A WHITECHAPEL MYSTERY.

BY F. M. JONES.

(*Continued.*)

In this moment of distraction, a tug at his sleeve brought him back to his usual round of drudgery a wretched child implored him to come and look at father Irritated, he shook her off somewhat roughly for him, and tried hard to solve his own problem, and that suddenly but the poor child was importunate, and turning to her, he listened to her tale for a moment He saw that, instead of thwarting him, she had been sent as a ragged and wretched messenger to save him This was one of those cases not infrequent in our homes of the poor, where the mother is the drunkard—by way of a change—and a much worse change The father was a quiet, meek kind of man, getting work when he could, and bringing home his earnings The day before he had returned from a ten days job across the city, to find an extra amount of misery in his household—the children neglected and half-starved, and their mother maudling drunk After getting some food and medicine for the young ones, he had left them for a few hours on some business, and on returning, found the virago cruelly ill-treating one of the children for the crime of buying butter instead of beer with the money he had left Of course, a fight followed, and it ended with the man having his head badly cut with a beer bottle, while Mrs Beauty got off with another black eye. The man's wound had not improved under the nursing of his eldest girl. A fragment of glass penetrating the wound, erysipelas soon set in, and the poor fellow began to get delirious and rave. His frightened and half-repentant spouse added no little to the hubbub by her maudling lamentations And it was to this miserable household Dr Forster was called, a few doors from where he had left the wounded Clarence He did what he could for the poor man and the wretched children, and when he met the police authorities, reported that there had been a severe fight, that a man was badly wounded, and lying now in a critical condition, that a woman was to blame, and that they would be quite justified, should the wound prove fatal, in arresting her, but advised to simply warn her for the present. As for a robbery, there was nothing special that he knew of, beyond the usual robbery by the saloonist of the earnings of the poor. And the inspector, being an ardent teetotaler, quite saw it in that light. And our Doctor, like many another good man, sophisticated his conscience by a few evasions and half-truths, till, with an intense feeling of relief, he saw the myrmidons of the law were quite off the scent, and completely lost the trail that he had so successfully endeavored to hide from them.

Now that our hero is out of immediate danger, and is in a fair way to recover health and strength—thanks to the devotion of his new friends, it may not be altogether uninteresting to enquire as to who these new friends are, and what the bond of unity might be that bound the handsome and somewhat scornful young aristocrat to those obscure daughters of the protelariat. With the busy doctor, of course, we know his interest is specially centred in the extreme value placed on the life of the stranger (to him) by the girl Black Bess. But was he such a stranger to her? One cannot always answer a direct enquiry in a straigtforward manner. The matter requires some explanation. The rooms in which Clarence lay was, with the adjoining one, rented by Bess and her sister Nelly, with three other companions, all of whom lived together in a degree of amity not quite unknown to their class, who struggled hard at what work they could get. Now at a sweating slop tailor's, making pants, at fifteen cents a pair, and finding their own thread; now at artificial flower making, at an equal rate of princely remuneration. Sometimes, in the opera season, Bess and Nelly would sell flowers near the theatres, but they would club their meagre earnings, and in a true communistic spirit, level the results, after paying rent. They would have their frugal meals and social chats together, devouring the not-to-be enquired-into-too-curiously-pologny, and the not-to-be-regarded too critically dime novel, or rather penny weekly serial story.

It was here that Hester shone, being by far the best scholar and reader, and generally (if the term can be allowed amongst a clique of mere ignorant work girls), of more intellectual force than her fellows. But who then is Hester? That requires more explanation Hester was just Black Bess, who was'nt christened Bess or Betsy, or even Elizabeth; neither was she black It was just a nick-name that had stuck to her from its seeming fitness, having regard to her thick black tresses and lustrous dark eyes and her gentle yet daring disposition.

