

THE MAN ON THE SLANT.

CHAPTER IV.

Men on the slant little know, or if they do know, too often they little care, what misery they bring upon those who love them.

Dick Cooper had for some time been doing all this. Oh, what misery had he sent down into the humble parsonage of Widgeon-cum-Saltwash!

For terrible accounts had reached the Lincolnshire parsonage about the doings of Dick Cooper. The chimney, the marriage, the running away, the being lost sight of in London, all were told; and Iris wept and the old man wept, as they waited day by day, hoping that some communication would come from the young man, but none came; so they could only pray and weep, and weep and pray again.

Events sometimes come upon us with a rush, they seem to find us out even in quiet places; and thus they soon did at the Rev. Ambrose Cooper's humble home.

At almost one and the same moment the long lawsuit and the great book on the dark ages, with the supplemental volumes on the angels came to an end—both were finished.

A letter arrived one morning in a lawyer's hand, and on opening it the Rev. Ambrose Cooper read as follows:—

"Lincoln's Inn.

"SLIPPING versus COOPER, JONES, - AND CROSBY.

"Sir,—We have much pleasure in informing you that a judgment has at length been obtained in this cause. We have to congratulate you and the other defendants on a great victory.

"We are, yours obediently, "THORNYPOINT & HOOKIT.

"The Rev. Ambrose Cooper."

"Glorious news!" cried Iris, who was told everything; "a great victory"—but the little girl suddenly checked herself, and the tears came into her eyes, for had she not hoped that Dick would be a rich man, and where was he now?

"Great victories are often great deceits," said Iris's grandfather; "but we must go to London." So Iris packed up in her own fashion, and in a great parcel by itself put up the manuscript of the dark ages and the two volumes upon the angels, good and bad.

To London they went, a place to which the child looked forward with a feeling full of awe; for her grandfather had often said that he believed there were many angels moving about there, both good and bad.

And first they called on Messrs. Thorny-point and Hookit. Mr. Hookit was the partner whom they saw. He seemed confused, somewhat, the Rev. Ambrose thought—how odd! when there had just been a great victory, and all he had now to do was to distribute the spoils. The sum in dispute had been £50,000 originally; that was when the Chancery suit had been commenced, three generations ago, but now where was it?

If Mr. Hookit had seemed for a moment confused at the sight of the chastened face of the old man and the trusting look of the child, he soon regained his composure; it would not do for men of his profession to be otherwise than cool, with all their wits about them. Accordingly he addressed the old clergyman in his usual dry professional accents: he told him that it was much to be regretted that owing to the obstinacy of the other party the litigation had been so long protracted, and been so costly; and that the balance coming to Mr. Cooper after all costs were paid was exactly £1 7s. 5d.—to be precise, £1 7s. 4½d.; he would upon the "great victory" that had been obtained—on the fact that the plaintiff Slipping was ruined from his head to his heels; and he promised that a bill of costs with a cheque for £1 7s. 5d., the balance, should be forwarded as soon as it could be made out.

With drooped head the old clergyman was passing out of Mr. Hookit's presence; his grandchild, with a face full of wonder and dismay, supporting his half-tottering step, when the lawyer suddenly said, "By the way, we have had a young relation of yours here several times asking after the suit. Here," said Mr. Hookit out loud to one of his clerks, "bring that young man's address, Mr. Hornby, and give it to this gentleman. Good day, Mr. Cooper—good day, young lady—there's a client waiting for me," and Mr. Hookit disappeared, and with him the hopes of many years.

But there was light; the lost boy was worth a thousand fortunes, and here was a chance of finding him. Yes, 'twas he, Mr. Richard Cooper, No. 6, Quail Row; and Iris was inclined to believe that if Mr. Hookit had anything to do with bad angels, surely his clerk, Mr. Hornby, must have to do with good ones, especially as he looked so kindly at her, and offered her grandfather his arm down the stairs, and said he would do anything for them he could.

