

"This is too awful!" began her ladyship, "and I really cannot attempt to see him again! You must tell me about it. What dreadful thing is this he has on his mind?"

Between us we managed to disclose Dawley's troubles.

"Ah," she said, "the old story, money, money. Whenever Forton is approached about him he always says, 'How much this time?' As to his engagement," she continued frigidly, "I can only wonder Mr. Bardett, who is so old a friend, has not apprised us of it."

"My consent was only given yesterday," said Mrs. Carew.

"Oh, indeed?" returned Lady Forton, with an icy smile. "Miss Carew, you must be a very courageous person to ally yourself with a young man of his antecedents. I hope you may never regret it."

"I am perfectly willing to abide by the result," said Miss Clara, returning the smile with interest.

We got a little pleasanter during lunch, and it ended by my being sent up with a kind message to Dawley, saying that his present trouble would be considered at Forton House. I was much pleased, and thanked Lady Forton heartily as I put her in the carriage.

"Now I'll tell you what I have done," I said. "I have given the young couple Pethouse Grange rent free for a year."

"You have done what?" she exclaimed in a loud voice.

"I have given them the Grange for a year," I repeated.

"Then all I can say is you have done the very worst thing you ever did in the whole course of your life! You know what Dawley has been to us, and here you choose to bring him to live at our very doors. It is abominable!"

"I assure you, Lady Forton—"

"Oh, don't say another word. To the station," she cried, and drove off without wishing me good-bye.

"This is how she thanked me for my kindness to her brother-in-law!" I said afterwards to Mrs. Carew and Dr. Boyd.

"She is an ill-bred person," said Mrs. Carew. "Never mind," said the doctor; "at all events her visit has done Dawley good. I told her he would get better directly his mind was relieved."

He was better still after a letter which arrived from Forton House the next day. He was to have a thousand pounds to pay his debts, and a slight increase in his allowance, but only on the condition that he lived out of the County of Hertford.

Not very civil to me, I thought; but Dawley said afterwards it was Pethouse Grange that brought them to look so quick. The Squire saw Lord Forton in London, and when he returned had a conversation with Mrs. Carew, which seriously discomposed her.

"I am afraid my sister misled you, Stenpor," he said to me; "but the fact is, she is never happy unless she is carrying out some mysterious plan. Now if she had only come frankly to me about this business we should have been spared all the stupid scheming and unpleasantness. Very kind of you to offer the Grange to the young couple, but I intend to give Clara a house and a few acres of land for her marriage portion. Dawley can amuse himself nicely there with his horse hobby."

The patient's recovery was marvellous. In two days he was down-stairs with a well-made wig on his head. Of course my brother says he was never ill at all, that he never had a tumble, and that the whole affair was planned between himself and Dr. Boyd. In short, he persists in calling it "Dawley's Dodge."

THE GIPSY'S PROPHECY.

BY B. P. SHILLABER.

IV.

Notwithstanding the acquaintance had been happily begun, the interdiction was not lifted, and Abel found himself still shut out from the craved communion. After a few trials to remove the barrier, his pride revolted, and, feigning a call back to town, he left his friends with a promise to join them a week or so before their return, to finish up the docket, as he professionally termed it. He had a lurking hope that some inquiry might be made for him and some regret felt for his departure, and it was not very gratifying to his self-esteem, afterwards, to learn that the only regret had been felt by his friends, and not a word expressed by any other regarding his absence. He was absent a week or so, during which time he had gone to Pleasant Cove, or Bald Cliff, in hope of meeting the gipsy or of hearing something relating to the old-time affair, regarding which some one, he thought, must have known; but he was not gratified, yet the stone he found where it was cast, though nearly covered with sand. That was a monument to the terrific fact.

He was received joyfully by the Calefs on his return to them, and the next day George proposed to join him in a ramble through the woods. They were gone nearly all day, making much noise with their guns, but killing very little, when, on their return, they came in view of the farm-house through the trees. Feeling in his pouch George found two rifle bullets, and bantered Abel on a trial of skill in marksmanship, challenging him to compete for a triding

wager. They selected the knot of a pine tree at a convenient distance, for the target, and drew lots for the first chance. Abel won, and, taking careful aim, he fired. He was moving to see where the shot had struck, when there came from the house a piercing shriek, and a great commotion was manifest there. Women were seen running about as if frantic, and a servant girl came bounding across the meadow, wringing her hands, her hair wildly blowing about her ears, shouting before she reached where they stood:

"Miss Alice is shot dead!"

