heavily against the branches of a tall elm that intervened, and fell lifeless on the sward almost at the King's feet. Mary at the same time urging Bayard to his speed, came scouring rapidly down the park as though in search of her lost favorite, and apparently unconscious of the presence of royalty or the proximity of a palace, put her horse's head straight for the sunken fence which divided the lawns from the park. Bayard pointed his small ears and cleared it at a bound, his mistress reining short after performing this feat, and dismounting to bend over the body of her dead falcon with every appearance of acute and pre-occupied distress.

The King and Lord Pembroke looked at each other in mute astonishment. Such an apparition was indeed an unusual variety in those tame morning walks, and the drooping figure of the lady, the dead bird, and the roused, excited horse, would have made a fit group for the sculptor or the painter.

"Gallantly ridden, fair dame!" said the King, at length breaking the silence, and discovering himself to the confused equestrian. "Although this is a somewhat sudden and unceremonious intrusion on our privacy, we are constrained to forgive it, in consideration of the boldness of the feat, and the heavy nature of your loss. Your falcon, I fear, is quite dead. Ha!" added the monarch, with a start of recognition; "by my faith it is Mistress Mary Cave! You are not here for nothing," he proceeded, becoming visibly pale, and speaking in an agitated tone; "are there tidings of the Queen?"

Mary was no contemptible actress; acting is, indeed, an accomplishment that seems to come naturally to most women. She now counterfeited such violent confusion and alarm at the breach of etiquette into which her thoughtlessness had hurried her, that the old Earl of Pembroke began to make excuses for her impetuosity, and whilst Mary, affecting extreme faintness, only murmured "water, water," the old courtier kept urging upon the King that "the lady was probably ignorant of court forms—that she did not know she was so near the palace—that her horse was running away with her," and such other incongruous excuses as his breathless state admitted of his enumerating.

The King lost patience at last.

"Don't stand prating there, man," said he pointing to Mary, who seemed indeed to be at the last gasp; "go and fetch the lady some water—can you not see she will faint in two minutes?"

And while the old Earl hobbled off in quest of the reviving element, Charles raised Mary from her knees, and repeated, in a voice trembling with alarm, his previous question, "Are there tidings from the Queen?"

"No, my liege," replied Mary, whose faintness quitted her with extraordinary rapidity as soon as the Earl was out of ear-shot. "This business concerns yourself. There is a plot to carry off your Majesty's person, there is a plot to lead you to London a prisoner, this very day. I only discovered it at midnight. I had no means of communicating unwatched with my Sovereign, and I took this unceremonious method of intruding on his privacy. Forgive me, my liege, I did not even know that I should be so fortunate as to see you for an instant alone; had you been accompanied by more than one attendant, I must have taken some other means of placing this packet in your hands."

As Mary spoke she unbound the masses of her shining hair, and taking a paper from its folds, presented it to the King, falling once more upon her knees, and kissing the royal hand extended to her with devoted loyalty. "I have here communicated to your Majesty in cipher all I have learned about the plot. I might have been searched had I been compelled to demand an interview, and I knew no better method of concealing my packet than this. Oh, my liege! my liege! confide in me, the most devoted of your subjects. It is never to late to play a bold stroke; resist this measure with the sword—say but the word, lift but your royal hand, and I will engage to raise the country in sufficient force to bring your Majesty safe off, if I, Mary Cave, have to ride at their head!"

The King looked down at the beautiful figure kneeling there before him, her cheek flushed, her eye bright with enthusiasm, her long soft hair showering over her neck and shoulders, her horse's bridle clasped in one small gloved hand, while the other held his own, which she had just pressed fervently to her lips; and impersonation of loyalty, self-abandonment, and unavailing heroism, of all the nobler and purer qualities which had been wasted so fruitlessly in the Royal cause; and a sad smile stole over his countenance, whilst the tears stood in his deep, melancholy eyes, as he looked from the animated living figure, to the dead falcon that completed the group.

"Enough blood has been shed," said he; "enough losses sustained by the Cavaliers of England in my quarrel. Charles Stuart will never again kindle the torch of war—no, not to save his crown—not to save his head! Nevertheless, kind Mistress Mary, forewarned is forearmed, and your Sovereign offers you his heartfelt thanks, 'tis all he has now to give, for your prompt resolution and your unswerving loyalty. Would that it had cost you no more than your falcon—would that I could replace your favorite with a bird from my own royal mews. Alas! I am a King now only in name—I believe I have but one faithful subject left, and that is Mistress Mary Cave!"

