

And out of this concourse of so-called friends, this turmoil of so-called conversation, was there one form amongst the throng that could call the blood to her cheek, the light to her eye? One voice that fell sweetly on her ear, that woke an echo responsive in her heart? Yes, on reflection there was one—nay, there were two or three half-a-dozen—a score—but it seemed that, of late, her charms had ceased to work, her glances to fascinate. Ten compliments—she counted them on her fingers—made the sum total of her triumphs last night. Harry St. Leger devoted himself to the bread-and-butter hoyden. The handsome colonel had drunk too freely of claret to be available. The marquis was wholly taken up with Mistress Blasters (who, and what she was, nobody knew). Two or three snuff-taking admirers simpered, but did not commit themselves. The duke passed her with a bow, and it was a weary world!

As she came to this conclusion, a tap at the door announced the arrival of her waiting-maid with the daily dish of chocolate. Contrary to custom, that demure person did not depart after she set it down.

"What is it, child?" asked Lady Bellinger, not very good-humoredly, because of her reflections. "Speak up, and don't stand staring there as if you'd seen a ghost!"

"It's my lord," answered the waiting-maid, tossing her head, in imitation of her mistress. "My lord *has* me ask your ladyship if you were up, and if you could see him now directly, before he gets into his coach."

"My lord!" repeated his wife, in a tone of surprise, that sufficiently attested the infrequency of such visits. "What can my lord want with me at this early hour? How am I looking, child? Quick! Give me those drops off the chimney-piece—a clean cap, the one trimmed with pink, you fool!—Put a touch of color in my cheeks. I declare my face is like death! Draw that window-curtain. Now you may tell him he can come in."

Lord Bellinger entered accordingly, dressed in great splendor, with cane, hat, and snuff-box in hand. Thus encumbered, he made shift, nevertheless, to take the tips of his wife's fingers and carry them to his lips, inquiring at the same time how her ladyship did, and whether she had slept well.

Her ladyship had not closed an eye, of course. She was feverish, poorly, and far from strong! Thus establishing a position of defiance from the first.

"Zounds! madam," exclaimed he, "so much the better—you will the more readily hear what I have to say."

My lord, to do him justice, was a good-tempered man enough, but this morning found him, for many reasons, in the worst of humors. Last night's gathering to him, no less than to his lady, had been replete with disappointment and vexation. Like many others, he attended Ranelagh with a variety of motives, among which, pleasure, even in his own sense of the term, was perhaps the least engrossing. In the first place he desired to show himself before the world accompanied by her ladyship, scandal having been busy with both their names of late, and the town "telling each other significantly that 'there must soon be a break up in that establishment. My lady's goings on madam, I protest, are inexcusable, and my lord's extravagance, I have it from the best authority, really beyond belief.' Therefore he thought well to appear in this public place prosperous, smiling, debonair, and on the best of terms with his wife.

Their exit, however, like their entrance, had been badly timed. They neither came nor went away together; and his own staunch ally, Harry St. Leger, who was also a professed admirer of Lady Bellinger, thought well to whisper in his ear, "Look ye, Fred, I never turn my back on a friend,

and that friend was my wife!"—the rounded arm, white and beautiful. For the hundredth time Lord Bellinger believed that for the first time he was in love. Still she spoke not, and the moments were precious. Her cavalier would return surely return without delay.

"Only tell me, I implore you," continued his lordship, "when we shall meet again—where can I see you? Where can I write to you? In what way can I prove how ardently I long to cast myself at your feet—to serve you as the humblest of your slaves?"

He spoke in an agitated whisper; not without its effect—a softer expression shone in her eyes, and she lowered her fan to reply. Alas, for the disillusion! instantaneous as it was complete!

The beautiful face might only be beautiful while the lips were closed; when they parted for speech they discovered black and unsightly teeth, separated by gaps and cavities neither few nor far between.

Quick as Lord Bellinger had been to fall in love, he was yet quicker to fall out. Ere a word could escape the lady, his cure had been effected, and with a dexterity that nothing but long practice could have insured, he effected his retreat after a profound bow, a devoted glance, and a deep sigh.

"You are watched," he whispered, "so I will take my leave. Do not forget me. Soon we shall meet again."

Nevertheless he went home from Ranelagh feeling strongly at variance with the world in general, and himself in particular.

Therefore his mood, notwithstanding his courteous entrance, was none of the most amiable when he paid this morning visit to her ladyship; therefore the tone in which he couched it was little calculated to sweeten the unpalatable communication he had to make.

"Zounds! madam," said his lordship, "you will the more readily hear what I have to say."

"Sure you need not swear," she replied, with frigid dignity. "No gentleman swears so early in the day."

He laughed, and continued more good-humoredly, "Your ladyship is very happy in town, are you not?"

"Your lordship must be a fool to ask such a question," she returned sharply. "If you neglected me less, you would know that in my position, and with my health, it is ridiculous to talk of being happy anywhere!"

"And yet you look charmingly," continued her husband, scanning his own hand—some person in the glass.

