

REYNARD, THE FOX.

THE fox is not a vagabond like the wolf, and other beasts of prey, wandering in the desert without any certain place of rest; he lives in a settled domestic state, and knows well where to choose the situation of his dwelling, and to make it safe and commodious. He digs his abode at the entrance of a wood, and, if possible, within hearing of the hamlet, where the game is plenty, at the bottom of a rock, or among the roots of the trees, where he cannot be uncovered. But he does not always submit to the labour of digging his own habitation. When he lights upon the hole of a badger, in a proper situation, he places himself at the entrance and keeps out the rightful owner, or, if the badger be within, and cannot be dislodged by force, he compels him to retire by the offensive smell of his odor, with which, in this case, he takes care to pollute the mouth of the den. When the badger is expelled he takes possession, and fits it up for his own accommodation. Here he is more comfortably lodged than was the Saviour of sinners when he dwelt with men. "The foxes," said the Man of sorrows, "have holes, and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of man hath not where to lay His head." To save his people from their sins, He was not content with submitting to be despised and rejected of men, to make himself of no reputation, and move in the humblest walks of life; so great was his love and condescension, that he denied himself many comforts, which, as the Creator and preserver of all things, he bestows on the beasts of the field and the fowls of heaven.

THE MAN WITH THE IRON MASK.



STRONG interest has been directed for two hundred years towards a man with an unknown name, who lived in the reign of the magnificent, but dissolute monarch,

Louis XIV of France.

About 1662, a State prisoner, tall and well proportioned, of noble bearing, was secretly conveyed to Pignerol, and consigned to the guardianship of Saint Mars, governor of the castle. Six years later he was transferred to the Isle of Marguerite, in the Mediterranean. Saint Mars accompanied him and watched him with unceasing vigilance. He ate and slept in his room, and allowed him no chance for escape, or communication with any one. It is evident the prisoner's birth and rank were high, for the attendants treated him with the utmost deference. His accomplishments were many and varied, and he enjoyed books and music; but the extraordinary doom of this illustrious personage was, that he was never seen without a black velvet mask worn over his face which completely concealed every feature. At a little distance it resembled a mask of iron, and was so constructed with steel springs at the back of the head that it could not be removed, while it left him at perfect liberty to eat and drink. Shut out from his fellowmen, it is not surprising he should seek to invent some way of conveying to his friends knowledge of his dreadful existence. Food was carried to him in dishes of silver, and once he contrived to scratch on a

silver plate a short account of his imprisonment. This he threw into the water, hoping it would attract the eyes of some men in a boat who were pulling for the shore. They saw it and picked it up, but were unable to read what was written upon it and took the plate to Saint Mars. The result was, the unfortunate man was held in severer confinement than ever.

In 1690 Saint Mars was appointed governor of the Bastille. Secretly his prisoner was conveyed on a litter to this place, and a well-furnished room was provided for him. Again he attempted to make the discovery of his name, which he wrote on a strip of linen and gave to one of his attendants, not in possession of the secret, but this person died suddenly, it was supposed by poison.

At one time, some prisoners confined over him, made him long to enjoy a little social pleasure which had been so many years denied him. By stealth he conversed with them, and they found him to be a man of extended learning, but he told them the revelation of his name and rank would be the means of death to both him and them.

Saint Mars was always provided with weapons with which to end his life should he attempt to escape, or succeed in disclosing his secret. No wonder he was vigilantly guarded, for the penalty of discovery would have cost Saint Mars his life. When this masked man attended mass, a detachment of soldiers followed him, and he would have been instantly shot had he uncovered his face or told any one his name.

Thirteen years went drearily by during which time the illustrious unknown man of the Bastille still lived, yet was dead to the outside world. Books and music were his only pleasure. Once in a while a glimpse was gained of him, and curiosity was excited towards him, and whisperings as to who he was went from circle to circle, but availed nothing. No one could tell.

In 1703 death came mercifully to release him. His medical attendant never saw his face, but believed him to be about sixty years old. He was buried at midnight near the cemetery of Saint Paul.

When the Bastille was destroyed, the room he had occupied was eagerly searched; but the furniture had been burned, the ceiling and casements destroyed, and also everything on which he could have made any record of his life. Neither did the prison books reveal any item of importance. Every means had been taken to keep his identity in the dark forever.

Who could this distinguished personage have been, styled in history "the Man of the Iron Mask."

By many, he is supposed to be a son of Arne of Austria and the Duke of Buckingham, and consequently a half brother of Louis XIV. Some writers think him of less importance.

There are also reasons for supposing the Iron Mask to have been a twin brother of the king. An old prophecy had foretold misfortune to the Bourbon family in the event of a double birth, and to escape this it is possible Louis XIII. concealed the existence of the lastborn of the twins, by consigning him to a dungeon, and hiding his features which may have closely resembled Louis XIV., his brother.

It is certain, every one in possession

of the secret died without disclosing it; and who the Man of the Iron Mask was will ever remain a mystery.—
Sarah F. Brigham.