As the King spoke, Lord Pembroke returned with the water, and Mary, with many acknowledgments of his Majesty's condescension, and many apologies and excuses, mingled with regret for the loss of her falcon, mounted her horse, and leaving the pleasure grounds by a private gate or postern to which the Earl had the key, returned to Boughton by the way she had come, pondering in her own mind on the success of her enterprise and the impending calamities that seemed gathering in to crush the unhappy King.

Much to the relief of the aged nobleman, this adventure closed the royal promenade for that morning, and Charles, giving orders for his attendants to be in readiness after dinner, as it was his intention to ride on horseback and indulge himself in a game of bowls at Lord Vaux's house at Boughton—an intention which may perhaps be accounted for his abrupt dismissal of Mary Cave—retired to the privacy of his closet, there to deliberate, not on the stormy elements of his political future, not on the warning he had just received, and the best means of averting an imprisonment which now indeed threatened to be no longer merely a matter of form; not on the increasing power of his sagacious enemy, who was even then taking his wary, uncompromising measures for his downfall, and whose mighty will was to that of the feeble Charles as his long cut-and-thrust broadsword to the walking rapier of a courtier; not of Cromwell's ambition and his own incompetency; not of his empty throne and his imperilled head—but of an abstruse dispute on casuistical divinity and the unfinished tag of a Latin verse!

Truly in weaker natures constant adversity seems to have the effect of blunting the faculties and lowering the whole mental organization of the man. The metal must be iron in the first instance, or the blast of the furnace will never temper it into steel.

CHAPTER XXX.

"A RIDE ACROSS A COUNTRY."

On the day during which the events recorded in our last chapter were taking place, the good sorrel horse, with the instinctive sagacity peculiar to his kind, must have been aware that some trial of his mettle was imminently impending. Never before in the whole course of his experience had the same care been bestowed on his feeling, watering, and other preparations for an appointed task; never before had Dymocke so minutely examined the soundness of every strap and buckle of his appointments, inspected so rigidly the state of his shoes, or fitted the bit in his mouth, and the links of his curb-chain with such judicious delicacy. Horses are keenly alive to all premonitory symptoms of activity, and the sorrel's kindling eye and dilated nostril showed that he was prepared to sustain his part, whatever it might be, in the pending catastrophe. Dymocke, too, had discarded the warlike air and pompous bearing which he usually affected; he had considerably shortened his customary morning draught, and as he was well known to be a man of few words and an austere demeanor, none of his fellow-servants dared take upon themselves to question him when he left the stable-yard in a groom's ordinary undress, and rode the sorrel carefully out as it were for an airing.

"Patrolling!" quoth Dymocke to himself, as he emerged from the park-gates and espied at no great distance two well-mounted dragoons pacing along the crest of a raising ground, and apparently keeping vigilant watch over the valley of the Nene below. "A picket!" he added with a grim leer, and a pat on his horse's neck, as the sun glinted back from a dozen of carbines and the same number of steel breastplates drawn up near a clump of trees, where the officer in command flattered himself he was completely hidden from observation. "Well, they've no call to say nothing to me," was his concluding remark as he jogged quietly down towards the river side, affecting as much as possible the air and the manner of a groom training a horse about to run for some valuable stake—a process sure to meet with the sympathies of Englishmen, whatever may be their class and creed, and one which even most rigid Presbyterian would be unwilling to embarrass or interrupt.

It was a good stake, too, that the sorrel was about to run for—a stake of life and death, a match against time, with the course marked out by chance, and a winning-post placed by destiny. The steel was sound and trim, his condition excellent, his blood irreproachable; to use the language of Newmarket, would he stay the distance and get home?

There was a marshy meadow by the river's brink, which even at this dry season of the year was moist and cool, grateful to the sensations of horse and rider. As the sorrel approached it, he snorted once or twice, erected his ears, and neighed long and loudly. The neigh was answered in more directions than one, for dragoons were patrolling the road in pairs, and no less than two outposts of cavalry were distinctly visible. It seemed as though the war had broken out afresh. Dymocke rode quietly round and round the meadow, apparently attending solely to his horse, and an indefatigable angler, who ought ere this to have caught every fish in the Nine, looked up in a startled manner for an instant, and resumed his sport with redoubled energy and perseverance.