They waited to make no inquiries, but, throwing down their guns, rapidly ran toward the house. Mrs. Calef stood in the door calling upon them to hasten, and pointed wildly to Mrs. Marlow's rooms. They rushed in upon a scene of fearful grief and dismay. There upon the floor, where she had fallen, and bleeding profusely, lay the young lady, beside whom her mother knelt in all the bitterness of woe, holding one of the moveless hands and uttering words of the deepest tenderness, her mind wavering under the terrible calamity.

Abel, though overcome by the sight, retained his presence of mind, and, stooping over the prostrate girl, found that her heart still beat, and applied himself to learn the extent of her injury. His early education aided this, and calling for water, he washed the blood from her face, which he found to proceed from a wound in her forehead, just covered by her hair. The bullet had ploughed to the bone, glanced off, and lodged in the window-casing across the room. Neighbors had been immediately summoned, who came rushing in, the most of them skilled in rural leechcraft, and when he called for styptics, with which to stop the flow of blood, they were ready with their astringent herbs. These were effective, restoratives were applied, the young lady opened her eyes intelligently and was removed to a sofa, and, after applying plaster from his own resources, Abel left the patient in care of her female friends and her mother, who had recovered from a fainting fit which had been induced by reaction of feeling at her daughter's restoration.

The bullet, which had been fired from a shot gun, had glanced from the tree, though not in the direction of the house, and wrought the mischief described. Abel's joy at the escape of the young lady was mingled with a feeling of delight that, through this accident, he had obtained entrance to the coveted precinct, and, as she had escaped, he was radiant with happiness.

"Do you catch any glimpse of the mystical thread in this adventure, Abel?" asked George.

"I don't care to seek it," said Abel, at once grown serious; "for there must be another risk of violence, according to the prophecy, and rather than subject one I loved to such a peril as this I would leave my passion behind me and fly to the uttermost parts of the earth."

"All must take their risks, Abel," said the oracular Mrs. George.

"What is to be will be," said George sententiously.

Abel made no further reply. The next day he had an invitation from Mrs. Marlow to visit his patient, whom he found sitting up, but pale and languid, the wound concealed by her hair. She extended her hand to him as he came in, and gave him a smile of welcome. The mother was profuse in her demonstrations. He told her the story of the accident, and joined with her in an expression of gratitude at the young lady's marvellous escape. Then he had some soothing words to say to the patient which had their proper effect, and after a short visit he left, promising to come again, after an urgent invitation from the mother, supported by a look from the invalid. A wonderful interest in her welfare, though she had fully recovered, brought him daily to the Marlows, or the singular number would express it better. Yet he was not in love, as he understood the passion, but he could not describe his feelings, and that prophetic thread of destiny loomed in his mind as large as the cable of a suspension bridge. They walked, rode and sat together, with full and free communion, but they made no talk of love. One day he found her engaged in looking over and arranging a box of what she called precious mementoes, and his gaze was attracted by a little blue shoe which lay half hidden among other matters.

"Please allow me to look at that," he said in an agitated manner.

"Certainly," she replied, and looked with anxious surprise at his pale face as he examined it.

"What may this little shoe be a memento of?" he eagerly asked.

"Oh, of an early adventure of my own, in papa's prosperous days, when we went to the beaches; and at one time I came near losing my life by a big stone which was recklessly rolled down from the top of a hill, but leaped over my head and fell into the sea. On leaving the beach with my nurse I lost one of my shoes, and have kept this ever since as a memento. I have forgotten the name of the beach."

"Will you please excuse me for a few moments?" he said, and, without waiting to hear her consent, he darted from the room, greatly to her surprise.

He rushed madly into the apartments of his friends, tore up to his chamber, dashed open a trunk with the ferocity of a baggage smasher, seized a small shoe from the nook where it for years had rested, and ran back in a very short space of time. He threw himself into the chair

he had left, and placed on the table, beside the "memento"—its mate!

The young lady, startled by his agitation and strange conduct, and seeing the shoe, could only say,

"What does this mean?"

