

tone louder than it was his intention; "and dead, as the result of a spirit crushed and broken."

"Pray keep your opinion to yourself," said Sir Harry, fiercely. "At her own request it was I who sent for medical aid, and, as it suited my purpose to employ you, I am willing to pay you for your services, and you are a witness that her death is the result of natural causes."

What a mockery! And did Sir Harry Chillington think to cheat his own soul by such sophistry? Is it possible that a man of education could become so forgetful of that terrible power that the wicked possess against their own will—conscience—as to flatter himself that, however such an excuse might for the time prevail, truth would not come back to him in greater force from being for the present evaded, and in moments, too, the most unwelcome? Natural causes, indeed! that attenuated frame as it lay stiffening before him for decay was a mute witness against the illusion he was seeking to impose upon himself. Not from natural causes did the mother of Mad Tom lie there in the silence of death, but as the result of false promises and a cruel deception. She had been caressed by the baronet until others had drawn away his sensual soul from caring for her; and then, almost the only interest he took in her welfare was to permit her to make her hair in that wretched dwelling, and to die, shut out from the sympathy of mankind. The note brought to the Priory by Mad Tom was the struggling effort of departing life, that she might obtain another interview with him, and plead with him to care for the poor boy after her decease. That she might do this successfully, she begged as a favor granted to her dying request, that he would bring to her medical aid. The nurse answered her desire; and that he might in some measure silence his own conscience, as well as be able to stop the surmises of unfriendly enquiries concerning her death, Sir Harry responded.

"You will see to the corpse," said the baronet to a deaf old crone, who had been discharging the duty of nurse, and on whose silence he could depend in keeping secret the fact that himself was present at the time of her death. "Get what you may require, and bring me the account."

The old witch, with a wicked twinkling in her eye, dropped a low curtsy in response, and mumbling through her closed and toothless gums some unintelligible expression, prepared to light them from the room.

Casting a look on Mad Tom as he left the house, the baronet muttered a fearful imprecation which, had but the smallest portion of it been realized by the idiotic creature, would have consumed him on the spot. But vengeance was reserving the boy for its own work.

The first streak of dawn was marking the distant horizon as Sir Harry and the apothecary left Bromley House. Placing his hand in his pocket, the former drew forth, slowly and grudgingly, the promised fee, and counted it into the hand of the forlorn creature he had employed. The sight of such a gilded palm astonished the man of physic, and, being paid, the pair separated—one to take a bride-path leading to the Priory, the other to return to his little shop. Yet, as the latter watched the departure of the man whose mingled pride and covetousness produced the drama before us, he felt it impossible to respond to his "good morning," for his lips were locked in silence by the hand of a strange fortune.

CHAPTER II.

THE APPREHENSION OF POVERTY.

As already appears, the Five-Post Lane apothecary was a man enervated through having to contend with unceasing difficulties. The shade of business and domestic sorrow had for years rested on this man, the latter because of the former, and had increased with the number of his family. Being of a sanguine temperament, he had held on tenaciously to hope as long as it was possible for mortal to do so, but circumstances had been too much for him, and he had at length become so enfeebled by the friction of sorrow as easily to succumb to the most gloomy apprehension. Fear had now become his constant companion; and having fixed its cruel fangs into his soul, it gnawed away at his strength of mind until an unmitigated dread filled his heart, and cast its shadow on his daily life. Yet occasionally, and as the result of the reaction of a mind stretched to the utmost limit of endurance, a momentary break would take place in his gloomy existence, producing a transient exercise of quiet even on his own misfortunes.

In early life, and wrongly calculating the success that would attend the practice of his profession, the apothecary took to himself a wife. Struck with her personal appearance, he sought no other dowry than the privilege of calling her personal charms his own; and, having obtained this desire, he threw all his energies into his profession. But, do what he might, success fled him; and as his family increased in the ratio of one per year, so his troubles multiplied in equal proportion. Indeed, it may be fairly said that money and the apothecary were strangers; the business of his life appeared to barter drugs in just sufficient quantity to keep himself and family from dying of cold and starvation. Yet even this, and getting the cheapest drugs possible, left him on the wrong side of the credit list, and only that he had nothing to sell, his home would frequently have been invaded by such as fatten on human misery.

Such being the ordinary condition of this man, his surprise as he saw the, to him, enormous sum of twenty guineas lying in the palm of his hand, and shining in the first rays of the early dawn was complete, and for a moment sealed his lips in silence.

