

ONE RAINY DAY.

At Chamouni I woke one morn,
Hearing afar an Alpine horn
Upon some gladder to the North,
And thought, although it rained forlorn,
To saunter forth.

There, in the hall, outside a door,
Waiting their owners, on the floor,
I saw two shining pairs of shoes;
One pair was right—*or*, may be, more—
The other, two.

I wondered who those gaiters wore
That such a look of courage bore;
They seemed alert and battle-scarred,
And all their heels were wounded sore
On mountain sherd.

The lofty steps spurned the ground
As if up high Olympus bound;
The treacherous soles were worn away;
The smooth and taper toes were round
And reticent.

Sudden my anxious thought essayed
To count the companies they had made,
And all their pilgrimages view;
O'er glen and glacier, gorge and glade,
My fancy flew.

I saw them thread the Brünnig Pass;
I saw them scale the Mer de Glace,
And Rilloberg, beyond Zermatt;
I saw them mount the mighty mass
Of Gornegrat.

I saw them climb Bernina's height;
I saw them bathe in Rigi's light,
And linger by the Gröschbach fall;
I saw them grope in Gondo's night,
And Muster Thal.

I saw them find the Jungfrau's head,
And leap the Grindel gorge's head,
And bound o'er Col de Colson's ice,
And on Belle Tola's summit tread
The Edelweiss.

The vision shamed my listless mood,
Banished my inert lassitude,
And fired me with intent sublime,
I vowed when sunshine came I would
Go forth and climb!

With new ambition I arose,
The foot-gear scanned from heel to toe,
(One pair was right—the other, two),
And blessed the owners brave of those
Heroic shoes.

W. A. CROFT, in *The Century*.

LITTLE CARROTON'S
HOLIDAY.

Mr. Cutbill was a busy lawyer, a bachelor, and not very fond of children, so that his married sister who lived in the country made a mistake when she wrote to beg that he would provide a day and an evening's amusement for little Carroton, who was returning to Westminster school after his Christmas holidays. The boy was due at his tutor's house in Dean's-yard on a Wednesday; but Mr. Cutbill's sister suggested that if he came up to London on the Tuesday, her brother might make him spend an agreeable day, and take him to see a pantomime afterwards. Little Carroton was not related in any way to Mr. Cutbill's sister, but he was the son of a friend of hers, and was said to be an intelligent boy well worth knowing.

Mr. Cutbill consented to entertain the youth, and little Carroton accordingly arrived at the lawyer's private residence in Gower-street one January morning, towards half-past nine. It was raining hard, and Mr. Cutbill thought it would never do to take the boy out of doors in such weather. He would be getting wet feet, catch cold, and so forth; besides, the lawyer was absolutely obliged to go to his office for two or three hours; so as soon as Carroton had been installed opposite a cup of coffee and a sausage, Mr. Cutbill said to him in a tone that was meant to be paternal, "Look here, James: can I trust you to be a good boy whilst I am out? I shall be back for luncheon, and then I'll take you to see the wax-works, and in the evening we'll go to Drury Lane. So, as you're going to have two treats to-day, I hope you'll keep out of mischief."

"Oh, certainly, if you wish it," said little Carroton, eyeing the lawyer with some surprise.

"If you'll mind not to leave this room, and not to play with the fire, I'll see if I have any picture-books."

"Don't trouble yourself, sir," answered the boy, on whose chubby face there was a slight flush of offended dignity.

"There's a friend of mine who lives in the neighborhood, and I thought of going to hunt him up."

"A friend? Is he a boy, like yourself?"

"Well, he's fourteen."

It was so long since Mr. Cutbill had been a boy, that he had forgotten all the habits of the species and the manner of addressing them. In the red-headed, blue-eyed, merry-faced lad before him he saw only a mere child who wanted to go and splash about in the rain, perhaps to make mud-pies and be run over by cabs. "No, I must positively forbid that," he said. "You are under my charge to-day, and must do as I tell you. Think what your mamma would say if you were brought home on a stretcher." Then, suddenly, a happy thought occurred to Mr. Cutbill. Why should he not set the boy to do a little useful work by way of making the time pass? He had read somewhere that boys enjoy a half-holiday better than a whole one; so he darted out of the room and returned with his washing-book. "Look here, James; I'll see how you can do sums. Just go through this book, add up all the weekly accounts of the past

quarter, and then divide the total of the number of weeks so as to get at the average of my weekly expenditure. If you do all that correctly by the time I return, and without making any blots, I'll give you half-a-crown to spend at school."