"THE WATER DRINKERS."

Oh! water for me, bright water for me,
A deadly draught in the wine cup's glow I see,
Water cooleth the brow and cooleth the brain,
And maketh the faint one strong again.
It comes o'er the sense like a breeze from the sea.
All freshness, like infant purity;
Fill to the brim! fill, fill to the brim!
Let the flowing crystal kiss the rim;
For my hand is steady, my eye is true,
For I, like the flowers, drink nothing but dew.
Oh! water, bright water's a mine of wealth,
And the ores which it yieldeth are vigor and health,
So water, pure water, for me, for me!
A deadly draught in the wine cup's glow I see.

HOSPITAL FOR SICK CHILDREN.



T is many months now since we had an opportunity of telling the readers of PLEASANT HOURS anything about the Hospital for Sick Children, and during this period much that is pleasing and interesting, as well as some

sorrowful things, have happened in that institution.

Some of you will perhaps remember the lad "Johnny," we mentioned when writing previously. Visitors see his pale face and wasted figure no more, now lying in the south ward, for he has gone to live in the heavenly home. Day by day he grew weaker, until quite suddenly, but very peacefully, one bright Sunday morning he died. But "Johnny" was not afraid of death. He had many quiet talks with the ladies who visited him, and we are quite sure that he went to be with Jesus.

Little "Janey" still lives, and may be seen any day in the larger girls' ward, after the hour of twelve o'clock, noon, sitting in her rocking chair. You can hardly imagine, however, what a sufferer "Janey" is. The kind nurse spends two hours daily in bathing and dressing her wounds, but "Janey" bears it all very patiently, not unfrequently holding with her own small fingers the rubber tube from which the water falls upon her ulcerated body. The physician says that "Janey" can never be entirely well.

A few days ago a tiny boy about three years of age was brought to the hospital from one of the poverty-stricken homes of which there are so many in Toronto, very badly burned. He had pulled over a basin of boiling water upon his head, neck, and chest, and when the matron and physician received him at the hospital, twenty-four hours after the accident, the wounds had not been dressed, and not even covered from the air with anything soft. His screams would have made your hearts ache, but after the first dressing he fell into a comfortable sleep, and is now doing well, though, in all probability, he could not have survived long without treatment.

As we walked through the wards on Friday, after the prayer service, we noticed that the children, especially the convalescents, looked unusually happy, and upon inquiry discovered that the cause of the commotion was a prospective sleigh ride. A kind lady in the

city had sent a large double sleigh, with beautiful warm robes, and a steady man to drive, and all the convalescent children were to go for an hour's drive in the sunshine.

Some of the children are looking forward with bright anticipations, even counting the days to the month of June, and we are sure you will wish to know why these little invalids are watching so anxiously for the warm fine days. In the bay just opposite Toronto there is an island; true, it is not so pretty or romantic as many, still it is an island, with the blue waves of old Ontario dancing on the sandy beach, and the pure, bracing air, blowing in every direction.

About three months ago it occurred to some of the ladies connected with the hospital that it would be a grand thing to build at the island a Convalescent Home, not only for the patients in the hospital, but for other poor sick ones who could never, by any chance, get a breath of fresh air. No sooner did the plan suggest itself than direction was sought, for you must remember that there was no money in the treasury for this home, and the ladies did not even know whether God wished them to undertake the work or not. Accordingly, one Friday morning at the prayer-meeting, one of those present in a simple childlike way, asked God to send means for a new home for convalescent children at the island if the plan was in accordance with His will. The prayer had not been offered a week when one thousand dollars had been received for this purpose, and at date more than seventeen hundred are in hand. The Sabbath schools of Toronto have contributed no inconsiderable sum of this amount, and as a thousand dollars more will be required, others who desire to do so, may have an opportunity of sharing in this good work.

Before closing I desire to extend an invitation to all the readers of PLEASANT HOURS to visit the hospital, at 245 Elizabeth Street, or the island home, when they come to Toronto, and also to ask them to pray for our sick children who are stretched in their cots, bearing days and nights of pain, with, in some instances, but little hope of recovery.

And now before you are wearied, we must close with the promise that, at some future time, we will tell you more about the hospital for sick children.

Contributions either for the Hospital for Sick Children, or for the Convalescent Home at the island, may be sent to the Editor of PLEASANT HOURS, who will duly acknowledge their receipt and forward to the Managers of the Hospital.
L. J. H.

THE death of John Brown, the faithful servitor of the Queen, is announced. The Queen is said to have formed a great attachment for this Highland gillie and always treated him with marked distinction. The reason was that she felt that he was a faithful protector, and that he would at any time willingly have sacrificed his own life to save hers. He was always at hand ready to execute her commands, and was more like a faithful watch-dog than a courtier. Her Majesty will be sure to miss him, as he has been her personal attendant for ever twenty years.

A SEEDY coat may cover a heart in full bloom.