The manner of her acquaintance with Clarence and his with her was in this wise. Hester and Nelly were selling flowers outside the opera house towards the end of the season of '87, when the untoward incident occurred that connected Clarence's name with the flower girls in a manner very little to that gentleman's æsthetic taste, though nothing to his discredit. The house had scarcely begun to empty, a few stragglers leaving early, and the portico of the theatre was comparatively deserted, when a handsome young gentleman, in dress costume, strolled listlessly out, as though tired of the opera and of most things Hester was there alone, arranging some violets, and a glance of the picture she made in the half shade of the lamp attracted his educated eye. He stood a moment studying the effect with an artist's critical gaze, and then strolled leisurely forward to get a closer view. Hetty was then in her seventeenth year and the height of her girlish beauty. The wondrous eyes were half shadowed by her wealth of hair. Her clear olive complexion; her pure oval face, bent half over her flowers her rusty, shabby dress, with its one bit of relief, a soft, white neckerchief, that made her pale skin look a shade darker, was a sight any artist might be excused for feasting his eyes on But Camille De Clay was an artist to the extent only of having a sybarite's refined taste, that prefers a beautiful and well appointed victim He accosted the girl with the politeness of a true Parisian—which he was—but with perfect English spoke to Hetty on the subject of button-hole bouquets Under pretence of purchasing, he drew a gold coin from his pocket, and hinted as near as he dared at his immoral purpose The girl at length understood his drift A blush of hot shame mantled her cheeks for a moment; tears mounted to her eyes but they were instantly scorched with flashes of fire. With quick scorn, she replied to the tempter with a stinging blow from her open hand "For in a wink the false love turns to hate. The brilliant Frenchman, whose creed declared all virtue had its price, and all women could be bought, staggered at this rough and unexpected repulse determined on revenge. He took her by the arm, and concentrating his hatred to his muscles, pinched it till the girl cried out with pain Of course, a scene followed The Frenchman, as unscrupulous as proud, told the police that the girl had tried to rob him, but more than one spectator denied it

A coachman, from his coign of vantage (waiting for my Lord somebody inside), had witnessed the whole scene, and gave the lie to the "furrin gent, as he called him, and the furrin' gent, in support of his own theory, had just laid his hand again on the girl, as though in arrest, when a stronger grip was laid on him. Turning, in proud indignation, he met the steady gaze of Clarence. An insulting defiance from De Clay was swiftly followed by a blow from the Englishman, whose blood was up and ready for anything any French scoundrel might want of him. Then friends and the police separated them, and after more recriminations and exchange of cards, they were parted, De Clay to plan a double revenge—Clarkson to settle whether he could fight a duel—and about a flower girl—and poor Hetty, with her sister Nell, to go home weeping, but dreaming of their hero—their demi-god—their champion—and framing Valentine pictures in the air surrounding poor Hetty and a certain swell known in the Clubs for the next three weeks as the "Flower Girl's Champion"

The affair had blown over, or had been hushed up by the influential friends on both sides as being too ridiculous; but more than once poor Hetty had fancied some sudden refusal of work—some curious piece of ill-luck, was due to the malignant and almost satanic power of her polished Parisian assailant. And Clarkson on his part had suffered considerable annoyance, not only from the chaff of his club friends, but his lady friends also, who, seeing he was a great catch and a persistent bachelor, had some cause for their jealous comments.

The Frenchman, since Clarence's refusal to cross the Channel, or to cross swords with him, made the usual continental mistake of deeming the big Briton a coward. He met Clarence once in a country lane near Richmond, and attacked him with a heavy cane. Clarence soon got a hedge stake, and played single stick with him in such fashion that poor mossoo (a Cockney's term for a Frenchman limped back to the railway pretty sore, being warned that, if he again molested him, he would break his nose for him. The great duellist, brave, and even daring as he was in his own department, knew enough of what his sporting compatriots called "la box"—knew sufficient to convince him that this barbarian fashion of fighting often did result in a gentleman having his nasal organ laid flat over the contingent portion of his other features. As the fist was the only weapon his opponent determined to use, and could use to advantage, he consented, as reluctadtly as mine ancient Pistol, to forego such a disagreeable encounter, comforting himself, like that ancient hero, with the same promise of universal and terrible vengeance.