Aye, indeed, Mr. Hornby did look after Iris; and when he went back to his desk, he said or thought some very ugly things about Mr. Hookit; and instead of going on with the bill of costs he was making out for the cause just spoken of, he took to sketching the old man and Iris from memory.

He made moreover a separate sketch of Iris; and as he had a decided taste for the way he caught the likeness very fairly—at least he thought it worth while hanging over his mantelpiece at home, to the destruction of the heart's peace of his land-

lady's daughter, who would have been Mrs. Hornby, not some day, but any day, if she had been asked. She always hoped she might be, and therefore kept her mind in readiness, and quite made it up as to what she should say.

Mr. Hornby, too, thought of a Mrs. Hornby—but that Mrs. Hornby was Iris; and the impudent, or impudent fellow (which shall I say?) was actually caught by Hookit skulking himself and Iris arm-in-arm, with apparently some part of a church in the background, and Iris with a white veil on, and numerous friends around. It was a horrible refinement of cruelty that he had also drawn the landlady's daughter in a back pew looking very uncomfortable.

Hookit had the young man up before Thorny-point and himself in their private office, and there wiggled him, as the young man himself expressed it, using thereby somewhat of a legal dialect; but the two together did not succeed in wiggling Iris out of his head or his heart; the only effect of the operation was that for the future Mr. Hornby drew all such pictures internally, and earnestly hoped that some day they might all come true.

Quail Row was soon found; and at No. 6 the young man Dick Cooper was still living, but he was out, and would not be home for two days.

How could this time be better occupied than by selling the manuscript of the dark ages and the two volumes on the angels? So the Rev. Ambrose Cooper took his life-long labor with him, and accompanied by Iris, went off to the publishers. Ah! it was only the Thorny-point and Hookit over again. One gentleman told him that manuscripts were so plentiful that they were only fit for making bonfires of; another informed him that he had been obliged to buy a second waste-paper basket only the week before; another asked him who he was, whether he was known in the literary world. "Sir," said Mr. Hornby, "we have to do only with established authors, we don't help any one up—we like to make the most of people when they are up. Have you ever been kept in Morocco, sir, or half-bound with marble edges?" Poor Mr. Ambrose stood silent and confounded. "Or in limp roan? or roan tuck? or cloth? or cut flush? or anything?" said Mr. Hornby.

"Come away, Gran," whispered Iris, who began to get frightened as Mr. Hornby raised his voice and waved his hand majestically; and with a bow—fine old gentleman as he was—the Rev. Ambrose Cooper turned sadly to the door, and half led, half supported by Iris, disappeared. Mr. Hornby thanked his stars he had got rid of such a wonderfully learned author so easily, and sat down to write to Professor Mulla-tawny that he would be very happy to publish his new work on cookery and give him half the profits. Mr. Hornby added that he might say the work showed decided flashes of genius. "Pish!" said he as he finished his letter, "who cares for the angels? but every one does for his dinner."

Poor Dick Cooper! They waited two days, and then found him and took him home. He had the laudanum bottle in his pocket; had they been another day later, and the results of the lawsuit been known to Dick, they would only have found him dead.

The dear old man forgave all. He said, "Have I not been forgiven, and shall I not forgive?" He read the "prodigal son" to himself, and said, "As the father did, so shall I do too."

Three years it took to recruit Dick Cooper's health, and at the end of that time there came to Widgeon-cum-Saltwash a young man named Hornby; he had once been a clerk at Thorny-point and Hookit's, but an old uncle had died and left him a fine fortune, and he had never forgotten that face of Iris's and he came duck-shooting to Saltwash. Oh! certainly, but he didn't spend all his time duck-shooting; indeed, he killed in the whole time only one foolish rheumatic old duck that didn't get up quick enough, and knocked the feathers out of the tail of that same duck's old drake, which was tardy too. If the truth were known, Mr. Hornby was almost as much surprised at this performance as if the poor creature had fallen to the ground ready dressed, green peas, knife and fork, and a spoon to help the gravy, and all complete.

