

notes he had picked up somewhere — and sold out that too, as the property of an absconding debtor.

Prickle was never seen in Quidbury after Swasher's reappearance; and the latter left soon after with a snug sum in his pocket.

Last summer, at a popular watering-place, turning about in answer to a tap on the shoulder, I found myself face to face with my mysterious client.

"Glad to see you," he said; "I owe you a fee, I believe."

I modestly assented, and Mr. Prickle made matters right, expressing his regret that circumstances had prevented his doing so sooner.

I could not forbear a question or two touching the occurrences above related.

"All easily explained," he said. "You see that rascal Swasher—excuse the force of habit—and myself were one and the same person. A little padding and Swasher's wig and goggles made all the difference. The two sanctums were separated by a board partition, part of which I could remove and replace at pleasure, and so be either Swasher or Prickle as occasion might require. I had forgotten to lock the door the day that confounded sub-committee-man bolted in and played the mischief."

"But the blood?"

"Pshaw!—I had upset a bottle of red ink and got some of it on my hands. What an ass of himself that fool of a doctor made, with his Fibrine and Albumen and Corpuscles!"

THE WORLD WOULD BE THE BETTER FOR IT.

If men cared less for wealth and fame
And less for battle-field and glory,
If wit in human hearts, a name
Seemed better than in song and story!
If men, instead of nursing pride,
Would learn to hate it and abhor it,
If more relied
On love to guide,
The world would be the better for it.

If men dealt less in stocks and lands,
And more in bonds and deeds fraternal,
If love's work had more willing hands
To link this world with the supernal;
If men stored up love's oil and wine
And on bruised human hearts would pour it,
If 'yours' and 'mine'
Would once combine
The world would be the better for it.

If more would act the play of life,
And fewer spoil it in rehearsal;
If bigotry would sheath its knife
Till good became more universal;
If custom, gray with ages grown,
Had fewer blind men to adore it—
If talent shone
In truth alone
The world would be the better for it.

If men were wise in little things—
Affecting less in all their dealings;
If hearts had fewer rusted strings
To isolate their kindred feelings;
If men, when wrongs beat down the right,
Would strike together to restore it—
If right made right
In every fight,
The world would be the better for it.

For the Favorite.

THEODORE'S COURTSHIP.

A TALE OF SISTERLY DEVOTION.

BY NED P. MAH,
OF MONTREAL.

Time, something after midnight; place, Great Coram street, London.

A fleet hansom, which had rattled us home from a "soirée de Bohème," at which we had been enjoying the society of a number of brothers and sisters of the pen and brush, stopped, in mid career, in a manner which said much for the training of the wiry screw between the shafts, at my lodgings, or rather at the lodgings of Mrs. Mah, as the lady has condescended to call herself, who, in consideration of a box at the Opera, a season ticket for the Palace and sundry other privileges and emoluments in our private agreement made and included, corrects, punctuates, and, in some instances, fair copies my careless MSS. and poses as my model for all female characters from chamber-maid to duchess, besides rummaging her fertile brain for those pleasing quips and oddities which, appended to my elegant little vignettes, so delectate a discerning public. I should have chosen another neighborhood, but gave in to Mrs. M. who represents her landlady as an "out-and-outer," and "completely on the square," although how any idea of rectangularity could connect itself with that rotund and capacious matron has ever been a mystery to me.

The vehicle, as I said before, stopped; and thence emerged your humble servant handing out a lady in pink, (Laura will wear pink, despite my protestations, although it does not become her; probably because it, her complexion, and the champagne she most affects, are all of precisely the same tint,) who straightway let herself in with her latch-key, while I turned to the driver in order to hand him the due recompense for his drive.

With some question about change, I lifted my eyes to his face, where, some far away memories stirring faintly within me, they instantly became rivetted by the awakening recognition expressed in his own optics.

"Why! Jack—"

"Hush," said I, with an uneasy glance at the hall, in which the lady in pink was busily engaged in illuminating the conjugal lamp. "Not Jack, now—Ned—Edward—Edward Percy Mah, journalist, caricaturist, cartoonist, hack author and poetaster, at your service. But Theo, old boy, how on earth did you ever attain your present exalted position. I declare you quite look down on poor me. And I thought all the while were enjoying the pipe of peace and the good things of this life—in fact the *otium cum dig.* of a respected and opulent existence among the sand hills of Jutland! But come in and tell me all about it," I continued, fairly pulling him down his box and saluting him, as the people used to do at Baden, on both cheeks.