Having said this, Mr. Cutbill retired, thinking he had hit upon an ingenious device for keeping his charge out of mischief. Little Carroton's face was a picture.

Public-school boys have strong expressions for describing such men as Mr. Cutbill; they call them "howling snobs."

The egregious "cheek" of forbidding Carroton "to play with the fire," and the utter villainy of compelling him to do sums in a house where he had come as a guest in holiday time, could only be matched by the impudent offer of half-a-crown to one who had no less than four sovereigns in his pocket. The whole thing was indeed so "rich," that after a brief spell of speechless indignation, Carroton laughed. He took up the lawyer's "beastly" washing-book, and got through the work set him in half-an-hour, after which he added some supplementary averages of his own. He computed how many shirts Mr. Cutbill would wear in the course of a lifetime, supposing he lived to the age of seventy; and how much he would disburse in getting his socks washed during the same period, and so forth; but these calculations only amused him for another half-hour. Then he yawned, started out of the window, and was startled by the postman's double knock. What devil of vindictive mischief was it that made him whisper then: "By Jove, I'll just answer the old cad's letters for him!"

Little Carroton slunk into the passage and found four letters in the box. He left one, in case a servant should come up and collect the delivery; but the other three he carried into the dining-room where he had been working. The breakfast things had not yet been removed, and there was some water in the slop-basin, by means of which the boy speedily ungummed the three envelopes. To say that he felt the slightest compunction at what he was doing would be incorrect; he thought only of having a lark, and paying out old Cutbill for his snobbery.

The first letter was a printed invitation to dine with a Peer; the second was a note from a lady who signed herself "Flora Higgins," and wrote thanking Mr. Cutbill for a legal opinion he had given her in a friendly way. She alluded several times to her daughter Rosa, who was so pleased to hear Mr. Cutbill's cold was better, and hoped so much Mr. Cutbill would look in soon to take a cup of tea, and hear her sing one of his favorite songs, which she had been practising. The third letter was in a man's hand, and referred evidently to some difference that had arisen between Mr. Cutbill and the writer. The latter—one Brown—wrote, however, to say that he trusted Mr. Cutbill would frankly accept the explanations he had tendered, and that the painful misunderstanding between them would now cease.

It has been said that young Carroton was an intelligent boy. He proved it by the calm deliberation with which he now went to work; for, having found a sample of Mr. Cutbill's handwriting in the adjoining study, to which he repaired on tip-toe, he applied himself during half-an-hour to imitating that writing, till he attained proficiency. He then indited the three following answers to the lawyer's correspondents, his face being as serious as a judge's whilst he wrote, though there was a suspicious twinkling in his eyes.

To the Peer he addressed himself thus:—

"My Lord,—It is very kind of you to invite me to dinner but I am afraid I cannot accept, because, since I last saw you, I have suddenly changed my political opinions, and think you are altogether wrong about everything. I shall be happy to make friends with you again if you will agree to think as I do; but, perhaps, being obstinate you won't like to do this."

"So no more at present from

"Your Lordship's obedient servant,
Long Cutbill."

Next came Mrs. Higgins' turn:—

"My Dear Mrs. Higgins.—Your kind letter has pleased me so much, because of its allusions to dear Rosa. I am so fond of her, that I have been quite miserable from wondering all night whether she would marry me, and that must excuse the shakiness of my handwriting this morning. I am sure I should make a good husband if Rosa would promise to keep my washer-woman's account correctly balanced. I am very particular about this. Please think over the matter, and let me have an early favorable answer, which will oblige,—Your truly,

"P. S.—Shouldn't I like to catch dear Rosa under the mistletoe!"

The gentleman who wanted to be reconciled to Mr. Cutbill came in for this kindly misadventure:—

"My Dear Brown.—It was I who was in the wrong all through our quarrel, so please say nothing more in the matter. I have a vile temper, which I freely acknowledge, and if you had kicked me downstairs when we last met it would have served me right, though I might have objected at the time. Pray come to dine with me on Saturday evening at seven o'clock and we will have one of the best bottles of champagne out of my cellar. Don't trouble yourself to write and say you'll come, as I shall out of town to-morrow and next day, but will be back in time for our dinner, which shall be a rouser.—Ever your friend,
Long Cutbill."

