

the parcel on the table, and Arthur knew his meaning. "It was very bad. The next we heard of him he was manager of a theatre in London. Failed. Next, he took a music hall on the Surry side—bankruptcy again. This time it was so bad that the court refused him his discharge for two years. But he was a man of never-failing resource, and he married an actress, on whose earnings he lived finely for a year or two. I have seen him riding a horse worth a hundred guineas in Hyde Park. Then misfortune came; there was a fire at the theatre one night, and Mrs. Loring's face was so badly burned that she was disfigured for life; and of course her occupation was gone, poor thing."

"What did he do next?" the nephew asked, as Ralph paused.

"Exactly what might have been expected. He converted the horses, carriages, furniture, and everything else into cash, and disappeared. Deserted her. She went down into obscurity with the child (they had a boy), and—the rest of his history I am not able to follow, until he turned up in London again with his rich American wife."

"But the first wife?"

"Oh, she was dead, of course. Your uncle wasn't the man to show himself here again until he was sure of that. Then he started this Annuitants' Association. He advertised for a secretary, and selected Longfield. Would you guess why?"

"You said a while ago," Arthur answered with beating heart, "that it was because—birds of a feather, you know."

"Partly that, no doubt; but mainly because he recognised in Mr. Longfield his own son!"

Arthur was astounded. What possibilities the revelation involved he was too confused to think; but surely—Alas, his uncle's next words cut the ground from beneath any wild unformed hope he might have in his breast.

"So you see that Priors Loring is not to leave the Loring's now. He is an Arthur Loring as well as you. And Mrs. Loring is aware of it."

"What a mother she is!" cried Arthur bitterly. "She is worse than the man—a thousand times worse. She is unnatural, inhuman!"

"It's a terrible state of things, I admit," said his uncle, without the slightest show of emotion. "I feel it myself, mostly because it gives your uncle such a triumph. I only wish I was two-and-twenty, with half of your advantages, Arthur—hang me if they should ever have the girl!"

"You would catch her in the street," said Arthur stung by his uncle's contemptuous tone, "and put her in a cab, and tell the driver to gallop!"

"I would—I would!"

"And at the railway station," continued the young fellow in the same note of bitter ridicule, "you would inform her she must pay the cabman and take the tickets! I wonder how it would come off?"

"Look here, Arthur," said his uncle dryly, "the young fellow who halts to consult his pocket when it's a question of capturing and making off with a girl that loves him, doesn't deserve the prize. That's not Lochinvar's principle."

"Lochinvar had a horse and a fleet one." "Horse or no horse, he would have done it!"

All this, as may be imagined, did not conduce to Arthur Loring's peace of mind that miserable night. Before going away, he informed his uncle of his settled decision; he would keep his promise to be present at Kitty's wedding next day, and on Saturday morning he would enlist. Ralph offered no comment, but appeared to take the decision as one that there was nothing now to be said against. He did not, indeed, inform his nephew that it was through the medium of this same Kitty that he had learned the news of Maud Lavelle's marriage. The girl, indeed, was related to his landlady; and thus it came about that Ralph Loring knew a great deal of what took place in his brother Henry's household.

When Arthur therefore left his uncle's rooms, that gentleman lit his pipe and lay back in his chair with a look of deep reflection. The expression of his face did not, as might have been expected, exhibit much commiseration for the situation of his nephew; indeed, after a few minutes' thought, a grin of pleasure lit up his features, and he rubbed his thin hands together after the manner of a man who was deeply satisfied.

"So odd a thing, I believe, never happened before," said Ralph to himself, putting his pipe aside.—"Now, Miss Kitty, I mustn't forget the present I promised to send you." Opening a rather battered deed-box, he found, after some rummaging, a five-pound note, new and crisp, and contemplated it for a minute. "How am I to tell what the mite wants most?" he asked. "I'll send her the money itself."

Ralph Loring sat down to write a note which was to accompany the present. For so simple an epistle, to a person who would be so little critical as Kitty, Ralph bestowed a remarkable amount of pains upon it. But at length it was finished to his satisfaction, and he rang the bell.

"Is John Bole about the house?" he demanded of the servant.—"Oh, at his supper? Tell him to finish his supper quickly, as I want to send him round to Sloane Street with a note, and to bring an answer."

In half an hour the messenger returned with the answer. This document, after expressing Kitty's thanks for the present, concluded with the following words, which gave Mr. Loring deep satisfaction: "I have burnt your letter, as you asked, and the other thing I will do if it is at all possible to do; but I will watch for a chance, and you may depend, oh dear, I'm sure you may. I'll do it with all my heart, and don't care what may happen."

"Kitty, you are a little brick," said Ralph Loring when he read those mysterious words. "It will be the oddest thing that ever happened, if it comes off. If not!"—He sank with a sigh in his chair.