Meanwhile a goodly cavalcade was approaching the half-ruined bridge of Brampton, which here spanned the Nene, and which, although impassable to carriages, admitted of the safe transit of equestrians riding in single file. Bit and bridle rang merrily as the troop wound downward to the river side; feathers waved, scarfs and cloaks floated gaudily in the breeze, and gay apparel glistened bright in the summer sun. It was the King and his courtiers bound for their afternoon's amusement at Boughton, discoursing as they rode along on every topic save the one that lay deepest in each man's heart, with that mixture of gay sarcasm and profound reflection which was so pleasing to the sovereign's taste, and hazarding opinions with that happy audacity stopping short of freedom which always met with encouragement from the kindly disposition of the Stuarts.

It seemed to be no captive monarch surrounded by his gaolers that reined his good horse so gallantly in front of the trampling throng; not one of his royal ancestors in the plentitude of his power could have both treated with greater outward show of respect than was Charles by his attendants who spied his most secret actions, and the commissioners who were employed by the Parliament to deprive him of his personal liberty. Old Lord Pembroke, riding on his right hand a little in rear of the King, bowed his venerable head to the horse's mane at every observation of his sovereign. The Lords Denbigh and Montague, with the ceremonious grace which they had acquired years before at Whitehall, remained at the precise distance prescribed by etiquette from the person of royalty, and conversed when spoken to with the ready wit of courtiers and the frank bearing of English noblemen. Dr. Wilson as physician, and Mr. Thomas Herbert as groom of the bedchamber in waiting, made up the tale of the King's personal attendants, whilst servants with led horses, and one or two yeomen of the guard, completed the cavalcade.

No armed escort surrounded the King, no outward display of physical force seemed to coerce his will or fetter his actions; yet the Parliament had chosen their emissaries so well that for all their decorous observances and simulation of respect, with the exception of Herbert, not an inhabitant of Holmby House, from the earl in the presence to the scullion in the kitchen, but was more or less a traitor to his sovereign.

Charles beckoned his groom of the bedchamber to ride up alongside, and old Lord Pembroke fell respectfully to the rear. It might have been remarked, however, that Montague immediately spurred on and remained within earshot. Herbert was a favorite with the monarch. His affectionate disposition was not proof against that fascination which Charles undoubtedly exercised over those with whom he came in daily contact, and a similarity of tastes and habits, a congeniality of disposition between master and servant, each being of a speculative temperament deeply imbued with melancholy, laid the foundation of a friendship which seems to have been a consolation to the one in the darkest hours of adversity, the pride and glory of the other to the latest day of his life.

"What sayest thou, Master Herbert?" said Charles, laying his hand familiarly on the neck of his servant's horse as he paced slowly down towards the bridge. "Did not the Stoics aver that the wise man is alone a king and was not their ideal of wisdom the *nil admirari* of the satirist? Did they not hold that it was a quality which made its possessor insensible to pain or pleasure, pity or anger; alike impervious to the sunshine of prosperity as immovable by the storms of adversity; that the wise man knew neither hope nor fear, neither tears nor laughter; that he was essentially all-in-all to himself, and from his very nature equally a prophet, a priest, a cobbler, and a king?"

"Even so, your Majesty," answered Herbert; "and it has always appeared to me that the ox browsing contentedly in his pasture, satisfied to eat and drink, and ruminate and die, approaches more nearly to the philosopher's ideal of wisdom, than Socrates with his convictions of the future, and Plato, with his speculations on the soul."

"Right, Master Herbert," answered the King, readily losing himself as was his wont in the labyrinth of abstract discussion which he delighted to provoke. "The two schools of ancient philosophy arrived, but by different paths, at the same destination. 'Eat and drink,' urges the Epicurean, 'for to-morrow you die.' 'Rest and ponder,' quoth the Stoic, 'for there is no reality even in life.' Either maxim is directly opposed to the whole apparent scheme of the natural world. The one would impress you with the uselessness of sowing your grain; the other convince you of the absurdity of reaping your harvest. Did either really prevail among men, the world could scarce go on a year.

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

A COUPLE OF HEROES.

