A LOST EDEN !

First of a Series of Life Stories of To-day

BY GEORGE R. SIMS.

Reuben Raybold was a handsome young English farmer He stood six feet in his stockings, had frank blue eyes, a sun-tanned face, and a noble head crowned with wavy light brown hair, and many a maiden eyed him with admiration as he stood up among the choir in Oldbury Church on Sundays and his glorious baritone voice rang out proud and clear above the commonplace notes of his companions.

Everybody had a good word for Reuben, from Squire Thornyhold, the Lord of the Manor, to old Dame Turvey, who was popularly supposed to hate everybody.

When the rumor was first circulated that Reuben Raybold had fallen in love with "Mamzelle," the pretty French governess at the Hall, there was something like a panic among the marriageable maidens of the old-fashioned Worcestershire village, and when a few weeks later the banns of marriage were put up between Reuben Raybold, bachelor, and Marié Louise Clementine de Chande, spinster, a sharp and sudden rustle of female finery was the outward and audible sign of the intense feeling which the announcement had created.

That a foreigner, a young woman who had only been in Oldbury eighteen months, and of whom nobody knew anything except that she was good-looking and spoke excellent English—should carry off handsome, light-hearted Reuben Raybold, of Five Tree Farm, was looked upon as almost a national affront. It was foreign competition carried to the verge of robbery, and the mothers of Oldbury who had daughters on their hands declared that the Squire had neglected his duty to his country and to his tenants, in not packing the foreign hussy off bag and baggage directly he found she was trying to get Reuben into her toils and his farm into her hands.

For Five Tree Farm was an excellent property, and though young Raybold was not at present its actual proprietor, his uncle was an old man, a miser, and a recluse, and being a childless widower, would naturally leave everything to Reuben at his death.

Reuben already managed the farm, and he was practically the master, for the old man had rarely of late been seen outside of the farmhouse doors. The servants and the farm hands declared that he was not very far off being out of his mind.

But whether old Nicholas Raybold was mad or not, there was no doubt that he was wealthy, for the farm had been a flourishing one for years, and he had never been known to give away or to waste a penny, and if he had taken his nephew and brought him up, it was only because he saw the lad would be useful to him.

And now Reuben was about to take a wife, and it was soon known that Nicholas Raybold had received his nephew's intended affably, and had told her that he should interfere neither in the management of the farm nor in the control of the household, so that she would be as much the mistress as if the property were already her husband's.

When the marriage took place it was a great event in the quiet annals of Oldbury. The Squire showed his approval of his governess' choice by giving her away, and the two young ladies were her bridesmaids, and everyone was invited to the Hall, where the Squire and Mrs. Thornyhold gave the wedding breakfast.

"Very different to what it would have been at her own home, I expect, my dear," said Mrs. Parkyn, the grocer's wife, to Mrs. Lidgett, the landlady of the Thornyhold Arms. "I'll be bound her people are nothing to speak of, or some of them would have been here."

"She's an orphan, my dear," replied Mrs. Lidgett, who naturally learned everybody's business, while atending to her own. "Mr. Masters (Mr. Masters was the parish clerk) tells me that her father is described as a gentleman, but that both he and her mother are dead. Being a foreigner they had to know all particulars, you see."

"Well, my dear," exclaimed Mrs. Parkyn, "mark my words, no good will come of it! An Englishman's home can only be half a home with a foreign wife in it. Poor Reuben's been caught by her black eyes and her white teeth, and her foreign ways, but he'll rue the marriage day before he's many years older!"

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Reuben Raybold and his young wife returned to the farm in the early days of their honeymoon, and they were supremely happy.

For the first time in her life Marie was independent. As she wandered about the old farmhouse and through the garden and the orchard and the meadows in the soft September sunlight, her heart was so full of joy that she danced and clapped her hands and sang the songs of her native land, and the farm hands and the maids stared at her open-mouthed.

But her husband worshipped her, and thought that he was the luckiest man in the world to have won such a glorious creature for his wife.

And when Marie—the day's work over—came and sat with him at sunset under the big mulberry tree on the lawn, and laid her hand in his, and they looked out together over the golden fields stretching far away into the mist, and the twilight hush fell upon vale and hill, the honest young yeoman lifted up his heart in thankfulness to God, and his eyes grew moist with gratitude and love.

And so they lived on, happy and innocent in their Eden, until—

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The doctor had been to see old Nicholas Raybold. Reuben had called him in for he was getting anxious about his uncle's eccentricities, which of late had assumed a more pronounced form.

He had taken to locking himself in his room for days together, and refusing admission to anyone. One morning when the servant had knocked at the door with his breakfast, and the old man came to take the tray the girl had noticed that his hand was bound up, and that the bandage was soaked with blood.