"I suppose," said Theo, emitting a huge puff of smoke, and settling himself luxuriously in my American rocking-chair, "that the circumstances which preceded our parting in Hamburg are still vivid enough in your memory. That it is needless to recall to your mind's eye the figure of the charming old gentleman and the more charming young lady, whose acquaintance we made on the excursion to Bankenese; nor to remind you—no, I see by your smile that that, at least, is not necessary—how that young lady's charms were the preponderating influence in leading me to accept the old fellow's advice, to see Copenhagen before my return to my own, my native land. Of course you remember how, under the genial influences of champagne and the unflagging vivacity of your own varied and amusing conversation, the old boy declared that we were the best fellows out of Denmark, and exerted every argument in his power, and all his authority with his niece to add her entreaties that you should join us in a trip to the Danish Capital, and how you remained courteously obstinate to the last.

"Well then, my story really commences at 5 o'clock in the morning of the day on which you bid me adieu at the gangway of the *City of Hamburg*, when I turned my face from the retreating steamer to the city whose name she bore, whose spires and pinnacles were then gleaming in the morning sun. Of course I felt awfully cut up at parting from you, my comrade in my pleasures and dangers, my joys and sorrows, for a whole twelve-month of travel and adventure, and it was fortunate that I had the happy consciousness of pockets well filled by over-prosperous ventures at Baden, and the still more enlivening hope of speedily possessing the one woman I had ever really wished to own, to aid my naturally elastic nature to recover its balance.

"Arriving at the hotel, I stumbled across the head-waiter as wide-awake, obliging, and irreproachably dressed as ever. I wished his aid to procure me some eye-openers and pick-nic-ups as antidotes to my grief; and then sounded him as to his knowledge of Herr Guldenberg. I elicited that the firm of Guldenberg and Son, (there was discovery No. 1. I had somehow felt perfectly satisfied in my own mind that Rosalie was an only daughter—by which I mean to say an only child,) was one of the richest in Copenhagen, the celebrated "Raunder's kids" bring a staple article of trade with them. 'No doubt,' he added, 'Rosalie will have a heavy dowry. The man who wins a woman at once beautiful and rich, will be a lucky dog.'

"Discovery No. 2 was in this wise: I was chatting with old Guldenberg, when the conversation turning on music, he asked Rosalie to give us a sample of Danish love-songs on her guitar. Sitting there on her low stool, her features animated by the act of singing, which she did with much feeling, she made the prettiest picture imaginable. 'Isn't she a charming little woman?' said the old man, in a little access of rapture. 'She seems something more divine than woman,' said I. 'Your daughter is, indeed, but little lower than the angels.'

"Allow me," replied Herr Guldenberg, 'to correct a little misunderstanding. Rosalie is not my daughter, although she frequently calls me papa.'

"I always thought it was the old buffer's daughter," I broke in, replenishing Theo's glass and drawing his attention to the box of cigarettes, (neat-handed Mrs. M.'s own rolling.) "How did he introduce her? or was there any introduction at all that jolly afternoon at Blankenese?"

"That must have been it," proceeded Theo. "Old Guldenberg went on to explain that she was one of his brother's two,—here he hesitated and instead of using the word daughters, said girls—who had recently on his brother's decease in Spain, been committed to his guardianship; and never, continued the old boy, breaking into raptures again—never were lovelier or more loveable wards. Rosa was the most beautiful, if what everybody said was true; but her beauty was of a graver, more melancholy style. I should soon be able to judge for myself; but to him Rosalie, his lovely, fairy-like, bright little Rosalie, was perfection. In amiability, he added, 'both were equal, for in that virtue each was superlative.'

"Here then were three discoveries. 1st. My adored was not a rich merchant's only child—he had a son. Next she was not this rich merchant's child at all. 3rd. She and another, as yet unknown, paragon, were the "girls" of Herr Guldenberg's brother.

"Now it behoved me, who, however, much I might be in love, was not quite insanely so, nor unmindful that the few hundreds made at Baden, were all that I possessed to speculate, whether this Herr Guldenberg No. 2, had also been a rich merchant, or a merchant at all, or rich at all, and whether his girls, in the event of

his having been rich, were co-heiresses, or, to use an Americanism—or how?