Little Carroton put the letters in envelopes, directed them, and stamped them with stamps of his own; after which, having hesitated a moment, he flung the three original letters into the fire. He thought at first of restoring them to their covers and laying them on the lawyer's table, but he concluded that the fun would be much greater if he simply suppressed them. He was seated by the fire, studying the police reports in *The Times*, and looking as innocent as possible, when Mr. Cutbill returned home towards one o'clock.

Now, if the lawyer had behaved "like a gentleman" for the rest of the day, little Carroton might have had mercy on him. The boy was in doubt about posting the letters he had written, and kept them in his pocket like loaded weapons, ready for reprisals if Mr. Cutbill "checked" him any further. Unfortunately, the lawyer was a dull person, and committed blunder upon blunder in dealing with his small but sensitive guest. He took him to the Tussaud show, but opposite the wax effigy of William Rufus he asked him what date that monarch had ascended the throne! He refused to let little Carroton go the Chamber of Horrors, saying it would excite him. He bade him admire the noble brow of Richard Cobden, and took a mean advantage of the occasion to bore him about Free Trade. Finally, he drew down on himself the contempt of Carroton by misquoting Shakspeare as they were surveying Charles Kemble in the part of Hamlet: "That's Hamlet saying 'My kingdom for a horse,'" remarked the mendacious lawyer.

At Drury Lane in the evening it was worse. Little Carroton derived some amusement from the pantomime, and almost relented in his revengeful purposes; but the miserable lawyer refused to stay for the harlequinade. He said that little boys ought not to be kept out of their beds after half-past ten. Little Carroton silently ground his teeth, and from that moment Mr. Cutbill's punishment was decreed beyond hope of pardon. The three letters were posted in the pill-box of Dean's-yard on the following day, when the boy returned to school.

They were destined to have very remarkable effects on lawyer's future. In the first place, there came to him on the Friday morning a short, but sweet note from Mrs. Higgins:—

"My Dear Mr. Cutbill,—Your original and amusing way of proposing for dear Rosa's hand has made us both laugh, but my beloved child is quite alive to the honor which are conferring on her, and I can promise you that all the affection which you lavish upon her shall be amply repaid in kind. Please come at once; she is waiting for you.—Very faithfully yours,
Flora Higgins."

"What the deuce does this mean?" asked Mr. Cutbill with a blank look. He wrote at once for explanations, and then received a curt note, begging him to call at Mrs. Higgins'. That lady and her daughter imagined that the lawyer cherished the unchivalrous design of retracting his proposal, and this they were determined to prevent. Mr. C. was confronted with his own handwriting. He vowed it was not his, but was driven at last to own that possibly he had written the letter in his sleep. He had heard of such things happening, and though he did not believe he was a somnambulist, he could not, of course, swear that such was not the case.

"But if you wrote the letter in your sleep, did it betray your unspoken thoughts?" was the clever Mrs. Higgins' next searching question. She smiled kindly as she said this, and Mr. Cutbill gave in. After all, why shouldn't he marry dear Rosa! He returned to Gower-street an engaged man; but by that time he had come to guess who was the culprit who had played him this trick, and he thought with indignation of the precocious depravity evinced by little Carroton.

This was on the Saturday, and Mr. Cutbill had scarcely reached home when Brown his quondam friend, marched in with a beaming face. It should be said that this Brown had behaved very badly to Cutbill; but now there was emotion in his eyes as he advanced upon the lawyer and forcibly grasped his hand. "You have acted nobly in forgiving me Cutbill. . . . I shall never forget it. . . . No more generous letter than yours was ever penned; but enough; I've brought a good appetite with me."

"I don't in the least understand you," Mr. Cutbill was about to say, coldly, but he checked himself. Since Brown praised him for his generosity, it was as well to take credit for such a rare virtue. Brown had evidently come to dinner, and as the lawyer always dined well, his sudden arrival did not matter much. But over their wine, by-and-by, when the two gentlemen had quite cemented their reconciliation, Mr. Cutbill thought it best to tell the truth, and avow that it was to a pestilent Westminster boy, named Carroton, that he was indebted for the pleasure of having Brown to dine at his table. As if to corroborate this assertion, that very evening's post brought a letter from the lawyer's third correspondent, the Peer which ran thus:—

"My Dear Mr. Cutbill,—What on earth is the meaning of the enclosed note, which, I presume, is a forgery!—Your truly,
C."