The underground railway took Arthur Loring to Sloane Square next morning, and at a quarter to twelve he was at the door of the church, looking as cheerful as he could, with a favour in his button-hole. Then, a few minutes later, Mr. John Hornby appeared, dressed with his best care; and the happy young man shook hands with Arthur Loring so shamefacedly that the latter had to laugh.

"Do you feel nervous?" he asked.

"Oh, not a bit, Mr. Loring," he answered quickly; "why should I? It's soon over, and—it's the lady that's always nervous, isn't it? I—I hope Kitty won't faint, or anything."

"Kitty won't faint, you may depend upon it.—By the way, I have a little present for Kitty. Where is the breakfast to be?"

"Upon my word, Mr. Loring," the young man answered seriously, "I don't know! Kitty has arranged everything. I don't even know who her bridesmaid is—one of her fellow-servants, I suppose."

"Very likely. And here comes the bride," he exclaimed, as a hired brougham became visible, driving down the street in spirited style.

Arthur Loring, as the vehicle approached, amused himself with observing the excitement of the bridegroom-elect. That young man seemed to have a great deal the matter with him which he could not understand. Among other unconsidered proceedings, he precipitately pulled his gloves off, and immediately discovering that he had no occasion to do so, he tried to pull them on again, but found them too tight. Then he stuffed them in the pocket, and wiped his face with his handkerchief.

The small bride looked aggravatingly cool and pretty in her bridal "things" as she stepped lightly on the pavement. Kitty bestowed on Arthur Loring a rather shy but intelligent look, which suggested to him the duty of attending to the bridesmaid. Stepping to the carriage-door with some curiosity—for the bridesmaid seemed to be considering her official dignity by waiting to be assisted out—his eyes met those of Maud Lavelle, timid and confused, and it was her small hand that fluttered in his own as he helped the bridesmaid out. He saw Kitty's little plot; but Kitty, pleased and interested, little knew what she had done.

As, still holding her hand—which he had no power to release—he stood beside Maud at the church door, the blood leaped wildly through his veins with the mad impulse to catch her up in his arms and run away with her. All the passionate love in his heart, all the agony of to-morrow's prospect, all the intense pain of his wounded pride, were focused in the burning eyes at which the girl looked up, scared, but not shrinking away from him.

Suddenly he drew a quick breath, like a gasp. "Do I frighten you, Maud?"

"No, Arthur."

Yet there was a fierce hunger in his eyes that might have startled a braver girl; and still holding her hand, they walked into the church together.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

### A 24-Story Building.

At Chicago capital has been subscribed, the ground purchased and plans drawn for the construction of the tallest office building in the world. The site of the structure is 110 feet of frontage on Dearborn street. The building will be 24 storeys high, surpassing the tower of the Auditorium by six storeys and the Masonic Temple by five. Steel will be the chief material.

### China's Reforming Emperor.

The decree which was published recently ordering arrangements to be made for receiving the foreign Ministers in audience in the first moon of next year, the seventeenth of his Majesty's reign, will have been received with general satisfaction throughout the world. The solution of the long-pending and apparently unmanageable question could not have taken a happier form, and if it were permissible to deduce from this one act of the Emperor an augury of the character of his reign we should be tempted to say that the star of hope had arisen on this country. The granting of audience removes a slur which has rested for thirty years on the foreign representatives, and places their relations with the highest officials in a light which is at once clear and defensible, while it, at the same time, removes from the imperial pathway a stumbling block of a really dangerous character.

Widespread interest has been shown already in the supposed idiosyncrasies of the young Emperor of China, which have hitherto been wrapped up in palace mystery. He comes of a hardy stock, noted for independence of character, and his not very remote ancestors have evinced special curiosity in foreign matters, as well as considerable originality in statecraft. There is no antecedent reason, therefore, why his Majesty should not take personal interest in the affairs of the empire, external as well as internal, nor why he should not find a certain satisfaction in cultivating friendliness with foreign Ministers at his court, and thus a real revolution may be silently effected in the mode of conducting public business.

The imperial power in China, hampered and almost stifled as it is by concentric circles of officials of every grade in thick array, seems to be impeded in its administration by the very overgrowth of the machinery which constitutes the instrument of Government. How is even an Emperor to break through these serried ranks; how emancipate himself from the thrall of one set without getting more hopelessly entangled in the coils of another? If there be anything in the notion to which we have repeatedly given publicity that the exclusiveness, the insolence, and even brutality of manner to which foreigners have been subjected are essentially the outcome of the Chinese nature combined with Chinese tradition, and especially Chinese ignorance, there ought to be a good hope of better things in gaining access to the person of the Manchu sovereign. The recent public acts of the sovereign to which we drew attention last month appear to be but the prelude to an imperial career in which the sovereign intends as his heroic contemporary, the German Emperor, has done, to take the reins of Government into his own hands and rule according to his conscience and his own perceptions.