"Well, at any rate, I was booked to accompany the old man and his fair ward to Copenhagen, and no doubt I might, by keeping my eyes and ears open, meet with further revelations. Meantime, the days passed delightfully. We made little excursions into the country, Rosalie usually taking her sketch book, and making the loveliest little picturesque landscapes imaginable. Oh, Jack, she was so clever and so witty, and so lively and so loveable, I declare the more I saw of her the more I—Well then, you saw her yourself, Jack, only just magnify the opinion you formed of her about a thousand, fold and you will have some idea of what she was really like when you come to know her. Then, in the evening, we went to the Opera or we strolled round the Alster basin by moonlight, or Rosalie played and sang to us at home. Oh, how happy I was, and, I think, we all were.

"Well, at the end of the week, old G. having finished his business, I suppose, we left for Copenhagen, via Lubeck.

"My first impression of the Danish Capital, as I saw it in the chill sunlight of the early morning, was that it had a very bleak appearance, and that as we used to say in our school-boy days, it looked extremely far off at a distance; all seaport towns do seem to be visible such an interminably long way off.

"However, we got there at last, and in reply to some questions about hotels, Herr Guldenberg said, 'Sir! you are an Englishman. I am at home here; permit me to do the honors of my city and of my country, and make my house your home as long as you will. My wife and Rosa will do all in their power to make you comfortable. You should never have supposed me so uncourteous as to have left you to the barren hospitality of an inn. And Rosa, ha! ha! You have yet to see Rosa, I assure you her charms will bear comparison with Rosalie's.'

"We drove out along the harbor in the direction of Charlottenlund, where Herr Guldenberg had his summer quarters in one of those little gothic villas that look out over the water to the far off Swedish coast. His particular little gothic villa was called Guldenlyst.

"Madame G. was a buxom, well-preserved, hospitable matron. But Rosa, Rosalie's sister,—how shall I describe Rosa? I can only say that to all Rosalie's talents she added a beauty of a far more exalted style. She was a superb creature with a grand melancholy air. Yet to me Rosalie's pretty face, and her little, lively, fluttering, merry ways, were twice as enticing. It was as well that this was so, for before I had been long in the house, I found that Rosa was evidently intended for, if not already regularly betrothed to Carl Guldenberg, Junior.

"Well, after about a fortnight of close companionship, and having been everywhere with the girls, sometimes in their cousin's company, sometimes without, to all the museums; from Thorwaldsen's to the "Old Sager" to the Theatre, and other places of less fame; having seen the pictures in Christiansborg Slove, and the exteriors and interiors of other palaces, and public buildings, not forgetting the round tower; having made pretty good running with Rosalie all the time, and thinking from appearances and especially from the girls' extensive costumes and expensive habits that there could be no lack of cash anyhow,—I made up my mind to sound Herr Guldenberg as to my prospects of becoming his ward's husband.

"I opened the subject one Sunday evening as we smoked our cigars in the little green summer house overlooking the graceful waters of the Sound.

"I am, as you know, Jack, a modest man, so I will pass over the old merchant's high flown praises of myself, and merely say that he declared that nothing on earth would please him more than to see me Rosalie's husband.

"But," said he, 'it is only right that, before proceeding further you should learn a few circumstances connected with the affairs of my two wards, with which my son, who will shortly be affianced to Rosa, has already been made acquainted.'

"My sainted brother Frederic, was my senior by twenty years. I was quite a boy when he left for Spain, where he made his fortune and won the hand of a young Spanish lady of good family and some wealth. Only one thing marred their wedded bliss—for years they were childless. At last they resolved to adopt a little orphan girl to whom Frederic had been greatly attached by the likeness she bore in "expression and in her glorious eyes."—I am quoting Frederic's letter on the subject—"to his adored Inez." A year afterwards Providence, as though pitying the evidence of their yearning for children, sent them a little daughter of their own. The orphan had been christened Magdalene. They called their daughter Maude.

"The arrival of this treasure seems to have thrown Magdalene's attractions altogether into the background, the mother having apparently taken a dislike to her from that day, and looked upon her as an alien and an interloper; and it was this dislike no doubt, (for Frederic worshipped his wife,) which influenced him in the wording of the will which provides, that Maude shall receive the whole of his fortune, subject only to the payment of a small yearly pittance to Magdalene, which is to cease on her marriage day. Meantime, an affection of unparalleled strength had sprung up between the two girls. Maude defending her foster-sister against every evidence of her mother's hatred, and fighting with tears, protestations, and passionate entreaties for her position in the household.

"Two years ago, Inez Guldenberg died, and my poor Frederic, whose existence was wrapped up

in hers, survived her only for a few months—appointing a certain Von Lorenzo and myself his executors, and confiding the two girls to my guardianship. I was laid up with the gout to which I am an occasional martyr, at the time. Von Lorenzo is old and infirm—in a word, it was arranged that the girls should travel to Copenhagen alone."