Having parted with his patron, he reflected that, doubtless, in a moment of excitement, and as a bribe to tempt him to face the tempest of the terrible night that had just passed away, Sir Harry had bestowed upon him the money he held in his hand, in the hope that nothing more would be heard of the matter. Yet even this reflection, from the long rule of apprehension over him, filled him with alarm, and he perplexed himself with the fear that mischief might grow out of it which would possibly lead to his being hanged; or, failing this, whether the entire scene was not an illusion forced upon him by the evil one, under the stress of his poverty, and that he might gain full dominion over him. Sitting on the back of "Bones," and ruminating until fancy became distorted, the apothecary appeared the picture of misery as he soliloquized:

"Am I dreaming? Dreaming, or bewitched, that's certain. My reason teaches me this is a reality. Yet, I feel it to be impossible, and that I am made the victim for the sport of some awful power. Bah! Seeing the guineas shining in the sun, and do you ask if it is a reality? I do, that's sure; and every ray shot forth by what I sincerely hope is precious metal, and bearing the genuine stamp of the King's face upon it, becomes an inciter of my worst apprehension. What if it should take to itself wings and fly away? and under this new thought, being aroused from his gloomy reverie, he quickly placed the money in his pocket.

Assuring himself from this act that it was possible for it to be real, and that the money was now secure, he drove his heels against the frame work of "Bones," and at the same time jerking at the bridle, that unhappy brute, which seemed to retain in memory the promised feed of corn, and had during the night been working it up into a brilliant anticipation, now, in the hope of realizing it, began his homeward journey with far greater spirit than he had evinced since his youth departed.

It was at—for him—a remarkable pace that "Bones" trotted down the muddy road, and possibly he would have continued at this rate of speed until he had reached the kitchen, which formed his stable, had not his effort been suddenly checked by such a tight reining up as almost overset him. Apprehension was abroad on that road in force at that early hour, and as though determined to vent all its cruel power upon the poor apothecary, for a fresh idea had now entered into his shattered mind, and this had nerved his arm with more than ordinary strength thus to check the career of "Bones." In a feeling of security he deposited the money in his breeches pocket, but now the thought had seized him, lest from want of use the stitches which held the different parts of that receptacle together should be so weakened by age as to yield easily to the pressure put upon them, and readily permit the treasure to work its way out and escape him. Acting on this fear he had stopped the brute which carried him, and now removing his hat, which he rested on the front of the saddle, he drew the money forth. Piece after piece he dragged out cautiously, until being convinced of their safety as he held them between his hands he rattled them from side to side, as though they were hot, and then carefully opening his palm he breathed on them for luck, and then deposited them, one at a time, in the crown of his hat. A careful scrutiny of the suspected pocket followed this act, and having fully convinced himself, by pulling at the stitches, of its capability to conserve the guineas in safety, he then returned them, but, in doing so, rubbed each one of them over his right eye, in the belief that this action would prove a prelude to a prosperous future. Putting "Bones" again into motion, the thought of home arose in his mind, and while fancy portrayed his reception there, he again indulged in soliloquy.

"What will they say?" he began. "Will they believe that all this money is mine? It is impossible they can do so; and will they not think me mad when I tell them? Indeed, should I show them all, would they not become filled with alarm, lest in a fit of desperation I had been driven to turn highwayman? I know I am not a likely person to act thus, but when distress goads, who can tell to what point a man may leap? Shall I show them all my wealth? This is an important question; for, should I do so, and should the children in their glee at the sight speak of the matter out of doors, I am ruined. The knowledge that I possess such an amount of cash would instantly bring the vultures upon me, and in the belief that I had more they would squeeze the very life from me. Yet it would be hard not to tell them, for none of them ever saw such a mountain of gold, and it may be a long time before they get the chance again to do so. I think I will tell them; yet I am afraid lest in their joy at the sight they should betray me and bring ruin on us all.

"Oh, dear! I hope this event will not turn my brain; and yet I am beginning to fear lest the hour of my prosperity should prove the signal for my destruction, and that having passed through an existence of clouds and storm, I shall sink beneath the rays of the golden splendour surrounding me. It would be an awful thing to die just now. Death fled me in the time of my wretchedness, and to intrude his unwelcome presence on this the hour of my prosperity would be tantamount to cruelty. The thought of such

a probability positively makes me nervous. Yes, I will tell them. We have been one in suffering, and now they shall share with me my pleasure to the full. 'Every dog has its day.' Misery has had its day over me; but now it is my turn; and although mine may be a short affair, we will enjoy it while it remains.