But he shot poor little Iris's heart through and through, which was in truth the very shooting he came to do; for he published the two volumes on the angels at his own risk, and it turned out a great success, and he promised that the dark ages should follow in due course; and he set up the now penitent and straightened Dick in life once more; and he was a staff to the old man, upon whom sorrow had told at last, so that his limbs grew feeble and his eyes grew dim. And as Iris had shot him through and through long ago, she had no need to do it again, though she had never intended to do it at all; only she had to do his shooting part also, and now it was all done.

Before the old man died he joined their hands in marriage, and a little while after he folded his own hands in his last long sleep. The angels with whom he might be said to have conversed so long were doubtless near his bed—they who carried Lazarus were not far off. Perhaps some of those which sang at Christmas time for the birth of the Redeemer sang at the birth to the new life of one of the redeemed.

Don't tell me, good reader, that because 'tis Christmas time you must have all politeness, and I must wind up with all the festivities of the season. My pen has its mission, and it must be fulfilled. Dick Cooper, though saved from his folly, pulled down, as it were, and built up anew, had many a sad thought in life as he remembered how he had helped on the ruin of his wretched life—how he had been the death of poor Daniel Smith; and the breaker of the heart of poor Daniel's wife.

Perhaps you say; "Who is Daniel Smith? we never heard of him before, nor his wife."

Ah! there are many things you have not heard of in the way of the miseries of Dick Cooper's past. You have not heard of all the weary wakeful nights of Dick's good grandfather; nor of all the sobbings and heart-anklings of Iris; nor of all the aches and pains

which racked Dick Cooper's body, nor all the anguish which tore his mind. You have had a sample or two, no doubt, but it was only a sample of great bulk. And this is nothing extraordinary at all. It is only a small part of such miseries come to light—we see but a few buckets-fall drawn up from the deep dark waters of the well, to the bottom of which we never come.

But it is necessary that we should know something of poor Daniel and his wife. And no doubt you have been more than once saying, "But what about the chimney; we have not heard the end of that?" Well, you shall not be kept long to hear the end of it.

Poor Dan Smith and his wife, and the chimney—aye, and six little fatherless and motherless children—are all connected together.

As the chimney progressed, it was, as the reader knows, a little on the slant; and as it grew, it grew on the slant. At last the evil became so apparent, after it had progressed a certain length, that it was determined that the whole thing must come down. Mr. Dick Cooper, as we have said, had taken himself out of the way; but there were others who were left behind.

Working at the chimney was poor Dan Smith; and as he was removing a piece of scaffolding, while the other men were at dinner, down came the whole concern with a crash and a smash. The crash was of the chimney, the smash was of Dan Smith. What did that chimney know about Dan's loving wife, or about his six little children? Nothing. Down it came upon him as if he were a single man and there were no one to feel for him but himself. It was not the chimney's fault, it was Dick Cooper's.

Poor Dan's body was recovered from beneath the rubbish; it was brought into the little cottage where he lived, and his wife and the six little children all stood round it. The six little children sobbed fit to break their little hearts, but the widow did not cry at all, she only looked very white and held her hand to her side. Folk said it would have been better for her if she could have cried. But she could not, so there was an end of it—only the doctor when he looked at her, and heard how she was tearless, shook his head; he said it was a bad sign.

Folk did not know then what it really was a sign of—just that the widow's heart was broken. It was a bad sign of a bad thing. Something very terrible must have happened to her, for she never smiled any more; she left her meat uneaten and her drink undrank. The kind neighbors told her to cheer up, but she could not do it; she felt that the chimney had fallen on her (that is, on her heart) as well as upon her husband; so she just died.

She would fain have taken the six little children away with her, rather than have left them in the cold world; but that she could not do, so she went away without them, and the neighbors all said, "What is to be done?"

They were in great perplexity, and nothing but the workhouse was before the little ones, had not an elderly man appeared on the scene and brought the difficulty to an end.