Ten years ago John Davison, a railroad engineer, recently killed by on explosion on a Western road, was running a train consisting of a box car with two valuable horses, six oil cars and two passenger coaches on the Buffalo & Pittsburgh Railroad. He was already under headway when the oil cars were cut loose, and the locomotive and box car moved on out of the way. Suddenly the engineer found that, the brakes not being set, the burning cars were pursuing him on a down grade. Before he realized the situation, they struck him, knocking in the end of the box car. He and the fireman could have jumped off, but the locomotive and the horses could be saved only by a race of life. He opened the throttle wide, and though he flew down the eighty-foot grade, it seemed as if the burning cars were gaining on him at every stroke. As he turned the sharp curves he expected to be hurled over the mountain side. The night was very dark. The engine thundered along through woods and deep rock cuts, and on the edge of high precipices. The horses were stumping and neighing with terror in the box car. And only a few feet in the rear was the flying mass of flames rushing down the mountain like a tremendous meteor. The blaze from the thousands of gallons of burning oil was more than sixty feet in height, and lighted up the woods and rocks and crooked roads for miles. The whole heavens was illuminated, and from Brocton the sight of the great conflagation, apparently flying through the air, now hidden for a second by a cut or a piece of woods, and then leaping out again and up toward the sky like a huge fountain of fire, is described as having been awful in its grandeur. Brocton Junction came in sight. Just beyond that was an up grade where he would be safe. Suddenly he was almost paralyzed at the recollection that the Cincinnati express was due there, while a freight train was at that moment running past the switch to make way for the express. He knew he must have been seen by the light of the burning cars; so he whistled for a switch, the freight train got out of the way, he dashed through the village and up the grade; the burning train came to a halt, the Cincinnati express, most luckily was late, was signalled and stopped in time, and at the end of a ride of sixteen miles in twelve minutes, both Davison and his fireman fainted on their engine. James Keenan, Davison's fireman, was killed six years afterward while rescuing a child that was playing on the track. He reached over the pilot, tossed the child to one side, but lost his balance and was crushed.

A KEEN-LOOKING BUSINESS-MAN.

Honesty is always—that is to say, almost lways—the best policy. For instance, the other day, as a keen-looking business-man, with his hat worn on the nape of his neck, was standing on Clark street, a simple, gawky-looking country lad of 19, with a big envelope in his hand, and his mouth and eyes wide open came sauntering along, looking anxiously at all the signs, which he was apparently spelling out. The business-man, being naturally kind-hearted and desiring to do a friendly turn to a stranger, said to the boy "Hi, sonny, what are you looking for? Let me see that letter."

"Now, I can't let you have that letter, there's bonds in it," said the boy; "but p'raps you can tell me where Mister Smith lives round here. The boss told me the number, but I've forgotten it, and the letter has got bonds in it, and so I ain't to give it to anybody but him."

"Why, I've been waiting for you this half-hour," said the keen business-man, as his face brightened up; "waiting for you to bring me those bonds which I bought of What's-his-name."

"Be you Mister Smith," asked the boy; "well, now, I'm right glad I met you, because I'd clean forgot what was the number where the boss said you lived, and I wouldn't have liked to go back to him without finding you; it would have looked as if I was careless."

With these remarks the lad took out a big envelope marked "J. Smith, Esq., Present," in the upper corner "$2,500 U. S. 5-20s," and in the lower corner "Commission due, $5. Please remit by bearer."

"That's all right, sonny," said the keen-looking business-man, as he hauled out a scantily-furnished purse, gave the boy a $5 bill and a quarter, and said. "There, sonny, that quarter is to reward you for your cleverness and fidelity"; and, putting the envelope in his breast pocket, he walked leisurely round the corner, ran to Dearborn street, with the speed of a deer, skipped lightly round to Madison, and hailing a car, was whirled away at a comparatively lightning speed. Not till he had reached Union Park did he draw the precious envelope from his pocket, and with the remark, "Pray Heaven they are not registered!" tear it open. He then found that the envelope contained a copy of the *Chicago Tribune*, which he could have purchased at the office for five cents. Meanwhile the simple country lad, entering a beer-saloon in the vicinity of the Sherman House, had absorbed a beer, salted away a $5 with seven others in his pocket book, and with the remark, "The fish is biting numerously to-day," taken another big envelope from his pocket, and once more sallied forth in search of a keen-looking business-man.

RAILWAYS IN ONTARIO.

Proposed Legislation Next Session.

The Toronto, Grey & Bruce Railwa Company will apply at the next session of the Legislature for an Act to amend the several Acts relating to the said Company, for the purpose of enabling the municipalities on the main line to Orangeville and vicinity who may assist the railway to elect a Director; and the same on the Western Division from Orangeville to Teeswater; and to enable the Company and any municipality or municipalities, bondholders and others, to raise money and otherwise to make such arrangements as may be necessary or advisable for the purpose of re-constructing and re-equipping the railway on a gauge of four feet eight and a half inches (4 ft. 8½in.), and for all other purposes that may be requisite or advisable in consequence of such change of gauge and work connected therewith. And for power to enable the Company to build a branch from a point on their railway to a point at, in, or near the town of Wingham, in the county of Huron.