His face was lit with joy. His eyes, suffused with tears, beamed on her with infinite tenderness, and, impelled by a sense of chivalry which always appears in the old romances in such cases, he dropped on his knees before her.

"It means, my blessed one," said he, "the removal of all obstacles to my happiness, and yours, I trust. It means that I have found a thread of existence to twine with my own, years ago presaged, without fear of threat-ned calamity. It means a future of unselfish love and devotion to the wife of my choice. To you, the only woman I have ever loved, whom twice I have been near destroying, I offer an honest and faithful affection."

She gave him her hand confidingly and then, the first plunge being taken, they sat and talked seriously but happily regarding the past and the future, during which the mother came in, who was very much surprised to be informed of the step taken, but could only shed tears at what she was very glad to learn, and invoked the widow's blessing on the twain.

Then he led her to the apartments of the Calefs, where no announcement of his happiness was necessary, as his face revealed it, and a rapturous welcome was extended by his friends, who hailed the event as a most delightful close to the summer's enjoyment.

"But," said George, "how about that prophecy?" How could you be brought to incur the risk, Abel?"

"Here is the fulfilment of the prophecy," he replied, showing the little blue shoes, "and here is the Cinderella who has come to claim her slipper and reveal to me the fact that the risk has passed. Twice tried by fate, the cord that has been twisting all these years has no break to fear in the future, and the gipsy's prophecy is fulfilled to the letter."

Those little blue shoes, shrouded in an ornate case of crystal and gold, form a prominent and attractive ornament in the home of Abel Dorne, and the tale has often to be told of the perilous adventure at Bald Cliff.

THE FARMER'S FOES.

Apart from bad weather, the farmer's worst enemy has been his own ignorance. He would go on, year after year, quickly submitting to the decimation of his crops by insects, birds, animals, and weeds, without so much as endeavouring to find out the nature or even the names of his enemies.

In commercial matters such persistent ignorance would be simple ruin; for no tradesman or mechanic could hope to make headway in the struggle for existence if he thus allowed the commonest difficulties and impediments to his craft to remain unnoticed and unremedied. But the farmer, until quite recently, has seemed to imagine that the whole science of agriculture was contained in a few simple principles, handed down from father to son without improvement or comment for several centuries. Many farmers will still, because rooks do harm at one season of the year to some crops, drive them away at other times when they might be of incalculable service. Sparrows are equally persecuted in June, when they are killing hundreds of insects every day, and in September, when they take toll of the wheat. The agricultural mind, in fact, adopts one of two wholesale theories about the sparrow—a comprehensive title which includes every bird unfortunate enough to be smaller than a thrush. It is either an insignificant bird, not worth driving out of the wheat, or an evil-minded bird for which absolute extermination, wherever met with, is all too light a punishment. Under the influence of this latter opinion a farmer is apt, in spring, to mistake the intentions of the town-tits, who are fighting in the good cause by devouring grubs and insects in his orchards; for he at once objects to these "sparrows" eating his buds—which they have no intention of doing—and producing his gun, incontinently fires a pipe-bowl full of small shot into his fruit tree, blowing away the prospects of a peck or so of apples, and killing his small friend. Then the farmer is satisfied as far as that "sparrow" is concerned.

The insectivorous hedgehog, moreover, is in danger of extermination, and all because lying rustic legends aver that the prickly beast not only sucks milk from sleeping cows, but carries off apples spiked up his back; and the useful toad is generally stamped upon for his ugliness.

In the matter of insects, again, scientific philanthropists, from Kirby and Spence to Miss Ormerod, have laboured for years to explain to farmers the nature and habits of their friends and enemies among the lower order of creation, together with the means for the prevention of their ravages. Cure, when once the rank and file of Nature's army has taken the field, is almost impossible; but prevention in many cases is, or ought to be, not only possible but easy.

So far, however, farmers have, as a class, refused to be instructed. They regard all insects as either "worms" or "flies"; and consider their generation and multiplication to be due to atmospheric influences. East winds are supposed to be responsible for the "blight," a miscellaneous title which covers a multitude of afflictions; showers of rain bring the frogs, and hot weather "breeds" flies, while maggots are the result of spontaneous generation.