"Compared to faces which your lordship is in the habit of studying, mine is perhaps well-favored," said she; "but nothing is so deceptive as one's appearance, and the air of this town is simply killing me by inches."

"Then it shall do murder no longer," he answered kindly. "I must leave for the West this very afternoon. My coach is waiting at the door to take me to the minister's. There is not a moment to be lost. It is the king's business; I suppose I ought to say, God bless him!"

"Well?" she asked coldly. "What concern is that of mine?"

"Will you not come with me?" was her reply. "We have been living separate lives too long. Perhaps each of us is better than the other thinks. Let us give it a trial and see if we cannot be happy together for a few weeks. We have been very uncomfortable apart for a good many years."

The tears were rising to her eyes. A kind word or a caress might have turned the violence even now; but it was his lordship's habit to assume carelessness of manner at the moment he was most interested, and instead of putting his arm round her waist, he busied himself adjusting cravat and ruffles in the glass. She felt and showed she was annoyed.

"I cannot leave town," she objected, "at a moment's notice. I wonder you can ask such a thing."

an hour."

"Your lordship is vastly obliging," replied Katerfelto, with his peculiar smile. "I must trouble you to sign this little acknowledgment of the debt."

He drew a sheet of paper from his pocket, filled in certain blank spaces at the writing-table, and spread it before his lordship, with an air of excusing himself for the liberty he was obliged to take.

It was Lord Bellinger's boast that he never refused to draw his sword, drink his bottle, stake his money, or sign his name; yet he made a wry face, and threw his pen into the inkstand with a curse, after it had performed its office.

"I'm in a corner," said he, "or you would never have had me on such exorbitant terms. The king's business must not stand too cool. Hang it, man! it had been my own, not a usurer in the town should have bit me like this!"

"Your lordship is in haste," answered Katerfelto; "and his Majesty's commands cannot be too speedily obeyed. I trust," he added, carelessly, "there is no fear of disaffection in the West."

"State secrets!" answered Bellinger, with a laugh. "How can I tell? I have not yet seen the minister. I go to him in an hour for final instructions."

Though Katerfelto was pondering deeply, his tone seemed lighter than usual, while he asked how the other had been amused the night before at Ranelagh; observing, "It is not your lordship's custom to leave an adventure half accomplished."

"No more of that!" exclaimed Lord Bellinger. "These are but the pastimes of a man who has little serious business on hand. Ambition, you know, is a specific for love. If I play my part well, Katerfelto, I have reason to believe that the next time I borrow your money it will be for an earl!"

"Good luck attend your lordship," answered the other, turning to depart. "As you are strong, be merciful."

My lord laughed, and snapped his fingers. "In half an hour," said he, "I shall have the lives and estates of some half dozen gentlemen in my pocket. Intrigue, my good friend, is all very well; but for real sport, give me the great game. If your spiritual informants can travel so far, they will shortly bring you stirring news from the West."

"The vicissitudes of this material world affect me but little," answered Katerfelto, "save in so far as they aid my researches among the boundless regions of science and futurity. I am but a man of thought, while your lordship is a man of action. If, in my humble capacity, I can serve you, command me; and so I take my leave."

"He's an honest fellow enough, I protest," thought his lordship, as the door closed. "though his terms are confoundingly high! Money seems like everything else; if you want it, you must pay for it—through the nose too! But he's an honest fellow, no doubt."

The "honest fellow," meantime, plodding thoughtfully home to Deadman's Alley, busied himself in elaborate calculations of time, distance, expense, and other matters tending to subvert the minister's intention, and render nugatory Lord Bellinger's mission to the West.

He lost not a moment in visiting John Garnet, whom he found sitting up in an easy-chair, half dressed, but so swathed in bandages that he could hardly move.

Dismissing Waif, who was in attendance as usual, he laid a finger on his patient's wrist, and marked the strong full beat of the pulse in grave approval.

"How much longer are you going to keep me here?" exclaimed John Garnet, with some impatience. "I've been telling Waif, for the last three days, I am as strong as I ever was in my life."

"Get up," replied the doctor, and lift that chair from the floor. So. Do you feel as if a dog were licking a raw place in your side?"

Twice Katerfelto perused it with an anxious brow, then he turned to John Garnet, and observed carelessly:

"A stroll before dinner will do you no harm. Come with me to the next street, I want your opinion of a horse I keep there."

So congenial a request met with an eager affirmative. In the flush of returning health, John Garnet longed keenly for the fresh outward air. And to see a horse again, even in another man's stable, was a return to life and all that made life enjoyable once more.

The doctor wrapped himself, though it was summer, in a long black cloak and drew a square cap down to his very eyebrows, before he crossed the threshold, precautions which seemed scarcely necessary for purposes of concealment, inasmuch as he led his visitor along two or three unfrequented by-lanes, to an old tumble-down building, that looked more like a dilapidated pigeon-house than the dwelling of so noble an animal as the horse.

"Enter," said he, unlocking the door. "The husk looks of the roughest, but there is a kernel within."