This gentleman carried an umbrella and wore a broad-brimmed hat, his coat-collar was straight, his shoes were easy and comfortable, his heart was in the right place. It was Mr. Samuel Best, the good Quaker. He had seen the beginning of the chimney on the slant, and the young man smoking his cigar there—for before he had passed out of sight he had turned round and soon the smoke curling up, and now he saw the end of the chimney on the slant—a mass of ruins, a dead father and mother, and six orphaned children.

Deep down into his capacious pocket dived Mr. Samuel Best, and brought forth a £5 note, which he gave to the foreman of the works, to look after the children and provide for them while he was seeing what could be done.

Deep down into his brains did Mr. Best go, thinking; and into his heart, feeling; and brains and heart, or rather to put them in their proper or, or heart and brains and pocket, all clubbed together to provide for Dan Smith's orphans. In a month they were all provided for in one way and another, though no one ever knew at how much cost to Samuel Best. These things come out some day—perhaps in a day a long way off, but they are not forgotten; and it will be a good thing to have done something for the orphan, and such as he.

Mr. Samuel Best had no wife or family, and still it is believed he made away for several years after with a huge plum-pudding every Christmas Day. It was currently reported in and about the factory that he had a huge round plum-pudding made for that festive and blessed day; that the six orphans of Dan Smith sat around it, and did not content themselves with admiring it, but as a strange-spoken factory hand said, "pitched into it." The meaning of that phrase is that they had two helpings of it, which was enough under the circumstances seeing that they had the like of roast beef. When all this was accomplished, it is said that Mr. Samuel pulled out some bright money and gave to each according to their age. Then he would gather them round the fire and while their mouths were wide open, he would tell them the dreadful story of the fallen chimney, and warn them about the first inclination to the slant. Different folk have different ways of doing things—of keeping Christmas amongst the rest—this was Mr. Best's way; and until better informed as to why we should do so, we do not mean to quarrel with him for it. It is believed that his own conscience was very easy, and indeed comfortable, under such merry-making as feeding and cheering the orphan; and it is further believed that on the day after Christmas Day—i.e., Boxing Day—he felt better than many do, who pay more attention to what they eat themselves than what others have. It may have been a peculiarity of Mr. Samuel's constitution, but if it were I certainly go in for the same.

But the past, as I have said, never anything but sad to Dick Cooper, let him think of it at Christmas or any other time; and so it will be to you, sooner or later, if you begin wrong, being content even ever so little to be

Mistakes with Children.

Very often a child gets the impression that there is something in his physical, mental, or moral condition, unlike that of other children, that places him at a disadvantage, and he is disheartened by the thought. Very likely there may be some peculiarity, but the point is to overcome that disadvantage, and to rise above it. Unhappily, however, we often aggravate and increase the trouble by our course of treatment. We feel with the child as a rude and thoughtless person do with one who has a blemish on his face, or some other bodily defect, noticing and commenting upon it until it is made tenfold more hard to be borne, and the sufferer made sensitive even to look upon his infirmity. A soldier who had lost a leg, wrote out some fifty questions with which he had been pestered by impertinent persons, concerning his loss, how and when it happened, and how much he suffered. And sometimes when there is any obliquity in a child, parents and brothers and sisters will bear down upon it, and twist him with it in a way to aggravate and increase it, rather than to cure it. They will say before his face that he is an odd one in the flock, that he is peculiar, that he is foolish, that he has not the capacity of the rest for learning, and that he will never be or do anything in the world, until the child himself believes it, and grows up under the discouragement thereof; and so the prophecy works out its own fulfilment, and he grows up to manhood the very eccentric or useless character it was foretold he would be. If judicious friends had noticed lightly his peculiarities, and taught him that he was not so very unlike or inferior to the rest, led him to look more hopefully upon his case, and appreciated and drawn out his real excellencies, he might have outshone all his kin. The reputed dunce of the family and the school, has often risen to high honor, to the astonishment of his early competitors. Beautiful is the story of "The Ugly Duck," that when a flogging, was picked at and persecuted as a strange creature by barn yard fowls, but which, at last, when grown, proved to be a swan, and took its place with arched neck and snowy plumage among its own kind on the lakelet, admired by all. Many a person, no doubt, has been helped on to the lunatic asylum by having his eccentricities of mind increased by wrong treatment, until the full result was insanity. And many a person has been kept down in low stations of life, or driven to evil habits and companions, by some fancied or real hindrance or disadvantage not treated wisely at first. Even born idiots, under skilful training, learn to know God and so repay toil for their good; and maniacs are sometimes restored to reason, while many might have been kept from madness by wise care. If one feels that he has the mark of Cain upon him, he will, like Cain, be apt to feel that his punishment is greater than he can bear, and to flee to a distant place; though it is to be observed, that even Cain's mark was set upon him in mercy by God.—Rev. Wm. H. Lewis, in *Churchman*.

