

Courrier des Dames.

Our lady readers are invited to contribute to this department.

In reply to an advertisement for eleven young women to be employed in London post-offices, two thousand candidates recently presented themselves.

A culpably foolish, as well as ungallant joke, at Allahabad, has led to a civil action, which is pending. A young man presented a lady with a rose which had been powdered with cayenne pepper. The lady, smelling the rose, went into a fit of sneezing, and ultimately became so seriously ill as to require the constant attendance of two or three medical men, and a journey for change of air. Her husband claims 700rs. damages for the expenses incurred.

A school committee in a certain New England town said encouragingly in their report: "As this place offers neither honour nor profit, we do not see why it should not be filled by a woman!" Encouraging, very.

"Kenselm Chillingly" says: "I don't think nearly so many young ladies six years ago painted their eyelids and dyed their hair; a few of them there might be, imitators of the 'ang' invented by schoolboys, and circulated through the medium of small novelists; they might use such expressions as 'stunning,' 'cheek,' 'awfully jolly,' &c. But now I find a great many who have advanced to a slang beyond that of verbal expressions—a slang of mind, a slang of sentiment, a slang in which every little seems left of the woman, and nothing at all of the lady. Newspaper essayists assert that the young men of the day are to blame for this; that the young men like it, and the fair husband anglers dress their flies in the colours most likely to attract a nibbler. Whether this excuse be the true one I cannot pretend to judge."

Mr. Frederick Lockyer, of London, is the author of this little verse, which contains a deal of truth:

"They eat and drink, and scheme and plot,
And go to church on Sunday;
And many are afraid of God,
And more of Mrs. Grundy."

What is the verdict of our lady readers on the following opinion of an English lady on the "Woman's Rights" question?—I do not hold at all with all this talk about our rights, and those who uphold the system I think, as a rule, are disappointed old maids, women who have married unhappily, or strong-minded people. Woman was sent into the world to be a help to man, and not to try and imitate him. That which is right and manly in him is wrong for her; she was sent to be patient and gentle, a peace-maker, tender and loving, to do all the good she can in the station in which she is placed; to be true to her husband, comforting him and helping him in trouble, to be a good mother and good mistress. These are what I consider a woman's duties, and the one who cannot fulfil them perfectly, whoever she may be, does what is her duty, her glory, and her pleasure far more than holding forth and storming and struggling for so-called rights which, when attained, only make for the laughing-stock of men, and a person disliked and avoided by all modest women. The greatest aim of a woman is to be womanly, as our great Example intended her to be, and if she comes out of her sphere she makes herself despised by all.—Content or non-content?

The Countess T——, who possesses the most beautiful colour in St. Petersburg, if inquiry is made in regard to the price of this treasure, replies, "It cost me ten months in prison."

Here is the key to the enigma:

The Countess had a revenue of about three hundred thousand francs a year.

One day a jeweller presented himself at the Countess's house with this famous necklace.

It pleased her immensely, of course; and she eagerly demanded the price.

"Two hundred and fifty thousand francs," reported the lapidary.

"It is a great deal. I haven't the money," sighed the beautiful Muscovite.

"Well, I shall take it to the Princess N——" he replied.

This lady was a rival of the Countess. It pained her to the heart to think the Princess should acquire these splendid jewels.

"Stop," said she. "Can you keep them for me for ten months? I engage to purchase them at the end of that time."

The jeweller was satisfied, and the bargain was concluded.

Thereupon the Countess went into a Greek convent for ten months. She bade adieu to all luxuries and vanities, discharged cooks, coachmen, and all other domestics, and devoted the expenses thus saved from housekeeping to the fund for acquiring the diamond necklace.

Ten months, thereafter, she returned to fashionable life more brilliant than ever, with a diamond necklace *de plus*.

"A necklace of two hundred and fifty thousand francs!" cried all the great ladies, her friends. "How did you manage it, Countess?"

"I have gained it by a certain method. And every one of you could do the same. But I know you will not try."

And that is true.