When the gooseberry and current bushes are stripped of their leaves by the caterpillars of a "saw-fly," most of those who suffer from their ravages are still content to imagine that the curly-tailed caterpillars are really "worms which come out of the ground." A fluffy brown moth, very common in many places, lays its eggs upon fruit trees, and the caterpillars subsequently spin voluminous webs around the branch; but these "black hairy worms" are in many districts considered to be the result of diseased wood in the tree, only to be cured by immediately sacrificing the offending branch. When this has been done, the caterpillars, falling to the ground, will frequently ascend the tree in search of food, and, by commencing operations anew upon another branch, lead to the destruction of the whole tree by its owner, under the idea that the disease is too deeply seated to be cured by the mere amputation of a branch or two. Though these are aggravated instances, there is no doubt that the unwillingness of farmers in the past to learn anything from experience has resulted in the firm establishment upon such of our staple crops of one or more special parasites, which can now only be dealt with in detail.

Hop, for instance, suffers severely at times from four distinct afflictions, agriculturally known as the "worm," the "hop-dog," the "fly," and "blight." The "worm" attacks the root of the plants, and is really the caterpillar of an insect known to entomologists as the "ghost moth"; the "hop-dog" is the caterpillar of another moth, and eats the leaves; while the "fly," which is a beetle, and the "blight," a kind of aphid or plant louse, attack the young shoots and the blossom. The last pest is undoubtedly the worst, but often brings its own remedy in the shape of attendant crowds of lady-birds, a small beetle specially designed by Nature for the destruction of injurious aphides. Unfortunately, however, the conspicuous colouring of the lady-birds is apt to attract the farmer's attention, and he, considering their presence in such numbers as suspicious, to say the least, generally adopts an attitude towards them which materially lessens their power of rendering him service.

The standing wheat, again, is often infested with small graminivorous beetles, and is sometimes carried to the granary so full of the caterpillars of a small grey moth that they may be picked up in handfuls from the floor. Still, although insect collectors, by sweeping the wheat by night with a net, will often for their own purposes collect hundreds of these injurious insects. The farmer never dreams of taking any such measures. There has, it is true, been some improvement of late years in the attitude of agriculturists towards science. Farmers, spurred on by the fear of forcing competition, are beginning to avail themselves of new chemical and mechanical appliances. But to bring out the full capabilities of the land something more than this half-hearted advance is required. Capital, energy, and scientific knowledge are indispensable; and in proportion as these are not to be found among our tenant-farmers in their small holdings, too long accustomed to undisturbed control of the market, we are tempted to regard the so-called evils of large farms and American competitions as very mixed evils after all.

THE proposal to form a national Liberal Club in London, to serve as a common meeting place for Liberals both of town and country, is in a fair way of realization. The new institution is to be much more than a club. It is suggested that it should be a kind of hotel, with bedroom accommodation for provincial members, and that all the Liberal associations of the country should have their offices in the building. If the ideas of its promoters are carried out, it will become the headquarters of Liberal organization in England. The scheme has already attracted a wide measure of support.

PERSONS about to use the telephone will do well to take warning by the terrible fate of a gentleman who is something in the city, and has a telephone. The other day he was offering a few remarks through the instrument, when suddenly he saw a bright flash from the instrument, and the same moment there came upon him a sensation as if a huge lobster had secured an unusually favorable grasp of him by the skin of the forehead, and was violently shaking him. The scientific explanation with which he has been consoled is that he had touched with his forehead the hooks for suspending the transmitter. That's all very well; but he got a great shock, and his watch won't go.

SHE was an American—petit, pretty, and plucky. We came out shooting, and she, with her little single-barrelled breech-loader, wiped many of our eyes. There was a tremendous number of guns, and the underwood is terribly thick this year, as everyone knows. Shot was peppering about as profusely as at Plevna, and at last about four o'clock entered the back of a gentleman who was standing by my lady's side. "By Jove, I'm hit!" he exclaimed, taking off his coat to see whether there was any blood about. "Captain—," calmly observed *la belle Americaine*, "if you have been a soldier and a sportsman for twenty-five years without knowing what lead is, you are a lucky individual. I trust you do not intend to undress yourself in this corner, as it is the best on this side of the wood, and I should be sorry to have to leave it before the drive is finished."