Scottish Piety.

One day recently the Hutchinson's steamer was sailing round Cape Wrath, carrying some five hundred Lewis men from Stornoway to the herring fishing at Wick. In the evening the captain was "chaffed" by a tourist about the Scottish strictness of view in relation to the Sabbath—it was Saturday evening—as a really impracticable strictness. The captain said that of the five hundred Lewis men "aft," not one, landing at Thurso late on Saturday night, would take a step towards Wick till Monday morning; that if the weather proved fine they would spend the night in the open air; and if it proved bad, they would seek shelter in out-houses; and that on the Sabbath day they would worship in groups, led by their headmen. About ten o'clock at night the captain's statement was strikingly illustrated by a solemn act of joint worship—singing, Bible reading and prayer—on the part of the whole five hundred; their grand shaggy heads, surmounting broad shoulders, being laid bare to the pelting wind and rain. Any one seeing those heads and shoulders of men worshipping God would have felt that, so long as men of their class people our country districts, we are not in sight of the poet's "Woe

To that land, to hastening ill a prey, Where wealth accumulates and men decay."

Presumption.

He who takes his boys to the beer-shop, and trusts that they will grow up sober, puts his coffee-pot on the fire and expects it to look bright as new tin. Men cannot be in their senses when they brew with bad malt and look for good beer, or set a wicked example and reckon upon raising a respectable family. You may hope and hope till your heart grows sick; but when you send your boy up the chimney, he'll come down black for all your hoping. Teach a child to me, and then hope that he will grow up honest; better put a wasp in a tar barrel and wait till he makes you honey. As to the next world, it is a great pity that men do not take a little more care when they talk of it. If a man dies drunk, somebody or other is sure to say, "I hope he is gone to heaven." It is all very well to wish it, but to hope it is another thing. Men turn their faces to hell and hope to get to heaven; why don't they walk in the horsepond and hope to be dry? Hopes of heaven are solemn things, and should be tried by the word of God. A man might as well hope, as our Lord says, to gather grapes of thorns or figs of thistles, as look for a happy hereafter at the end of a bad life. There is only one rock to build hopes on, and that is not Peter, as the Pope says, neither is it sacraments, but the merits of the Lord Jesus. There John Ploughman rests, and he is not afraid, for this is a firm footing, which neither life nor death can shake; but I must not turn preacher, so please remember that presumption is a ladder which will break the mounter's neck, and don't try it as you love your soul.—John Ploughman's Talk.

The sale of pews in a new Jewish Temple in New York, recently dedicated, realized \$200,040.

Scientific and Useful.

When no other means are available, common earth is recommended as a handy and efficacious remedy for the sting of bees.

The use and adaptability of banana fibre in the manufacture of paper is about to be tested by competent parties in Savannah, Georgia.

In removing ink spots from delicate colors, when oxalic acid or chloride of lime cannot be used without injury to the color, a concentrated solution of sodium pyrophosphate is recommended.

An experiment shipment of uncooked meat, preserved by a freezing process, has been dispatched from Australia for London. Large joints of fresh uncooked meat have, it is said, already been preserved for some months by this process in Melbourne.

Scoresby and other arctic voyagers and whale hunters have observed that whales have some means of communicating with one another at great distances. It is probable that the animals follow in a tone too grave for the human ear, but quite within the range of the cetacean ear.