A visit which Mr. Cutbill paid to Westminster School on the Monday night might have had distressing consequences for little Carroton, but for Mrs. Higgins' interference. As it was, the lawyer only went for the purpose of asking how many letters Carroton had thought proper to write in his name, and he smiled—rather a grim smile, though—in cautioning the boy against practical jokes for the future. Little Carroton laid the lesson well to heart. He got many a

welcome reminder to this end from dear Rosa, who, after her marriage, became his firm ally, and often invited him to dine in Gower-street, where she gave him no washing bills to balance, but treated him like a man, and tipped him sovereigns, earning in response his unqualified opinion as to her being a "brick."

A STORY OF AN OLD BACHELOR.

There was a fine old bachelor once, who, having spent most of his life in the field of Mars, knew very little of the camp of Cupid. He was one of those rough-and-ready and honest spirits often met with in his gallant profession—innocent as an infant of almost everything save high integrity and indomitable bravery. He was fifty years old, and his toils nearly over, when Dan Cupid brought him acquainted with a widow Wadman, in whose eye he began to detect something that made him uneasy. During his service he had never seen anything worthy of notice in a woman's eye.

Well, the general had settled down into an amiable, gentlemanly old fellow, living alone, with comfortable wealth around him, and having little to do, save now and then to entertain an old comrade-in-arms, and, together, to fight their battles o'er again. But, alas! over this calm evening of the old general's day a deal of perplexity was doomed to fall, and he soon found himself in troubled water. He floundered about like a caged rat under a pump, and such another melancholy fish out of water never before swallowed the bait, hook and all, of the angling god of love. At length, however, the blunt honesty of his disposition rose uppermost amongst his conflicting plans, and his course was chosen. At school he once studied Othello's defence to recite at an exhibition, but made a great failure; and he now recollected there was something in the defence very much like what he wanted to say. He got the book, immediately clapped on his hat with a determined air, and posted off to the widow's, with Shakspeare under his arm.

"Madam!" said the general, opening his book, at the marked place, with the solemnity of a special pleader at the bar. "Madam—

"Rude am I in speech,
And little blessed with the set-phrases of peace.
For since these arms of mine had seven years' pith
Till now some nine moons waxed they have need
Their dearest action in the tented field;
And little of this great world can I speak
More than pertains to feats of broil and battle,
And therefore—"

Here the general closed the book, wiped his forehead, looked up at the ceiling, and said with a spasmodic jerk, "I want to get married."

The widow laughed for ten minutes by the watch before she could utter a syllable, and then she said, with tears of humor rolling down her good-natured cheeks—

"And who do you want to marry, general?"

"You," said he, flourishing his sword-arm in the air, and assuming a military attitude of defiance, as if he expected an assault from the widow immediately.

"Will you kill me if I marry you?" said the widow, with a merry twinkle in her eye.

"No, madam," replied he, in a most serious and deprecating tone, as if to assure her that no such idea had entered his head.

"Well, then, I think I'll marry you," said the widow.

"Thank you, ma'am: but one thing I am bound to tell you of. I wear a wig."

The widow started, remained silent a moment, and then went into a longer, louder, and merrier laugh than she had indulged in before, at the end of which she drew her seat nearer to the general, gravely laid her hand on his head, gently lifted his wig off, and laid it on the table. The general had never known fear in hot battle, but he now felt a most decisive inclination to run away. The widow laughed again, and the general was about to lay his hat on his denuded head and bolt, when the facetious lady placed her hand on his arm and detained him. She then deliberately raised her other hand to her own head, executed a rapid manoeuvre with her five fingers, pulled off her own head of fine glossy hair, and placing it upon the table by the side of the general's, remained seated, with ludicrous gravity, in front of her accepted lover, quite bald. As may be expected, the general now laughed along with the widow, and they soon grew so merry over the affair that the servant peeped through the keyhole at the noise and saw the old couple bobbing their bald pates at each other like a couple of Chinese mandarins. They were very shortly united.

MUSICAL AND DRAMATIC.

MME. CARRENO has been quite ill in Iowa.

GADE's "Crusaders" is to be given in Boston on April 4.

THE London College of Music may be considered a *fait accompli*.

MADAME SCHUMANN made her expected *réentrée* in London a few weeks since.

THE latest thing in musical prodigies is Miss Dora Becker, violinist, aged eleven.

WILHELM has been touring in Australia and New Zealand, but without much financial success.

LEVY has made his *début* in Paris, at the Folies Bergères. He was warmly received. His wife or at least one of them, is studying for the operatic stage at the Conservatoire.

SAVE for a slight relapse, Sir Michael Costa has continually progressed toward convalescence, but the complete recovery of the famous London conductor will be a work of some time.