John Garnet was surprised to find the stable roomy, commodious, well ventilated, and amply supplied with all necessaries for the comfort of its inmate. "If the casket is mean," said he, "at least it seems well lined, and water-tight. Let us open that shutter, Doctor, for a glimpse at the jewel it contains."

It was a jewel! An exclamation of wonder and admiration escaped the visitor's lips, as daylight, thus admitted, revealed to him the beauty and symmetry of the animal he came to inspect. From boyhood he had spent much of his time in the saddle, found a store of pleasure and legitimate excitement in the companionship of his horse, and here seemed the very flower and perfection of the whole equine race.

It was not that the sloping shoulders, the deep girth, the flat legs, the round firm feet, the full, well-turned back, and lengthy quarters denoted strength and speed unequalled, but there was also that proportion and harmony of all the parts, which Nature is careful to preserve when she means to turn out some masterpiece of her craft. John Garnet said as much; and Katerfelto, man of science though he was, could not conceal a certain prim satisfaction, which every man alive betrays when congratulated on the superiority of his steed.

"I am a poor judge," observed the Charlatan, whom no earthly consideration would have induced to bestride the paragon before them; "but I imagine the creature is as good as it looks."

"That I'll swear he is!" replied John Garnet, fairly putting his arm round the taper muzzle, that nestled kindly to his embrace. "If I had seen nothing but this beautiful little head, with its full bright eyes, and fine transparent ears, I would have backed him against any horse in England for all I am worth in the world. Not much to be sure," he added, with a laugh, "but you should have carried it for me, old man; and I don't think the addition weight would have caused you to falter at the post."

He patted the hard, smooth neck, and strong, firm crest while he spoke; and the animal, though an entire horse, in the full vigor of good food and high condition, responded lovingly and gently to his caress.

"He knows you already," said Katerfelto; "he will know you better before you have done with him. Listen, John Garnet: what would you give me for that gray horse as he stands?"

"Five hundred guineas!" answered John Garnet, laughing. "if I had them. Ten years of my life, as I haven't five hundred pence in the world!"

"He is yours!" replied the other. "You shall ride him out of London to-night."

John Garnet's eyes brightened. "I do

of the surgery, and, indeed, with some interruption during the progress of dinner. When that meal was taken away, and Waif, with many a backward glance, had departed and shut the door, Katerfelto filled the glasses, smacked his lips over the Burgundy, and thus delivered himself:

"They would hang you, my good sir, if they could catch you; and this I consider a sufficient reason for your leaving London to-night."

John Garnet gasped, and set his wine down untasted. For some time he had entertained uncomfortable misgivings to this effect. It was not reassuring to hear them corroborated by so sagacious a person as his host. "Chance-medley is not a hanging matter," said he, in a shaking voice.

"But murder is," answered Katerfelto; "and murder I fear they would bring it in. Why, in the name of all that is hasty, my young friend, did you not take a couple of gentlemen into that dark room, and exchange a pass or two in the presence of witnesses? See how the matter stands as it would be submitted to a jury. An altercation, brooded over for more than an hour; a quarrel, not in hot blood, but on reflection; and the company gone. The lights out; the younger man escapes, and the elder is found stabbed to death on the floor? It looks ugly, you must confess."

"I have thought so more than once," replied John Garnet, much disturbed. "Do you mean they will try me for—for—my life?" He got the question out with difficulty, and swallowing a mouthful of wine fancied it tasted like blood.

"I mean nothing of the kind," said the other. "I mean you never to be placed in such a position. I mean you to be a score of miles away to-night. I mean to rescue your name, to save your life, and to make your fortune."

"How so?" asked John Garnet, taking comfort while he emptied his glass.

For answer, Katerfelto made an almost imperceptible sign with one of his fingers, to which the other responded by a word, whispered so low that its import was to be gathered less by the sound than the movement of his lips.

"I was sure of it!" exclaimed the Charlatan. "I could have sworn from the first you were one of us. I may speak freely now. John Garnet, I call upon you this day to ride for the king!"

"To the gates of hell!" was the reckless answer. "And as much farther as your good horse will carry me. I am ready to start this minute."

"Softly," said the other. "I neither require so prompt a departure, nor so long a journey. You need not mount for another hour. You need not ride so far as the Land's End. The business I shall intrust you with demands courage, secrecy, and some little ingenuity. I believe you possess all. To win, opens a path to rank, fortune, and the choicest honors royal gratitude can bestow. To lose, leaves you no worse than you are now, for at least you will have a fair chance of escape."

"I ask for nothing better," replied the young man. "Only tell me what to do, and how to do it."

Katerfelto pushed the bottle to his guest. "You will need a good horse," said he, "and good pistols. These I can supply. You have a good sword and a good mother-wit of your own. It may be you will want them all to carry out our plans. Success is a peerage at least. Failure means high treason so you know what you undertake."

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

In hunting hippopotamus, it is usual to employ guns of very heavy calibre, and bullets hardened with tin or quicksilver, and to fire as short a distance as possible. Among the Dutch elephant-hunters, bullets have been so large that four of them together weighed a pound.