The North Simcoe Railway Company will apply for an Act to alter and amend the Acts relating to said Company in relation to the borrowing powers of said Company, and to confirm two mortgages given by the said Company to secure the issue of first and second mortgage bonds and the bonds issued there under, and the lease granted by said Company to the Northern Railway Company of Canada.

Application will be made for a charter for a railway to construct a railway to be called the Toronto and Nipissing Extention Railway, from Coboconk to Norland, or some other point on said Toronto and Nipissing Railway, and thence easterly to the township of Dungannon, in the county of Hastings, and thence to Ottawa, and with power to build the same in sections.

Applicatian will be made on behalf of the Midland Railway of Canada for an Act amending the Acts relating to the Midland Railway Company.

Application will be made for an Act to incorporate a company with full powers to construct, maintain, and operate a line of railway from Sault Ste. Marie, in the District of Algoma, eastward, to a point at or near Lake Nipissing, and from such point, southward, to connect with the Ontario system of railways at or near Gravenhurst, in the direction of Muskoka, with all necessary powers to build the same in sections.

Application will be made for an Act to incorporate a company to be called "The Port Rowan and Lake Shore Railway Company," and to authorize such Company to construct a railway from Port Royal to Port Dover, with power to connect with the Hamilton and North-western and the Port Dover and Lake Huron Railways.

ENGLAND'S IRON-CLADS.

Some of the Monsters of the British Navy

(Pall Mall Gazette.)

The lately published Parliamentary return of the names of the steamships of her Majesty's Navy on the 1st on January, 1874, and the 1st of January, 1879, is well worthy of attentive study; and, accordingly, we propose giving a brief summary of some of the most significant information which it contains. The number of armored ships in commission on the 1st of January, 1874, was, we learn 29, and on the 1st of January, 1878, 28. Although, however, one more iron-clad was in commission on the former than on the latter day, yet on the whole the condition of the vessels in commission was better on the first day of the present year than it was on the 1st of January 1874. We do not, of course, in making the statement allude to the size or strength, offensive or defensive, of the ships. Progress has been made during the last five years in the art of ship-building generally, and especially in the construction of armored men-of-war, and, therefore, it is almost needless to remark that many of the iron-clads now in commission are more powerful and better built vessels than any afloat in 1874. But, independently of this, we find that there were fewer vessels on the 1st of January of this year which required repair than there were on the 1st of January, 1874. On the latter date the Agincourt, Northumberland, Achilles, Black Prince, and Audacious "required repair and new boilers;" the Hercules and Lord Warden "required repair to hull and boilers," the Terror was "only fit for harbor service, boilers worn out;" the Caledonia had her "hull and boilers worn out;" the Royal Alfred, Zealous and Favorite "required large repairs on the hull and boilers;" while the general condition of the Penelope, Pallas and Research could only be returned as "fair." On the other hand, we find that on the 1st of January, 1879, the Bellerophon only required new boilers, while all the armored vessels in commission could be returned in good condition, except the Audacious, condition "fair;" the Lord Warden, "hull fair, boilers good;" the Defence and Resistance, which will require new boilers in 1880-81; and the Pallas and Research, which were in "indifferent" condition.

In the condition of the ships classed as "in reserve" a notable improvement also took place between the 1st of January, 1874, and the corresponding day of 1879. On the former date we had the Monarch and Hotspur in good condition; the Viper and Vixen, armor plated gun boats, in fair condition; six other vessels undergoing repair, and seven condemned for sea service; while the only new vessels actually built and completing for sea service were the Thunderer and Rupert. On the other hand, on the 1st of January, 1879, we had "in reserve" the Northampton, the Northumberland, Viper and Vixen in good condition, besides the coast defense vessels Cyclops, Hecate and Prince Albert, all also in good condition; the Dreadnought, a new ship, "complete for sea, except small fittings;" the Devastation, "in hand, making good defects," six iron-clads undergoing repair; the Scorpion, "in fair condition, requiring new boilers;" the Water-witch, an armor plated gun boat, also requiring new boilers; while actually built and completing for sea-service we had the Inflexible, the Nelson, Superb and Neptune. Finally, it may be added that on the 1st of January, 1874, five iron-clads were either building or ordered to be built—namely, the Alexandra, Temeraire, Shannon, Fury and Inflexible; while on the 1st of January, 1879, the number had increased to seven, the vessels being the Agamemnon, Ajax, Colossus, Majestic, Conqueror, Polyphemus and Orion.