"Dead from repletion; horrid thought! and yet I have no doubt that such would be the case were I to permit them to eat as much as they choose. Well, who can wonder at it? for not one of the eleven ever remember the time, sleeping or waking, when they were not hungry. But for once in their lives they shall have a feed, even if it kills them. Yet I sincerely hope it will not do so. We cannot afford to die. Living, we can manage to hold on to each other, although goodness knows how it is done; but if one of us were to die the rest are ruined entirely, as it would take all we possess to pay the expenses of a funeral. By Jingo! what pleasure is in store for them at home. I shall be looked upon by them all as being a veritable hero; and my declaration of our good luck will claim for me a thorough ovation. Ovation! that's the word. We'll form a procession, and the eleven, with their mother at their head and myself following, carrying the bridle and saddle of "Bones," will march around the back yard and through the kitchen into the parlour, and upstairs and down-stairs, to do honour to the man who braved the darkness and the tempest—and I think I may say death, too, for I might have been killed—to snatch his wife and family from the jaws of starvation. There! I am getting sentimental. Well, who can be surprised at it with this change in my circumstances? Prosperity has created a feeling which bubbles through a part of my heart long unoccupied, and the thought arising from it is more than I can withstand. My head fairly reels; and the cause of it lies either with the strange emotions filling my soul, or with the thumping glass of brandy Sir Harry gave me from his flask to keep the cold out. Quicker, "Bones!"

As the apothecary uttered this latter sentence, he accompanied the demand by again bringing the heels of his boots into fresh contact with the ribs of the horse; and that animated trestle, always in greater haste on a homeward journey, plucked up his remaining spirit and put it forth to its fullest energy. Nor was the quickening of his pace untimely, for the next minute found the man suffused in a cold perspiration, and nearly paralyzed from fear. A strange sound had fallen on his ear, a sound which filled his mind with the dread of murder and robbery, and to his excited imagination it appeared that his throat was already at the mercy of a ruffian who threatened to operate on it unpleasantly, that he might take from his victim the twenty guineas he was so carefully preserving. But the cause for this alarm was less dreadful, and was nothing more than the hooting of an owl returning to its nest, and shrieking out its hatred of approaching day.

(To be continued.)

OUR POETS.

We cheerfully publish the following tribute to our native poets from the pen of one who has already made his mark, as a pioneer in our magazine literature, and the author of such excellent works as "Evenings in a Library" and "The Earl of Dufferin's Administration in Canada."

In a recent magazine article, Mr. John Lesperance, himself an elegant and forcible writer, has some good words to say concerning Canadian poetic literature. We have few poets in Canada worthy of the name, and perhaps on that account as much as by reason of the excellence of the work which they have produced, we should treasure our native bards, and note out to them all the encouragement which their genius or talent merits. It must be confessed we do not treat our literary men fairly. Heavens, perhaps the greatest of them all—certainly he wrote the most marked poem ever written in Canada, the strong and powerful drama of "Saul"—was suffered to die unnoticed, save by a few friends, in the city of Montreal. His books never sold as they should have done. "Saul" passed through three editions.—the last one was issued in Boston,—but the author barely paid the expenses of publication by them. "Jephtha's Daughter" was another commercial failure, though a noble literary effort, full of the promise which later developed itself, and "Count Fillippo, or the Unequal Marriage," has always been a house-keeper on the publisher's shelves. Charles Sangster, who has done so much to perpetuate Canadian rivers and Canadian scenery, in his tuneful lyric poem "The St. Lawrence and the Saguenay," has received the cold shoulder from our people, and been made to feel the pangs of neglect. But, poets like Longfellow long ago recognized his ability, and the latter has not hesitated to avail himself of choice excerpts from our own poet's works for his pretty collection of Poems of Places. Even John Reade, one of our most mellifluous singers, has had to go abroad for a reputation. Matthew Arnold—a severe and formidable critic, ten or twelve years ago saw the *divine effluence* in the author of the "Prophecy of Merlin" and without hesitation called him a true poet. So did Longfellow, and so did Whipple, if we mistake not. But while all this was very pleasing to the writer of gentle and musical verse, he sighed naturally enough for an appreciation of his labors nearer his own home. That appreciation has never come. The