Whether all hell "suffered" for his absence or not, we have not been able to learn, but the polished De Clay soon shook off the last remnant of coarse British dust from his neat patent French boots, and never again visited that beastly John Bull in his isle!

So, whilst Clarence had a faint and fading idea only of the girl he was championing, having just caught one glance at the upturned face in the height of her indignation and shame, with another glance of intense gratitude and admiration after her assailant's chastisement—poor Hester was cherishing a vision of a delivering deity, beautiful and terrible, chivalrous and noble and all that was to be secretly and silently adored

Strange as it may seem to a certain section of pessimistic, grovelling-worm-school of theologians, the nursing of this hopeless earthly passion for a fellow mortal—as the peasant worships the princess, or the clown the queen of the fairies—so this all potent love spell kept poor Bess in an artificial atmosphere of her own creating, that was nevertheless a protection against many noxious gases of a social and immoral origin—to speak figuratively—that might have otherwise poisoned the well spring of her young existence. An orphan, with a younger sister, who was a real charge on her responsibility whilst still a child, she had no natural protector, no relation but a kind hearted but loose-living uncle, who would have clothed, fed and educated the girls in his own fashion, had his wife permitted; but the aunt was one of those repellant she dragons of virtue who make vice seem quite lovable and desirable by contrast. So, as the poor children, after a six weeks trial of her draconic reformatory regime, had rebelled and escaped, she gladly and grimly washed her hands of the hussies—scourged them and let them go.

This was when Hester was scarce fourteen and Ellen twelve; but the memory of it was lively still. Since then they had found friends among some of the few real ladies who make the work of helping their poorer brethren a life-study—and from their point of view a worthy one—albeit the aid rendered is bound to smell strongly of the peculiar ecclesiastical odor of sanctity that appertains to the sisterhood of one of their especial East-London Anglican convents One or two of these excellent ladies had taken quite an interest in Esther and Ellen Downes, and seeing them somewhat proud and independent, had helped them to help themselves So Bess, though as we have seen, paying little regard to appearances, and hating the conventionalities cordially, still had preserved thus far her independence and self-respect, and her influence therefore for good on the other and less fortunate of her own oppressed class.

"But," the impatient reader may exclaim, "this, after all is a very poor equipment for a heroine Such a heroine as she is scarcely a proper person at all—you know—introduced under such peculiar, not to say compromising, conditions, one almost "expects to find she is one of those low creatures of *Zola's or Ouida's*, only not half so interesting"

To which severe indictment—or worse—of our society readers the author pleads guilty, more than guilty We feel the task of making anything like a "silk purse from a sow's ear" would be absurd and futile, and don't attempt it That regal abstraction called the "voice of society" has decreed that poor flower girls must necessarily consist altogether of such coarse material as the uncomplimentary proverb refers to

How else would it be? If a girl selling flowers had horticultural culture herself, refined taste, æsthetic emotions, delicate sensibilities and cultivated appreciation, what distinction could one make between her and the ladies and gentlemen she sold flowers to? Except in being richly and warmly clad, where would be the advantage of being a lady? To admit so revolutionary a supposition would be equal to supposing it possible that the lady in her carriage could by any possibility be herself considered coarse in manner, ignorant in mind, vulgar in taste, or unlovely in her divine person