Here Theo paused to drain and refill his tumbler of claret, remarking that talking was dry work, and fearing I was tired. As I energetically denied this, he lit another cigarette, and folding one foot luxuriously over its fellow, and reclining both upon the mantel shelf, he thus continued:

"Now," proceeded Herr Guldenberg, 'begins the mystery; here commences the problem which it is our duty, and your and young Carl's interest, to solve; but which has hitherto baffled the united perspicuity of myself and Madame G. Two chambers were duly prepared for the girls' reception, one sumptuous enough for Maude, one neat, but not too gaudy, suitable to the position and less ambitious expectations of Magdalene. Imagine my surprise, therefore, when the girls arrived and I rose, as well as the gout would permit, to do honor to their reception to see before me two young ladies, alike in dress, stature, and charms, with no atom of difference in demeanor or bearing.

"Welcome, my darlings," said I, 'pray which is my niece Maude, and which is Magdalene?'

"She whom we call Rosalie was spokeswoman. Tears glistened in the eyes of her companion.

"You must know us," she said, 'not as Maude and Magdalene, a rich heiress and a poor dependent; but as Rosa and Rosalie, two sisters of equal fortune, both alike orphans; both alike bound to each other's hearts by years of sisterly devotion, both alike prepared to love and honor you and our good aunt both alike resolved to keep intact our little secret.'

"And they have kept it. No cajoleries, no threats, no deep-laid traps, no sudden questionings, have ever surprised or extorted from them one admission which could give a clue to their identities. I and my wife have exhausted our ingenuity in vain. We have even written to Von Lorenzo and invoked his aid in vain.

"Here," said he, drawing a paper from his pocketbook, is what he says:—

"CASA LORENZO, Madrid.

"I'll give you," said Theo, "the drift of the letter, and as nearly the words as I can remember."

"I have had the honor, much esteemed Herr Guldenberg, to receive your letter which relates the pretty deception practised by your wards, and invokes my aid—involving photographs for that purpose, to discover their identity. I regret much that my eyes are too dim to serve you in this, and that I know not where, at this present time, to find eyes that could decide the question. Your brother's household is scattered to the ends of Spain. My nephew, who is my amanuensis, did not return from his cottage till the girls were gone. Nor does your description aid me, the girls were always much alike. Maude was, I think taken altogether, the gayest, but was subject to strange fits of melancholy. They were both very amiable. I will tell you a little story of them. One day I had eaten with your sainted brother and his sainted spouse, and we were drinking coffee in the veranda; Maude's cup was full of little bubbles, and it is an old wife's proverb that bubbles are the sign of wealth. You will be very rich Maude, said Magdalene, but see, there are no bubbles in my cup. What matters, Maggy, cried Maude, when I have enough for both? Is not all I have yours? I know to be with them was like to be with angels. I miss them much. Ah, well! I am old. I go soon where we shall meet; where too, some day, I shall make the acquaintance of yourself and of your amiable spouse; but that this may be long years hence, for you, Heaven grant!

"Accept, etc.,

"FERNANDO LORENZO."

"That's all the help he gives me," said Carl Guldenberg, grimly. "Well, I have done all that my sense of duty, as regards the carrying out of Frederic's wishes, and my own dislike of being baffled by a couple of little baggages, prompts. And, by Jove, I wash my hands of it! We must let the matter rest until the weddings come off, and then the grave question of settlements will drive the girls into a corner at last. Meanwhile, it is only right that I should warn you that the disinterestedness of your attachment may receive a rude test. Rosalie may not be worth a shilling. I do you the honor to believe that you are disinterested. Again Rosalie may be worth her thousands, and my Carl's Rosa, be penniless. I do assure you upon my solemn honor, that you and my son are equally in the dark."

"Of that I am certain. Whatever the result, I will take my chance with Rosalie."

"I think you will do well. Who gets a good wife is rich already."

"It was too late to draw back; there was some excitement too in this lottery. Besides, were not the chances on my side. It was Rosalie who had spoken to her uncle on her first interview. Naturally the heiress would have made that speech. Again Rosa's beauty was more perfect than Rosalie's. Was ever woman perfectly beautiful and immensely rich?"

"I sought out Rosalie."

"Rosalie will you be my wife?"

"Have you seen uncle Guldenberg. Has he told you?"

"I know all about it, Rosalie. Rich or poor, will you be mine?"

"She looked up shyly, blushing, half inclined