Many depressing pictures of the future of this great empire have occupied the columns of the *Chinese Times*. We have honestly cast our eye to the north and south, to the east and west without discovering any signs of the coming regeneration of the Government and the social system, and if, as we believe, some thorough regeneration is necessary to the preservation of the empire, the outlook is anything but encouraging. There seems to be but one ray of hope, and that is in the personal initiative of a sovereign resolute and strong and with a long life before him in which to develop his reforms. It may be that such a ruler is now on the throne, and his proceedings will be scanned with very eager interest by both natives and foreigners. The new relations which have been established by imperial decree, and which may open a door to the exercise of a healthy living foreign influence, put the Emperor in possession of auxiliaries such as were not available to any of his Majesty's predecessors.

### The Trick of the "Terrapin."

There is a species of terrapin at the London Zoological Gardens which is in the fortunate position of not having to work for a living. Like the children in the fairy tale, it has simply to open its mouth and food will drop in. In the mouth of this reptile is a little tag of flesh which is in continual vibration and nearly always visible, for the creature remains open-mouthed for hours together. It is believed that the sight of this is particularly alluring to the piscine mind. The fish commits the very pardonable though fatal error of mistaking the process for a wriggling worm. In trying to take bait it is caught in the trap and swallowed. This proceeding cannot be witnessed as the water in the tank is too clear. Muddy water is no doubt necessary for the terrapin to perform this trick with any success.

### Inoculation for Diphtheria.

The success that has attended the efforts of Prof. Koch to discover a remedy for consumption inspires the hope that the investigations now being made by that distinguished bacteriologist and those associated with him in his studies as well as by eminent specialists in Paris and Washington, will result in the discovery of a means of rendering the diphtheria bacillus innocuous. It is safe to say that of all the diseases to which childhood is liable none is so dreaded by parents as diphtheria, or is so dangerous and insidious. It is generally admitted that the disease is produced by germs floating in the air and gaining access to the body chiefly through inhalation, and that the germs settling upon the mucous membrane of the throat set up a local inflammation and send their poison through the blood to all parts of the organism. Thus far the experimenters appear to be moving along the line of preventive inoculation, as in vaccinating for small pox. But here the identity of their experiments ceases, the substances employed being very dissimilar. Thus it is stated that Baktachinski, having observed that erysipelas developing in patients already quite ill with diphtheria seemed to counteract the poison in the latter disease and to lead to recovery, experimented upon fourteen diphtheritic cases by inoculating them with erysipelas. The result was the saving of twelve lives, for all of the other members of the same families who also had diphtheria, but were not inoculated, died. Frenkel has discovered an albuminous substance which, introduced into guinea pigs infected with diphtheria by hypodermic injection, renders them immune, although it fails to produce that effect when the animals receive the infection in the ordinary way through the mucous membranes. Behring is the discoverer of a method of making the serum of the blood of infected animals bactericidal by the introduction of inorganic chemical substances, and has proven not only that these lower animals may be made germ-proof as regards diphtheria, but that the injection of some of this anti-bacterial blood serum from one animal into the system of a susceptible animal confers a similar immunity upon the latter. Von Schweinitz and Gray in this country, working in the same direction, have just announced that by means of a chemical substance they have also been enabled to render guinea pigs proof against diphtheria; and they further express their belief that their method will soon be made applicable to man. Many will unite in the wish that this expectation may be fully and speedily realized.

### Bathing Habits of Birds.

We never see hawks or falcons bathing when wild. Trained birds, in good health, bathe almost daily, and the bath of a peregrine falcon is a very careful performance. But no nymph could be more jealous of a witness than these shy birds, and it is not until after many careful glances in every direction that the falcon descends from her block and wades into the shallow bath. Then, after more suspicious glances, she thrusts her broad head under the water and flings it on to her back, at the same time raising the feathers and letting the drops thoroughly soak them. After bathing head and back, she spreads her wings and tail fan-like on the water, and rapidly opens and shuts them, after which she stoops down and splashes the drops in every direction. The bath over, she flies once more to the block, and turning her back to the sun spreads every feather of the wing and tail, raises those on the body, and assists the process of drying by a tremulous motion imparted to every quill, looking more like an old cormorant on a buoy than a peregrine.

If man had nothing better to learn from the animals than the great lesson that cleanliness means health, the study of their habits would be well repaid, and it is not the least reproach to be brought against our own Zoological Gardens, that these fine hawks and falcons, while deprived of liberty, are denied the only means of that cleanliness which would make captivity endurable. (The peregrine falcons at the Zoo are kept in a cage sanded like a canary bird's with no bath at all, and no room to spread their wings.) Sparrows, chaffinches, robins, and, in the very early morning, rocks and wood pigeons bathe often. One robin we knew always took his bath in the falcon's bath after the hawk had finished. The unfortunate London sparrow has few shallow places in which he can bathe, and a pie dish on the leads delights him. If the dish be white, his grimy little body soon leaves evidence that his ablutions have been genuine.

Never believe the man who says he has forgotten all about that little loan you returned.