

the door. She was a small, spare old woman, with a wrinkled face, still keeping a rosy tinge, as if she had lived most of her younger years in the fresh air and sunshine of the country. In the room behind her there was no portion of the walls to be seen for the numerous articles of clothing which hung upon them; whilst the four posts of Mrs. Clack's bed were clothed from head to foot in full walking-dress, as if they were so many persons about to set out at once into the streets. In the dim light the room looked full of tenants, though Mrs. Clack was living in it alone.

"Brought me a little girl, Don!" she exclaimed, "and a man, Don! I wouldn't have minded a little girl; but whatever are we to do with a man? Oh, Don! you know I can't abide to have aught to do with men. They cost so much, and they're so wasteful and masterful. I have kept clear of 'em all these years, and now you've brought one of 'em to my very door-sill. I'd rather you'd brought me ten dogs than one man. Dear, dear, I can't abide a man!"

"Mrs. Clack," said Don, mournfully, "you know I'm bound to grow up into a man. I couldn't be turned into a woman, nohow. And he's very old, and blind; and he's hungry and cold, and his own daughter's run away and forsook him, and I couldn't leave him and Dot to be froze to death in the Gardens, could I? Bless you! it won't cost you nothin' just to give him a lodgin' for a little while, till he can turn hisself round. Only look how old he is! Scarcely like a man, you know. He won't be drinkin' and smokin' and wastin' money. I told him you were the cleverest woman in London, and he must come and talk with you. Won't you just let him come in, and let's talk it over?"

The voices of Don and Mrs. Clack sounded in old Lister's ears like some indistinct buzzing. He stood tottering behind Dot and Don, shivering with hunger and cold and bewilderment, and as Mrs. Clack looked at him, he stretched out his shaking hands to her.

"Don't let me die like a dog!" he cried.

"No, no, no!" answered Mrs. Clack, "poor old creature! Come along here. I couldn't turn him away, Don, though he is a man, poor fellow! Come in, and we'll do the best we can for to-night."

CHAPTER III.—A LONG NIGHT.

When Hagar gained the main road, and was lost in the stream of busy traffic, she went on her way mechanically, with swift steps, seeing none of the many faces she met, and hearing nothing of all the stir and noise about her. She had sunk into so profound a depth of wretchedness that she was conscious of nothing

but her own misery. She had tasted no food since the night before, but she did not know she was hungry and faint. The slush of the muddy pavement was oozing through her worn-out boots, and the drizzling of the November evening penetrated through the thin, dirty shawl she had crossed tightly over the baby, who was sleeping on her bosom. But Hagar did not say to herself that she was wet through and cold. There was no shelter for her from the coming night, but she did not think of that. A blank despair,

could not be pattering beside her, for she had not forgotten what she had just done. The image of her old father, blind and helpless, standing still under the trees, and of Dot running away to play at her own bidding, remained in her brain, and she could not get rid of it. By this time she had wandered a good way from Kensington Gardens, and had lost herself in a knot of streets; but quite clearly she seemed to see the tall, bare trees, scattering heavy drops of rain from their wet branches, and the old man

wide awake, and more keenly sensitive to her black despair. Yet she knew she must not sit there all night; so she bestirred herself, stretched her aching and stiffened limbs, and set out again on her aimless wanderings with creeping footsteps; moving simply to keep life in her veins, for she had no home to go to, and knew of no shelter to seek.

If her father and Dot had been with her, she would have gone to the workhouse for their sakes; but for her own she did not care to go, nor for the baby's, who would perish with her, if she perished. It would not be a bad thing to die, she thought, if she could die peacefully in a bed, with quiet, gentle people about her, as her husband had died six months ago. But to freeze on some doorstep, or be carried away at the last moment to some hospital, amid strangers; that was hard! It would be dying like a dog, as her father so often said.

At length she found herself again in the high road, and close by Hyde Park, where it joins Kensington Gardens. There were lamps everywhere in the Park; but the Gardens were unlighted and locked up. She crept slowly along the broad drive, looking over to the black masses of the trees beyond the sunk fence. It was possible that her father and Dot were still in there, crouching asleep under some of those black shadows, or stumbling to and fro amidst those black shadows. They might not have been seen by the policeman, in the quiet, unfrequented path where she had left them. She made her way over the wet grass, and called softly across the sunk fence. There were but few carriages, and still fewer foot-passengers, along the broad drive, and no policeman was in sight. Hagar dragged herself along by the edge of the Gardens, searching the thick darkness with her eyes, and straining her ears for some answer to her low, frightened call. Ah! if she could but hear their voices calling back to her!

(To be Continued.)

THE SWELLED TRUNK PALM.

The lower part of the trunk of this peculiar palm tree is swelled and supported from seven to nine feet above the ground by a number of radiating and inclined roots. These roots shoot out from the tree during the rainy season, and support it without aid from the main root, which finally disappears. The leaves are from ten to fourteen feet long. This tree is found on the banks of the Amazon. The illustration is copied from *La Vie Végétale*.

THE GREATEST friend of Truth is Time.—Butler.



THE SWELLED TRUNK PALM—*Iriarte Ventricosa* Mart.

heavy and thick as the leaden clouds that hid the sky, hemmed her in on every side, and she felt only a vague, unbroken sense of desolation. A faint, half-sleeping sob from the baby she was carrying was the first sound that brought her back to her present misery. She pressed it a little closer to her bosom, and her other hand fell down by her side, as if to catch hold of Dot's, whilst, almost against her will, she turned her head to see if she was anywhere near. She knew her child

and little child forsaken and wretched among them.

Hagar ventured to sit down to rest now and then in the quiet streets, and on the steps of some empty house, where she could remain undisturbed. Once she fell asleep. How long she slept she could not tell; but the baby's cries awoke her—those shrill cries of suffering which pierce a mother's heart. It was almost impossible to soothe the little creature, and by the time it was slumbering again she was herself