HOW TO DINE CHEAPLY.

"Hi, waiter! —— —— —— —— you, you —— —— ——! Waiterrr!"

"Yessir."

"It's twenty minutes since I ate my soup, and to cheer the dreary interval I've eaten up all the trimmings and drunk a bottle of wine" ——

"Yessir; get you another one, sir?"

"But you want pay for the other one, sir. Bring me my dinner. sir! —— —— —— —— it, bring me my dinner!"

"But, sir, you ordered a *sole Normande*—it takes some time for prep"——

"What? What are you giving me, sir? What do you take me for, sir? Eh, sir?"

"I was simply saying, sir, that"——

"Hold your tongue, sir, and learn to keep your place, I never brook impertinence from an inferior." (Takes his hat and exit furiously, kicking over a chair).

"But, sir"——

"Don't 'but, sir,' me. I'm off to some restaurant where they know how to treat gentlemen."

The Boss to the waiter—"Isn't that the third time that gentleman has gone off mad before finishing his dinner?"

The Waiter—"Yes; he pretends he isn't waited on promptly."

The Boss—"Did he pay for what he had had?"

The Water—"Naw; he never does. He'll go somewhere else for his fish now, and then to another shop for the rest of his dinner. I know him."—*Paris Paper.*

WOOING BY PROXY.

A naughty nephew has swindled his uncle, a foolish Kentucky farmer, out of a bride. The old man was well-to-do, and his nephew lived with him on Green River. A charming country lass in the neighborhood was very poor, and yet disinclined to marry wealth when it was handicapped by old age. The old man's entreaties did not cease, and finally in despair he enlisted the services of his nephew, who was prevailed upon to argue the case with the charmer. The confiding old farmer never suspecting anything, when nephew suggested the propriety of capturing the young lady with presents, and giving her an earnest of what she might expect after marriage. The suggestion was received favorably, and the old man thinking the younger the better judge in such points, gave him $150 for the purchase of the gifts. The nephew went down to Evansville a few day ago and bought some handsome dresses, jewelry and other bribes, and took them back to his Green River home. The old man presented them to the lady freely as a token of regard, hinting that if she would only become his wife she could have as many duplicates of the lot as she pleased. The young lady went to work and made up the dresses, and then ran away with the nephew.

HE FOUND A BLACKER PAW.

Dr. Joseph Wolff, the famous Asiatic traveler, was emphatically a man fitter for the desert than the drawing-room. His journey, unaccompanied, to Bokhara, in 1845, to ascertain the fate of the murdered English residents, ranks with the noblest exploits of modern times; but he brought back to Europe all the barbarous habits of the East, and fully merited the nickname of "Wolff in sheep's clothing," given him in allusion to the clerical white tie which he sometimes wore. He frequently slept on the floor of his room instead of going to bed, and would seat himself cross-legged on the carpet, even in the houses of his friends. One of the latter disconcerted him by saying quietly: "You had better take a chair, Doctor," and Wolff did so, but only to return to the Eastern fashion on his very next visit. His personal slovenliness was such that one of his tilted friends in London was in the habit of taking him aside to be "tidied up" before letting him run the gauntlet of the drawing-room. His *vis-a-vis* at a fashionable dinner party, shocked at the sight of the Doctor's grimy hand standing out in bold relief against the snow-white table-cloth, whispered to his neighbor. "Good gracious what a black paw!" "I'll lay you £5, sir," said Wolff, overhearing the remark, "that I find you a blacker one in this very company." "Done," answered the guest. The Doctor instantly produced his other hand, and was unanimously admitted to have won the wager.

—A hundred thousand dollars' worth of hazel nuts are shipped yearly from Turkey to England.

—They were meandering arm in arm up the street, and a short distance ahead of them walked a young lady very handsomely attired. The sun was about setting and its light was throwing a beautiful crimson glow all over the earth. He said, in a rather subdued tone of voice: "How beautiful! perfectly grand?" etc. "Well, I don't know," was the response from the fair one by his side, "I don't admire her style, and the dress is a mighty poor fit." He weakened, and the sunset interested him no more.—*Yonkers Gazette.*