

mosphere of the previous night's bird's-eye. His dress was negligent. Half of his ill-folded newspaper stuck out of one pocket, and two-thirds of an old baudana hung out of the other; and he seemed not at all conscious of his utter commonplaceness and very inferior condition.

The lady lowered her glasses, and said—

"I have written to you signing myself anonymously. You received my letter yesterday?"

"Yes, ma'am. If you will walk into my office, we can talk without fear of interruption. This way, if you please." Mr. Pierce opened the inner door.

The lady hesitated, as if she regretted having anything to do with Mr. Pierce; however, there was no going back at this point, so she entered the inner office. There was nothing at all business-like in the look of this small room except a desk and a stool. Looking about her deliberately, she observed that, while the two arm-chairs had the air of being extensively sat upon, there was a thick stratum of dust upon the stool. Mr. Pierce placed a chair for her, and with difficulty poised himself upon the stool. "I should like to know if you are the principal of this firm?"

"I am the senior partner and head of the business."

"Thank you. I do not wish to waste your time or my own, Mr. Pierce; we will therefore come to the point at once."

"She wants to get out of it," thought Mr. Pierce. "Like my luck!"

"You have taken three weeks to consider the subject of our correspondence."

"Yes ma'am; we do nothing in a hurry."

"Obviously; and you have arrived at a conclusion?"

"Yes. We are prepared to make the investigation, and to begin at once."

"Just so. Be good enough to tell me now, if you please, at what price you value your services."

"It will cost you two guineas a day."

"For how long?"

"Until the guilt or innocence of the party suspected is proved to your satisfaction."

The lady smiled; there was something quite too ridiculous in Mr. Pierce's proposal.

"That is to say," said she, "the inquiry is to be protracted indefinitely at my expense."

"I shouldn't advise you to have it extended beyond six months. If nothing is discovered by that time, nothing will ever be discovered."

"I am afraid the result would not be worth the expense"—the lady rose from her seat—"I must therefore decline to go any further with this investigation, Mr. Pierce." With the slightest perceptible inclination of the head, she turned towards the door.

Mr. Pierce slipped off his stool with an air of resignation, and going to open the door for his escaping client, murmured—

"So much the better for Sir Gilbert."

"Sir Gilbert!" exclaimed the lady, stopping abruptly and turning towards Mr. Pierce. "How did you come into possession of that name?"

"Do you suppose I should take up a case, knowing no more about it than you told me in your letter, Mrs. Gower?"

"How long have you known my name?"

"Only within the last three weeks."

"And—and what do you know of this case?"

"Sufficient to warrant me in offering my services on your side. This private inquiry business is not a very exalted kind of thing—not the sort of work a gentleman would take to if he could help it, nor the occupation that any decent man would devote himself to without a pretty

strong conviction that he could get his living honestly by it."

"Then you believe Sir Gilbert is guilty?"

"I do not believe him guiltless. I am tolerably certain he had a stronger motive for wishing his wife out of the way than the counsel for the prosecution discovered."

Mr. Pierce spoke with his hand resting on the handle of the door. Mrs. Gower after regarding him without the aid of her glasses for a couple of moments in silent surprise, quietly turned to the chair she had left and reseated herself. Mr. Pierce, returning to his desk, dropped by force of habit into the arm-chair that faced her.

"What motive had he?" she asked.

Mr. Pierce did not reply directly; he seemed to calculate for a brief space how far he could play with his fish before striking.

"Do you know that Sir Gilbert has given up the Abbey?" he presently inquired.

"I heard that he had left Monkden. No one would miss him."

"Do you know that he has taken a second wife?"

"Sir Gilbert married again, and not a year since my dear Griselda was alive?"

Mr. Pierce nodded.

"To whom? What is the creature's name? How long has he known her?"

"Her name now is Lady Linton. He made her acquaintance about five or six months before your daughter was drowned."

"That is precisely what I suspected!" cried Mrs. Gower in great excitement.

"I was certain of it. I said to my husband again and again, 'There is another woman at the bottom of this.'"

"That reminds me ma'am. If this investigation is to be proceeded with, absolute secrecy is necessary. Above all things, Mr. Gower must suspect nothing of your knowledge."

"Why?"

"Because Mr. Gower is in frequent communication with Sir Gilbert Linton, and is not only his friend, but also, I believe, an old acquaintance of the present Lady Linton."

"Oh, the infamous man, the monster, the wicked base creature! Why did I ever marry him?"

"Ah!" Mr. Pierce made a little gesture which signified that this question was open to a good deal of private inquiry.

"Go on, Mr. Pierce; do not regard my emotion. Tell me all; let me know everything."

Here Mr. Pierce thought that the time had come to strike.

"As you may suppose ma'am," said he, rising and thrusting his hands into his pockets, "this knowledge has not been acquired without a good deal of trouble and expense on our part. If the investigation ends here, I shall be a loser. That is my affair. One must speculate in every business. I have given you sufficient proof, I think, that we are neither stupid or dishonest. If you still think the result of our inquiries will not be worth the cost, you are at liberty to withdraw at once; but if you desire to know anything further from me concerning Sir Gilbert Linton and Lady Linton—and your husband—you must sign this little memorandum of agreement, empowering us to carry on inquiries in your behalf at a payment of two guineas per diem for a space not exceeding six months from the present date."

Saying this, Mr. Pierce pulled out the bundle of letters from his pocket, and, after opening half a dozen envelopes, at length found the copy of agreement, which he handed over to the lady.

Mrs. Gower read the form of agreement through, and sat for some moments in silent reflection, tapping the paper with the rim of her glasses.

"It is not a trifling sum that I may be compelled to pay," she said at length.

"Before signing this agreement, I ought to have a more defined prospect of success. The facts—if they are facts—which you have produced may be all that you can obtain."