The reason why common salt sometimes becomes moist when exposed to the atmosphere is because it is not pure. Chloride of calcium and chloride of magnesium are impurities generally present in salt, and they absorb moisture from the air.

WHAT TO DO IN CASE OF ACCIDENT.

Professor Wilder, of Cornell University, gives these short rules for action in case of accident. It would not be a bad thing to cut them out and carry them in one's pocket-book, or commit them to memory. For dust in the eyes, avoid rubbing; dash water in them; remove cinders, etc., with the round point of a lead-pencil. Remove insects from the ear by tepid water. Never put a hard instrument into the ear. If an artery is cut, compress above the wound; if a vein is cut, compress below. If choked, go upon all fours and cough. For slight burns, dip the part in cold water; if the skin is destroyed, cover with varnish. For apoplexy, raise the head and body; for fainting lay the person flat.

GLASS MANSARD ROOFS.

Hygiene suggests that "architects examining into the feasibility of constructing the Mansard roofs of dwellings at least, of iron and glass. This upper story, as now constructed, is generally devoted to the billiard-room, servants' chambers, or some other secondary purpose. If made, as suggested, of iron and glass, either with or without General Pleasanton's violet-colored panes, it would really be one of the most valuable features of a modern city residence, and would furnish a hygienic agency of acknowledged importance. The influence, not only of light, but of direct rays of the sun, and of breathing and bathing in sunned air, on vitality and health, is too well understood to need detailed mention. The nursery, children's play-room, family gymnasium, even the billiard-room, should be placed in this human conservatory as well as suitable apartments where, with the necessary privacy, the various members of the family might revert to the primeval condition for an hour or two, and so, to a large extent, remedy the ill-effects of privation from sun and air that ordinary city life entails. The substitution of a frame-work of iron, covered with glass, and provided with the necessary screens or shades, for the wood and slate of which the Mansard is now built, ought not to present any difficulties."

THEORY OF "TAKING COLD."

Professor Rosenthal gives the following explanation of the pathogenic action of exposure to cold. Suppose an individual to have been subjected to an elevated temperature, such as that of a ball-room or theatre, or to have engaged in violent muscular exercise; the cutaneous vessels are dilated, and in a state more or less akin to paralysis, and in all cases more slow to contract than usual. If at this moment the same person be exposed abruptly and without any intermediate transition to a low temperature, especially to a current of cold air, a considerable loss of heat will be observed upon the surface of the body. The blood which has been thus cooled externally comes back into the internal organs and cools them suddenly; which circumstance alone may, in an organ predisposed to disease, become the active cause of some severe malady. The cutaneous vessels, on their part, become contracted, driving out the blood which they contained, and thus produce a kind of hyperemia, which in itself may exercise a morbid action. This cause, however, is usually only an accessory one, at least in cases where the temperature has been much elevated. The vessels have lost their tonicity, and do not contract suddenly. But if the danger from collateral hyperemia is thus diminished, that from refrigeration is increased.—Harper's Magazine.

EFFECT OF CAST-IRON STOVES.

Some time ago a paper was read before the French Academy of Science, in which the evil consequences of using cast-iron stoves were forcibly dealt with. Little, however, was the interest excited in the matter at the time, but the subject has more recently been brought forward with better success. Dr. Carrot, one of the physicians to the Hotel Dieu in Chambery plainly denounces cast-iron stoves as an absolute source of danger to those who use them, and he claims to base his denunciations upon positive facts. It appears that during an epidemic which prevailed in Savoy, Dr. Carrot observed that all the inhabitants who were infected by it used cast-iron stoves which had recently been imported into the country. On the other hand, he observed that all those who used other kinds of stoves, or adopted other modes of firing, escaped the disease. Another circumstance bearing on the same interesting question occurred in the Lyceum of Chambery, where an epidemic of typhoid fever broke out. This outbreak is regarded by Dr. Carrot as having been influenced or superinduced by a large cast-iron stove in the dormitory of that establishment.