Being, as we are, hopelessly out of the fashion, we must be permitted to go on in our stupid way—like poor Bess, quite outside society's pale. If the almost friendless girl presumed, in her wild ignorant way, to retain, fresh and pure, amid her vicious surroundings, a nature tried in the furnace, we must not be too hard on Mrs. Grundy if she envied her. Not many of the patricians' daughters, fenced in by every kind of social protection from temptation and harm, would have gone through the same fire scatheless Nor do we pretend that Black Bess would have been likely to have fared better, but for the fact that, blest with perfect health and a good constitution, and favored above most of her class, she always had the opportunity to earn honest money, the will and ability to work, and the encouragement of the good sisters. If not actuated, as these ladies fondly believed, by their theological teaching and the love of a Deity, who is Father to the orphan, she was exalted by a love she could much better understand—a passion which belongs to youth's bright morning—that, with the said theologian's permission (or without it), we would claim to be a truer and more tangible gift of the Great Father than the one they present, and hot youth regards as too etherial and abstract. 'Tis true, "We needs must love the highest when we know it—not Launcelot nor another." But youth must have the tangible vitality, the warmth and color they find in Launcelot. To pursue the Laureate's allegory, "For, indeed, I know of no more subtle master under heaven than is the maiden passion of a maid to lead sweet lives to speak no slander, to love one only, to teach high thought and amiable words and courtliness and the desire of good, the love of truth, and all that enobles and exalts."

This, if the great Baron of the muse will forgive us for paraphrasing it, was something like the spiritual support that sustained our heroine throughout the too long dreary winters, and short, hope-destroying summers that intervened between the incident of the Frenchman and the opera house and that recent one of the Whitechapel tragedy.

What restless impulse on that October night had led her wandering near that coffee stall, she herself would have found it difficult to define. She had gone to a certain large drug store on Fenchurch Street for a specific remedy for her sister's headache, as late as eleven o'clock, when just on closing time, and had returned to —— court, as this thoroughfare was termed, which was only a thoroughfare to the initiated

The prescription was just what her sister required, and relieved, yet restless, she had strolled out, wandering, and thinking ever on one sole subject, when a voice that passed her exclaimed to a companion, "Blow'd if ther aint a drunken swell." This reference to one of her hero's class aroused her attention Looking in the direction indicated, her heart beat fast as she seemed even to recognize the form Burning with shame for him and herself, she scarcely knew what she thought. When the two women arrested him, her indignation would have then and there ruined them both by some hot action, but her step was arrested by the look on the face of the coolie and the general demeanor of the idlers around the stall.

As Clarence broke away, to her intense relief—especially from the women—she lost sight of the dark face of the Indian; but as she followed stealthily, ashamed, and yet full of dark apprehension of danger to her own hero—for she had seen his face once more, and there could be no mistake—she detected the slinking coolie distantly following.

With a woman's determination, she resolved to save him from whatever form the danger took. Oh! if she could be so blest as to avert disaster from her hero, at whatever cost, how amply she would have been repaid for all her weary months of waiting and weeping. So, as it transpired, when she saved him from certain death, and had a good wholesome-sized wound to show as the result, "not as deep as a well, or as wide as a church door, but enough," Clarence must see it and thank her when he recovers When she found, by the doctor's connivance, that she was permitted, with her sister, to nurse her hero back to life, her cup of bliss was full, her joy was complete, her reward was obtained her seventh heaven was reached

Leaving Clarence to his good nurses, and his kindly, skilful surgeon, under whose joint ministrations he slowly but surely recovered, we will return to the world of society and fashion For the first few days after the disappearance of the young patrician, no notice was taken It was nothing unusual for a gentleman of means, of a roving disposition to absent himself suddenly for a few days or weeks, even from his friends, without him giving them any special account of his actions. At the end of the first week there was little or no uneasiness concerning him

When another week elapsed and still no tidings, his legal friends and comrades in Chambers, remembering the occasion and manner of his leaving, began to get considerably alarmed Enquiries were made of Sir James Clarkson, Bart, cautiously at first, of the servants, for fear of alarming the old widower, who had not been the same man since the sudden death of his wife, whom he adored When they found these enquiries eagerly met by counter enquiries, they were thoroughly aroused and the police communicated with

The authorities of Scotland Yard used all the "intelligence department," as they term it, at their disposal—not an overwhelming stock, as some think. But then there is a certain class of critics who are always down on the police—as though in retaliation—and they want to know why they keep their intelligence in a separate department, and why the said department so soon runs out of the staple article, and if they spread any of it over the other departments (the brute force department to wit) which never seems to have too much brain power wasted on it. These same critics are curious concerning the economic principles that govern the departments, and "want to know—you know"—what is done with the intelligence wasted in the perjury department, affirming that the ingenuity exercised in proving to the magistrate they must be always right, and the prisoner at the bar wrong, is good material that might be utilized again for similar purposes, if carefully bottled.