"Oh, yes," murmured Mr. Pierce thoughtfully, looking up at the ceiling over his glasses, "I think you are right there! It's a fair suggestion. Do you think, ma'am," he proceeded turning his glance down to his client—"do you think a man could keep a secret from his wife?"

"Not if she wished to know it," answered Mrs. Gower sharply.

"And there are very few secrets that a wife doesn't want to know, generally speaking," said Mr. Pierce, with a chuckle. "Now Mr. Gower was a widower when you married him. Do you think, if he was suspected of having murdered his first wife, you would have found out the truth very soon after your marriage? This is merely a suggestion to prove the case."

"Of course I should."

"You think that any woman, living constantly with her husband and on affectionate terms with him, would in the course of a few months discover whether the charges against him were true or false?"

After considering the question for a minute, Mrs. Gower replied—

"Yes; I think that any woman with ordinary common sense would discover that—after marriage certainly, if not before."

"Then I fancy I can give you some assurance of discovering more facts than I have already produced."

Saying this, Mr. Pierce had recourse once more to the bundle of letters in his pocket, and, taking out a bulky packet, held it up and said—

"This, ma'am, contains a faithful copy of the present Lady Linton's diary, as I am given to understand. As yet I have only just glanced at it, for it came to me only by this morning's post. It is not the whole of the diary, nor anything like the whole. Apparently it begins at the date of the lady's first meeting with Sir Gilbert; but I am assured that the diary contains a complete record of the writer's experiences and reflections up to the present day. I may tell you that my partner is now residing with Sir Gilbert and his wife, and has access to Lady Linton's diary." Mr. Pierce looked at his slippers, as if he were rather ashamed of his partner. "The opportunities of seeing the diary and copying from it are naturally few and brief—an hour or two each day is about the average; but we may reasonably expect to get the whole of it in time. I am told that there are facts relating to Mr. Gower which will be of great interest to you."

"You will let me read that and what follows?" Mrs. Gower asked eagerly.

"Certainly. I will give you this packet as soon as you have signed the agreement."

"Give me a pen."

With some difficulty Mr. Pierce found ink that would flow and a pen that would write, and, having brushed the desk with his coat-sleeve, invited Mrs. Gower to put her name to the agreement. This she did, and then handing the paper to Mr. Pierce said—

"Now give me that woman's diary," Mr. Pierce handed her the packet.

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

There may be several of our readers who do not know what evolution means. For the benefit of such it affords us pleasure to state that, according to Herbert Spencer, evolution is simply "an integration of matter and concomitant dissipation of motion, during which the matter passes from an indefinite, incoherent homogeneity, to definite coherent heterogeneity, and during which the retained motion undergoes a parallel transformation." Now that they know the definition of evolution, they will marvel that it never occurred to them before.

Modern Algiers.

A traveler arriving at Algiers by rail naturally feels a sense of disappointment, as if he were come upon a modern French town with its streets, large warehouses, colonnades, and gay shop windows. This is modern Algiers; and it lies along the borders of the sea for a distance of two miles or more, and on the rising hillside, three or four blocks upward. High above the French buildings, and directly back of them, rises what is left of the old Arab city. The houses, white as an advanced knowledge of the art of whitewashing can make them, are irregularly piled together, like a huge mass of rock candy. A flight of five hundred steps leads to the Kasba, or port, that surmounts the height; and many other streets and lanes, dark, narrow and circuitous, lead to the same point, giving the old town a triangular shape. Scattered over the hills on either side of the city one sees a large number of villas; those belonging to the French and the rich Hebrews are more to the left of the town, while to the right live a large number of English, who occupy a tract of land extending three or four miles beyond Algiers. The impression of the place is much grander when one approaches it by water; its fine harbor, with the forts, lighthouse, and a mass of buildings of dazzling whiteness, terminating in the grand old fort on the summit, and the Moorish villas which surround the bay, half concealed by the luxuriance of the foliage, make Algiers one of the most beautiful cities. The climate is absolute perfection. Neither hot nor cold, but allowing one always to sit with open windows. The seasons are not marked by the budding of trees and the putting forth of flowers, for this is going on throughout the year.

Greeley's Casual Lunch

Speaking of Horace Greeley, the anecdotes which have been going the rounds of the press about his wonderful powers of digestion, recall one of Parton's stories. Greeley was much interested in the log cabin campaign, and during it could think and talk of nothing else. One night he was invited out to tea. The hour came. All were present, but Greeley did not appear. After waiting a reasonable time, the rest of the party sat down and ate their meal. A half hour after they had finished, in came Mr. Greeley. He said nothing about being late, and apparently had forgotten about taking anything to eat. He sat down, and at once began to talk about the campaign. The lady of the house attempted to ask him if he had had his tea, but he brushed the question aside, and went on talking.

She went out and brought in a large cake basket, holding perhaps a half peck of doughnuts, rich and greasy, but not bad to taste; these she handed to Mr. Greeley supposing he would take one or two, and then pass them along. He took the dish mechanically, and placed it in his lap. He then took a doughnut and munched away unconsciously as he talked. This eaten he took another, and so went on eating and talking, to the surprise of all, until the half peck was entirely eaten up. As he finished the last one, the lady took away the dish, and I suppose on the principle that cheese is good for digestion, she put a plate of this in its place, Mr. Greeley talking all the time.

A moment later and his hand instinctively sought the cheese. He took it up, block after block, and before he had finished talking, the plate was empty. It was taken away quietly, and the person who witnessed the scene says he don't believe Greeley was either then or afterwards aware that he had eaten anything.

When a young girl finds a four-leaf clover it is a sign that she will be married within a year. It is strange that some families don't hire a farm and sow it all to clover.