Young ladies who find a difficulty in deciding on the merits of their suitors will do well to study an Indian novel entitled "Miragamma," published in Pundjabee for five annas, described as a tale of a highly accomplished, pious, and beautiful young lady, daughter of a King of China, professing the Mohammedan religion, who had taken a vow to marry him alone who equaled her in learning and piety. To test the proficiency of her many suitors, she had prepared a certain number of questions relating chiefly to morality and religion. The book

contains these subjects of examination, together with the answers by one of her suitors, who eventually succeeded in obtaining her hand. There is no good reason why the competitive system of examination should not be adopted in the case of all matrimonial candidates of the male persuasion. The Civil Service Commissioners would no doubt willingly undertake the duty of conducting the examinations on receiving from young ladies instructions as to the qualifications required in each case. Care, however, should be taken to reject those who have merely been crammed for examination by husbands with experience as to the treatment of wives, and who would no doubt establish classes for indoctrinating their pupils with that cunning for which vile men is proverbial, and which accounts in great measure for the low estimation in which he is now generally held by gifted women. It might also be as well in the present unsettled condition of man's future prospects to lay it down as a rule that no husband is entitled to superannuation or retirement unless he can produce a certificate from the Civil Service Commissioners, or some other properly constituted body, showing that he was duly examined at the commencement of his career, and did not contract matrimony under false pretences.

Rumour assures us that there will be exhibited at the Vienna Exposition an elegant dress of point de Venise—the first specimen of that kind of lace manufactured in more than a hundred years. The current story, which may interest our readers, is briefly as follows: A few years before the fall of Paris the Empress Eugénie one day discovered among some old laces which had been transferred to her as souvenirs of the Empress Josephine about a quarter of a yard of a lace flounce of most peculiar mesh and beautiful design. It was worn and yellow with age. Eugénie at once realized that it was an art treasure. She sent for M. de Lisle, lace manufacturer of Paris, showed him the lace, and requested him to reproduce it, mesh and design, in a full lace dress for herself. The manufacturer told the Empress that her remnant was real old point de Venise, the art of making which had been lost for upward of a century, and he feared it would be impossible to execute the commission. The Empress, however, requested him to spare no pains to revive the lost art. M. de Lisle took the bit of lace, and for more than a year he used every possible means to discover how to make such lace again. He sought the oldest lace-makers; not one knew the mesh. He selected the most intelligent girls among his employees—those with keenest eyes and deftest fingers—supplied them with the most powerful lenses, and a sample of the old lace; but no progress was made. M. de Lisle was about to give up the experiment, when one day came the welcome news that a young girl had discovered the old point de Venise mesh. The fortunate workwoman was appropriately rewarded, and the work began in earnest. Eugénie visited the manufactory from time to time, exhibiting much pleasure at the restoration of a lost art to the lace-weavers. Before the dress was completed the Empress was an exile, but the delicate fabric was saved from destruction. She wrote from England that she would still take the dress if the manufacturer would be a loser by keeping it. The manufacturing company, touched by the misfortunes of Eugénie, agreed to release her from the engagement. Such is the romantic story of the lace dress which will be exhibited at Vienna.

Written for the Canadian Illustrated News.

THE DESERTED HALL.

BY HARRIET B. KING,

Ontario.

"The gods are just, and of our pleasant vices
Make instruments to scourge us!"

SHAKESPEARE.

DURING the summer and autumn of 18—, my kind and skillful physician, Dr. K——, strenuously insisted with my friends upon the necessity of an entire change of air and scene for me, as my health, which from childhood had been delicate, was now decidedly failing, and being intended for the profession of the law as a barrister—a profession requiring the most vigorous exercise of intellect, the keenest discrimination of judgment, sedulous application, and long-continued mental fatigue—I looked forward to keeping my first term with feelings of unqualified apprehension. The arguments of my good doctor that a tour in the northern counties would brace me for the ensuing winter, and a more familiar acquaintance with different classes would enliven my somewhat melancholy temperament, were so fully in accordance with my wishes, that after a few family consultations I was dismissed from the paternal mansion with a purse moderately well lined, and with the voluminous note-book of a determined tourist.

Passing through the many smiling landscapes of the midland counties, I approached by degrees the bolder scenery of the north.