But all such growlings, though eminently English, are quite beside the mark in a case like the present, where the certainty of being well paid, of achieving promotion, and pleasing the most powerful section of society—the government and parliamentary set—was ample encitement for Scotland Yard to do its best. It being safe to be impartial, we feel bound to opine that the best Scotland Yard could do would not be much bettered by any other police department, whether of Paris, Moscow, or New York. English detectives never had—and we hope never will have—the plenary power to do as they will with a private and innocent citizen's liberty and very existence; and they are therefore handicapped in the race with the ubiquitous and omniscient heroes of the foreign departments referred to.

Nearly three weeks having elapsed since our hero's disappearance, the detectives did what they could to regain the scent. Having darted out on the night in question, in the precipitous manner described, the circle he had left thought no more than that he had taken a stroll round to cool himself, most likely turning south through the famous gardens, or even towards the embankment. Questioned on the point, they could surmise nothing certain Much time was wasted over theories—drowning, or embankment robbery, and murder. The leading lights of the detective department did not entertain the latter idea. According to their theory, he had left, having plenty of money with him, for one of his favorite haunts, to get a quiet spell, as he had sometimes done before.

This idea received confirmation, "like proof from holy writ," from the policeman near Blackfriar's Bridge, who, seeing what his boss's theory was, felt in honor bound to support it, and therefore swore positively the swell in question went direct to the adjacent station. It so happened that a dinner given by one of the city Liveries (who took that way to get rid of the unearned increment that accrued to them) had occurred that night, and several members in evening dress took advantage of the fine weather to rush across from the Holborn restaurant to several city stations to catch the night train. Having followed up several false clues of this kind, the detectives made enquiries at his hotel at Hastings, and one at Tunbridge Wells, at a rural friend's in Surrey, and as far south as Torquay; north again to Finchley, to Malvern, and even to Edinburgh. Not content, they tried the eastern coast, and the boats to Havre and Ostend were examined

Clarence had more than once expressed a strong liking for the quiet life the English colony led at Bruges, and the whole Saxon community there were disturbed by enquiries forthwith. Of course, he might have taken the night boat to Paris, or even have started for New York. There was no reliance on the freaks of a young gent with lots of cash and no family ties, as it were. This was the dictum of the detective to Clarence's friend in the Temple at the last enquiry.

"It's no use a worritin', you know; gents like that is a' often disappearin', but they don't get robbed or done away with once in a score o' cases; they gits away suddint like, that's the trouble, but they turns hup all right in a month or two the other side o' the world, or just roun' the corner, one's as likely as another."

And sure enough—as if to prove the correctness of our genial Dogberry's predictions, a very few day's after, a note, was delivered into the aged father's hands, on foreign not paper, minus all crest or embellishments, but unmistakeably in his son's own handwriting, to the effect that "he was very sorry to have distressed his father and friends by his silence, but that he had been taken very sick among foreigners, who had no clue to his identity and therefore could not communicate—had had brain fever, and a narrow escape from losing his life, but was quite safe now, having been carefully nursed by sisters of mercy, and that he would write again as soon as he was able

And that was all The broken-hearted baronet extracted all the comfort he could from it, but was sorely puzzled to know whence or how it came There was no address or even date—no post mark or indication of locality of any kind It was found by the servant in the letter-box at the residence in Upper Berkeley street of the worthy Baronet, and taken to him with the letters of that morning's post. No questionings of any one could obtain any nearer clue to the method of its arrival