few who know Reade and his modest bearing, and gentleness, appreciate and love him, and read often his slender volume of poetry, but he might never have existed so far as the masses of the people are concerned. He might never have written a line of poetry, so far as our so-called patrons of the arts and of literature are concerned. His sensitive mind shrinks from notoriety, and his book is too ill-known to find the readers it should have. Mr. Lesperance in his clever paper, which has the fault only of being too short, strives to make the little which his friend has done in sonnet writing, win the favor of the public by calling fresh attention to its varied excellence as a whole. We trust this will have its due effect. Surely nothing more is needed than an introduction to the gems which may be found among what Mr. Lesperance beautifully calls the "Cameos of literature." Mr. Reade's admirers will not think the estimate which is placed on their poet's work too high perhaps, when it is stated that after Longfellow he is the first sonneteer in America. Certainly much of his verse is of the same noble character, of the same high endeavor, of the same sublimity and grandeur, but there is no echo, conscious or unconscious, of the New England singer. If Reade recalls any one, it is Tennyson, and at times, though faintly, a little of John Keats, but for the most part he is an original writer, and a thinker of singular delicacy and gentleness. The critic will search in vain for a halting line or a limping verse. The columns of the *Chronicle* have often been enriched by the fruits of Mr. Reade's muse, and in that way our readers have had an opportunity of reading for themselves some of the tenderest things ever written by a home poet. Mr. Lesperance quotes three sonnets in his article, but he could easily have proved his assertions by any other three in the collection, which we hope, some day, to see in a less fragmentary and more enduring form.

A very small part of Mr. Lesperance's criticism, or shall we call it "apology," is devoted to French-Canadian sonneteers, Mr. Fréchette, whose "Avril" in a late number of *The Atlantic Monthly* will be remembered, coming in for judicious acknowledgment. Two pieces are reprinted, the pretty, glowing sonnet "Belœil Lake," and the lines to Miss Chauveau, a daughter of the esteemed Sheriff of Montreal. Mr. Lesperance should amplify his paper.

HUMOROUS.

A GREEN Christmas makes a lean plumber.

AN honest milkman is the scarcest work of God.

"That's what beats me," as the boy said when he saw his father take the skate strap down from its accustomed nail.

YOUNG swell: "Schneider, I should like to have my moustache dyed." Polite barber: "Certainly; did you bring it with you?"

THE King of the Belgians gets only \$1,643 a day, and, if the wages are again reduced, will have to saw his own wood this winter.

THE two important events in the life of a man are when he examines his upper lip and sees the hair coming, and when he examines the top of his head and sees the hair going.

A CORRESPONDENT wishes to know the best way to winter geraniums. The best and cheapest way is to sling 'em over the back fence and buy a new lot in the spring.

WHEN you deprive a boy of the privilege of taking off his coat and vest together at one pull, and leaving his boots in the middle of the floor, what do you expect he has to live for?

WHAT is the difference between a hornet and a flea? One difference is that when you put your finger on a flea it isn't there, but when you put your finger on a hornet it is there.

"WHAT is a Bible?" asks an exchange. How stupid some editors are. "Why, what lunatic don't know that a Bible is a—er—is a—who walked off with our encyclopedia, anyhow?"

"ANNIE, is it proper to say this 'ere, that 'ere?" "Why, Kate, of course not." "Well, don't know whether it is proper not, but I feel cold in this ear from that air."

A SOCIETY man thought he would make a casual call the other evening, and was somewhat taken aback when the servant remarked as the door was held open: "Third door, back." A retreat was in order, and was duly executed.

AN English physician says: "If you feel like sneezing, throw yourself flat on your back." Yes, or it will do as well to turn a hand-spring and then crawl under a sofa. By the time you're accomplished this you'll have got over wanting to sneeze, which will amply repay you for your trouble.

JUST as he finished his little serenade the moon came out from behind the cloud, and she, the mother of the moon of his heart, leaned out of the window, and upon him emptied about two gallons of cistern water. "After me, the deluge," he simply and prettily said, and as he walked briskly away the plashing aqueous in his light gaiter made it sound as though he were carrying home a jug.

SPECIAL NOTICE.

Pimples eruptions on the face so annoying to the young and difficult to cure, can be entirely eradicated from the system by using ACNE PILLS. They contain nothing injurious nor, apart from the disease, do they in any way affect the constitution, save as a healthy tonic and an aid to digestion. Box with full directions for treatment and cure mailed to any part of Canada for \$1. Sample packets 12 cents in stamps. Address, W. HEARN Chemist, Ottawa.

A CARD.

To all who are suffering from the errors and indiscretions of youth, nervous weakness, early decay, loss of manhood, &c., I will send a recipe that will cure you, FREE OF CHARGE. This great remedy was discovered by a missionary in South America. Send a self-addressed envelope to the REV. JOSEPH T. INMAN, Station D, New York City.