It was towards the close of a fine autumnal evening that I drew my bridle rein before the door of a small inn in the little village of Sandford. But a short time elapsed before I had made satisfactory arrangements with the mistress of the "Dolphin" for the use, during an indefinite period, of her best room and her

best fare, as, attracted by the beauty of the neighbourhood, I resolved upon a more protracted sojourn than was usually my custom.

On the morrow I began my excursions, which were distant or near according as the weather invited or my own changeable mood tempted me, and before long I had made myself master of all the local knowledge which could be collected by an inquisitive traveller from the kind-hearted villagers of Sandford or the ruder fishermen of the seaport of Burnham, to which, being only two miles distant, my rides and walks were often directed. But there was one enquiry to which I received nothing but unsatisfactory replies or skillful evasions. This was with respect to the past history of a large mansion some distance from the high road, which I had observed the very evening of my arrival at Sandford. No question was necessary with respect to its present occupants, as I plainly perceived it to be uninhabited; but great was my surprise when, on asking an old peasant "to whom it belonged?" he turned pale, and, with visible emotion, changed the subject. It was no baronial castle richly fraught with reminiscences of feudal grandeur, no castellated mansion of the middle ages now ruined and ivy-clad, and appealing through the eye to the heart with memories of civil wars and family feuds; it was simply a large gray house, embosomed in orchards now glowing with the ripening fruit of autumn, and built with a solidity which gave it an air of true English comfort. It was the last place in the world, in which a romance hunter would have chosen to indulge his reveries, and the most unlikely spot for the perpetration of a domestic tragedy on which the eye of man ever rested. Yet the dim shadows of a fearful past were floating round it. The peasant loved not to linger near it after night-fall, the song of the merry child was hushed if a passing traveller asked its name, and even the wayfarer, beguiled by his ignorance of the locality to stop within its precincts during the twilight of the summer evening, felt a vague mysterious feeling of horror prompting him to seek, with quickened footsteps, the companionship of the village lights gleaming at a short distance. To add to these marvels, it was long before mine hostess of the "Dolphin" (albeit somewhat of a gossip) could be brought to pour into my thirsting ears the disjointed fragments of a tale which I now place before the reader in a more connected form.

At the close of the Peninsular war, when so many veterans returned to enjoy in retirement their well-earned laurels and the moderate competence secured to them by their country's gratitude, Reginald De Grey, a colonel in the British army, sought his native village of Sandford, partly that he might in its tranquil solitude watch over his only child, a fair, motherless girl, from whom the duties of his profession had long separated him, and partly that he might enjoy the society of his early friend and college companion, the Rev. Henry Melville, now the rector of the same village. Like himself, Mr. Melville was a widower and the father of an only child, but for eight years Herbert Melville had not visited his home. The adopted son of a widow lady, the possessor of the mansion at the outskirts of the village called, *par excellence*, the "Hall," he had gone with her to a Southern climate. Her death closely following their arrival in Italy, had left him as her heir, master of the "Hall" and the small estate on which it stood, and many wondered that instead of returning to take possession he lingered for more than two years in the sunny land of his exile, and afterwards mingled as an amateur in the stirring scenes which were taking place on the continent.

There was sunshine in the village of Sandford from the moment in which Adela De Grey, in the dawn of early womanhood, crossed the threshold of her father's cottage. Rather below the middle size, and delicately moulded, her slight figure conveyed an idea of fragility which was belied by her unwearied activity and uninterrupted health. Her beaming and intelligent eyes were of the colour of an early spring violet, and her luxuriant hair was of that deep chestnut over which a setting sun casts a golden glory. A graceful and gracious creature, gifted with feelings and talents of no common order, she became the light of her father's home, and the universal favourite with young and old. Of that father whose early literary bias, long repressed by sterner duties, eminently qualified him for her guide, instructor and friend, she at once became the cherished idol, nor was the affectionate and high-minded girl slow in discovering and appreciating the high chivalrous principle and the deep under-current of kindly feeling which in Reginald De Grey was veiled beneath an austere exterior.