There were, of course, other mysteries not cleared up at all in connection with the disappearance incidence; flaws in the chain, or missing links entirely, which any tyro, without being an expert in detective literature, could easily point out For instance, why was not the coffee stall man called as a witness? Surely he had his wits about him How about the other policeman in Fenchurch Street, whose intended vigilance almost spoilt the Author's nice little amateur plot Then supposing the vigilant reader were to get a map of London—"a large map" as Lord Salisbury once told his critics, and asked the poor benighted colonist to place his finger on, or point out with his "Waverley" the special court in Whitechapel where all this happened; and if it is a thoroughfare well known to the police (that is, if he allows the London police can know anything of their own city why was not a thorough search made, especially after the Jack the Ripper scare, and the whole thing unearthed? What kind of a plot does he call it that has no provision for such contingencies?

Well! the Author bows his brow to the dust, and mutters to his beads "*culpa mea*," and is afraid his little plot must be a heavily mortgaged one for the occupier to have so little right in it. But if said critics will kindly forget to be too critical, we will go on with our little plot, set our next little scene, and send the callboy after the actors, and ring up.

(*To be Continued*).

WHY MICHAEL DAVITT IS NOT ON THE LABOR COMMISSION.

It is very much to be regretted that Mr. Michael Davitt, whom so large a proportion of the working classes wished to have appointed on the Labor Commission, was not invited to give it his assistance. Yet, when Mr. Justin McCarthy moved the adjournment of the House in order to call attention to this omission, he found only twenty-eight members prepared to back him. How was this? Many plausible pretexts are, of course, brought forward his former Fenianism (though nobody dreams that he is a Fenian now), his unwillingness to take the oath of allegiance that is required of every member of Parliament, and so forth; but the real reason is pretty well known by social reformers. It is this: Mr. Davitt understands the land question, and he would have been sure to try to show the Labor Commission that Labor never can have justice till the land of the country is resumed by the Nation, and the rent of it rescued from private uses and abases for various beneficent public purposes. The bulk of the members of Parliament, both Liberals and Conservatives, have private reasons for not wishing any further light on the Land Question If the Commission should institute a search as to where the balance is of what Labor has produced over what it has been paid, a considerable part of the missing wealth might be found in the hands of these Tory and Whig M.P.'s and their relations.

THE COMING STRUGGLE

I may be mistaken, but I think we are in the beginning of a social war. In the Pennsylvania coke region the working people are kept in subjection by the presence of soldiers. In Bradford, England, the same is true. Everywhere the labor leaders are talking more freely about the use of weapons to gain their ends. In Europe the working people seem determined to make a bold strike for the eight-hour day, and their leaders declare they will resist force with force if it is brought to prevent their meetings or processions It would not surprise me if within the next two weeks a great many working people and a few soldiers and policemen should be killed. The working people cannot hope to win in an armed struggle at this time. Public opinion is against them, as is shown by the fact that the editors and clergymen—the weather vanes which record the direction of the wind of public sentiment—are in favor of the monopolists.—*Twentieth Century.*

IT SUCCEEDS WELL IN ENGLAND

As the New Nation recently stated, the street railway of Huddersfield, Eng., is owned and operated by the municipality. The length of track is eleven miles, and the capital is $133,000. The city pays 3 per cent. interest on the loan, but charges its railway department 6¼ per cent. to cover depreciation and interest. The total receipts for 1889 were $70,675, and the total expenditures $48,795, leaving an amount sufficient to meet the financial charge of 6¼ per cent. Employees never work more than eight hours per day, or forty eight hours per week, and they are uniformed by the city.

A Chinaman named Sing Hi has taken the position of tenor in a Dorchester, Mass., quartette.

Brooklyn, N.Y., Socialists have opened a "School of Oratory," in which they expect to educate Socialistic agitators.