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MARCH 29, 1893.

Shall sin ennoble? Still is all
The end but bitterness and gall?
Yet closer, fondlier is pressed
The prodigal to loving breast,
And him the mother holds most dear
Who, sinning oft, returns sincere.
Shall he, who all of sin hath known,
Of Death, who every seed hath sown,
In hopeless, withering, curs'd despair,
Not find the birth of love and prayer,
And, broken, learn 'neath scourging rod,
Through sin is suffering, and through suffering
God?" Z.

ONE NIGHT IN A BALL-ROOM.

A SUMMER IDYLL.

Ἀνδρὶ τοι χρεὼν
Μνήμην προσεῖναι, τερπνὸν εἴ τί που πάθοι.
Sophocles.

There is a time to dance.—Solomon.

It was towards the close of a blazing afternoon in August that a picturesque group of ladies and gentlemen stood on the wharf of the fair town of Viae Umbrosae, gazing out over the lake. Philosophical resignation might be seen perched on the brow of some; the faces of others expressed a stern determination to enjoy themselves in the teeth of circumstances; others, again, wore the truly Anglo-Saxon expression of "suppressed agony and intense gloom." Their garb and equipment were calculated to attract the attention of the casual observer. Some carried valises, others bore lunch-baskets of plethoric suggestiveness; while the ladies carried those small hand-bags, the contents of which are as much a matter of speculation to man as those of the mystic caskets at the Eleusinia were

to the uninitiated, or as the once dreaded majesty of the Chariot of the Sun to the curious Archaeologist.

Despite the glowing heat shed by the now almost horizontal rays of the setting sun, close-buttoned overcoats and cloaks surprised the eye on every side; and it did not need the apparition of a solitary but unmistakable dress-coat tail, which, escaping from beneath an all-too-short summer jacket, imparted to its wearer a decidedly novel, if somewhat one-sided, appearance, to inform the onlooker that these were the beauty and chivalry of the lovely town aforesaid, clad as modern civilization demanded, or as fancy dictated; that they were bound for a Calico Ball held at the neighbouring town of Elithiopolis, in honour of the Venetian Gondola Association; and that they were awaiting, with what patience they might, the arrival of the good ship *Argo*, chartered to carry them over the twenty-five miles which separated them from their destination.

"Whence and what art thou, execrable shape?" said the Professor, apostrophizing the tail. A faint and timid murmur, to the effect that if the gentleman could not "point a moral" he could at least "add on a tail," was heard from the critic; but the rest of his sentence, together with some unintelligible reference to the *Caudine Forks*, was fortunately lost in the hum of voices which heralded the approach of the *Argo*.

That goodly vessel presently came to anchor at the wharf; the party hastened aboard; and after some delay, enlivened, however, for those standing within a yard or two of the boiler, by the interesting efforts of the captain to open the safety-valve with a stick of cordwood, they began to move down that beautiful bay which, as every dweller in *Viae Umbrosae* knows, and does not hesitate to affirm, is far superior to the Bay of Naples.

The stern of the boat was occupied by a merry party; a lively company held the cabin, and a giddy group ornamented the prow. A dropping fire of laughter sounded continually from stem to stern, interrupted ever and anon by a perfect volley, at some demurely malicious insinuation from she-who-must-be-obeyed; or mingled with groans of agony from those whose ears were assailed by some preternaturally ghastly fun of the Doctor's. Indeed, all went merry as a marriage bell; but by this time it was the tea bell which alone could awaken a responsive echo in every heart. Bell there was none, but a sound of rattling crockery, and a certain popping of corks formed an eloquent substitute to a company who, by this time, were "all agog to dash through thick and thin." Parenthetically, I may report the observation of our Apicius, who, in an expressive aside, remarked that it was the sandwiches which were thick, and the claret-cup that was thin; but his well known hypercritical taste caused his insinuation to pass unnoticed.

'Twas a pleasant sight to see the beaming face of the Epicure, as he gloated over a quadrant of pie, reposing on the piece of brown paper which served him for a plate; and interesting too, to watch the studied carelessness and innocent unconsciousness with which the ethereal Heloise helped herself from adjacent baskets.

"Again, again, again,—yet the havoc did not slack." Pleasant, too, it was to observe the Professor, (so called on the *lucus a non lucendo* principle), with a sandwich in one hand, a glass in the other, and a cake lying expectant on his knee

"Baskets to right of him
Bottles to left of him
Dishes in front of him.—
—Nobody wondered:"

for be it known that the principles of the Professor were of the easy, comfortable Horatian stamp; and his philosophy, on such occasions as these, was, to use his own expression, of a "hand to mouth" order. The Capitalist, too, was observed to be "staying himself with flagons, and comforting himself with apples," but it could not have been because he was "sick of love"—judging at least from the general tenor of his subsequent conduct.