Adela De Grey and her father had been settled at Sandford for more than two years when they one morning received a summons from their kind friend Mr. Melville, with whom they were on a footing of the most social intimacy, entreating them to spend the remainder of the day with him. This being a circumstance of no uncommon occurrence, they at once complied, and a few minutes brought them to the rectory. As Adela, in the ex-

uberance of happiness which had never known a check, bounded like a fawn through the French window which opened from the little flower garden, she was startled and abashed at the sight of a stranger, whom her old friend hastened to introduce as his long absent and now recovered son. But Herbert Melville and Adela De Grey were not altogether strangers to each other, for the fond father had often dwelt in glowing terms upon the personal beauty and high mental acquirements of his wandering child, and in every letter Herbert received from the rectory was some mention made of the fair girl who had risen like a star upon the dullness of a country village. Herbert Melville was in his thirty-second year, his figure was tall, elegant, and manly, and his complexion was redeemed from the charge of fairness which might once have been brought against it by long exposure to a southern sun. His eyes were of that clear grey which, set off by the darkest lashes and eyebrows, gave so intellectual a character to the countenance; hair of the same dark hue, and a smile which, if rarely seen, was yet so captivating that it seemed to unlock the secrets of all hearts, completed an exterior eminently prepossessing. The party separated at night mutually pleased with each other. Col. De Grey appreciated in its fullest extent the high polish and varied information of his friend's son, and Adela was not a little gratified to find that her preconceived notions of his personal and mental excellence were so fully verified. It must be admitted that the few thoughts of their fair visitor which floated that night round the pillow of the handsome stranger were not unmixed with surprise that so much beauty and elegance should be found in a far off village of the north. From this time a constant daily intercourse succeeded, and before the lapse of six months rumour was busy in the little village of Sandford. Friendly gossips whispered over their tea-parties that arrangements were nearly concluded for the marriage of Herbert Melville and Adela De Grey. And such was indeed the case! It was not difficult to foresee to what results the constant companionship of two such beings would lead, and if the fond father felt something of a pang when he saw that his darling had given him a rival in her heart, yet he suffered no selfish feeling to interfere with a union in every respect so suitable, and on which the happiness of his child evidently depended. In this case "the course of true love did run smooth," for Mr. Melville was equally satisfied that his early friendship with Reginald De Grey should be cemented by the marriage of their children. Arrangements were made for the young couple to reside, immediately after the wedding, at the "Hall" of which Herbert had been for many years the master. Had there been any at this time with feelings and passions wholly uninterested, willing to scrutinize the mind of Herbert Melville, they might have traced in its workings something which boded little good for the future happiness of the young pair. He appeared to labour under a mental restlessness, and to indulge in saddening thoughts, which evidently flowed from some hidden spring of sorrow, and which could hardly be accounted for by the natural anxiety attendant upon his coming change of life. It required even more than the playful tenderness of Adela to withdraw him from the reveries in which he daily became more fond of indulging, and had not the acute perception of Col. De Grey been blunted by that idolatrous love for his child which led him to view the object of her affection through the same partial medium, he would have been startled at the absence and distraction of mind so clearly manifested in the affianced bridegroom. After a courtship lengthened by the reluctance of the fond father to part with his child, the day was fixed, and Adela almost won a promise from Col. De Grey that he would in due time give up his cottage and reside entirely with her at the "Hall." It was on a beautiful summer's morning that the bells of the village church rang out a merry peal of congratulation to the newly-married pair. Amid the mingled smiles and tears of her friends, and the heartfelt blessings of the poor, among whom she had moved like an angel of mercy, the hand of Adela had been bestowed upon her lover, and the gay flowers with which her pathway was strewn by the village girls seemed but glowing types of the joys of her future existence. The last kiss of the dotting father was pressed upon the cheek of his fair child, the last blessing died away upon his lips, when the carriage arrived which was to convey them the short distance between the cottage and the Hall. As he placed her trembling hand within that of her newly made husband, something he would fain have said to him of the care and tenderness necessary for the fair blossom thus separated from its parent tree, but the words found no utterance; touched to a degree of tenderness of which superficial observers would never have deemed him susceptible, the iron-hearted soldier watched the receding carriage, and then retiring to his study, wept those bitter tears which so constantly prove that the heaven of sorrow is forever mixing with the brightest enjoyments of earth!

At the early hour of seven on the morning subsequent to the marriage, Mr. B., a resident