It was then that Reuben insisted upon the doctor seeing him and attending to the wound.

When the doctor came down, Reuben and his wife asked him eagerly for information.

"It's nothing," said the doctor. "It looks to me like a chisel wound."

"What on earth can he be using a chisel for?" exclaimed Marie.

"Some mad idea or other, I suppose!" replied Reuben. Then, turning to the doctor, he said: "Doctor, what is your opinion? Is he really insane? Is there any danger?"

The doctor hesitated.

"He's eccentric," he replied, "but I can't say that he is not responsible for his actions; and his present health is excellent. There is no reason that your uncle should not live another 20 years."

When the doctor had gone, Marie turned to her husband. "Twenty years," she said; "twenty years before you are master here!"

"But, my darling," replied Reuben, "I am master here now!"

"No, you are a servant. You have all the work and all the anxiety. Your uncle lets us live here, but all the money that is made he takes. You are dependent on him for every penny!"

"We live here rent free; this place is practically ours, and ——"

"Yes, but we have no money, only the wages—for they are wages—that he allows you to draw for yourself weekly. And he—they say he is worth thousands! What use is all the money to him?—what does he do with it?"

"Once a month I drive him over to Worcester, and he goes into the bank, and I suppose he pays his money and cheques in, and draws out what he wants."

"And when he dies everything will be yours?"

"Yes; I am his only relative."

"And he may live another twenty years!" said Marie, a shade passing over the pretty face.

"I hope so," replied Reuben, cheerily. "Come, come, my little wife! you're not going to wish the poor old boy dead that we may have his money? Why, we've been married a whole year, and this is the first time I've ever seen you look sad!"

"It's nothing," said Marie with an effort, "only after all this place isn't ours, and we do all the work, and we ought to be making something ourselves!"

Rueben came to his wife and put his arm gently round her neck.

"Marie," he said, "I told you when we married that this would be your home, but that till my uncle died I had only the money he allowed me for my services. You are not growing discontented? I thought you were happy here—and that—"

"Reuben dear, forgive me! It seems so unjust that you should not have the fruit of your labor; that he should give you only a pitiful wage as if you were a servant. But I am happy, dear; I should be happy anywhere with you. Forgive me!"

Reuben kissed his wife tenderly and went out, but her words came back to him all that afternoon as he rode round the fields. After all she was right. He was making the property more valuable year by year, and he was not sharing in the profit which was the result of his labor and his skill. His wife had planted the first seed of discontent in his heart that had ever found a resting place there.

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As soon as her husband had gone Marie Raybold took from her pocket a letter which had been brought to her that morning from the Hall. There was a French stamp on the envelope. She had recognized the handwriting, and when the messenger from the Hall handed it to her over the garden gate, at which she was standing, she had to clutch at a rail to prevent herself from falling.

How had this man found out that she was in England? He must have traced her through the Governess Agency in Paris to the situation to which she first went in London, and from that to Squire Thornyhold's. He had written her there. He was ignorant of her marriage, for she had not thought it well to advise him of it. She hoped that he would never trouble himself about her again. He had so completely dropped out of her life that she had forgotten that his sentence had only been seven years. And now he was not only free, but he had found her out.

The letter, which was written in French, was from her father, informing her that he had been released from prison, and that he was unable to find any friends to assist him. If his daughter would help him with money he could get away to Algeria, and there he would be able to obtain employment. If he did not receive a satisfactory reply he would come to England and talk the matter over with her.

Marie Raybold crushed the letter in her hand, and flung it into the fire. She was determined that she would not reply. Perhaps her father would believe that she had left Oldbury, and would make no further attempt to find her.

It was humiliating to the young wife of honest Reuben Raybold to remember now that she was a convict's daughter—that her father, whom she had stated to be dead, was once more free to blackmail her. The crime of which he had been convicted had been robbery. A clerk in a merchant's office, he had been dishonest from the first. Emboldened by the success with which for many years he had embezzled his employer's money, he had lived extravagantly upon a small salary; and his wife, ignorant of his guilt, had brought her child up to honor and respect him as a good and loving father. The merchant who employed him and trusted him having become bankrupt, Jean de Chande obtained another place. Here he had no opportunity of handling the cash. But cash he was bound to have and so he allied himself with a gentlemanly burglar whose acquaintance he had made on a racecourse, and the two planned an attack upon the safe of De Chande's new employers. They were detected in the act by a man who slept on the premises, and after nearly killing him they made their escape, but were arrested in the street, tried for robbery and murderous assault, and sent to penal servitude. Jean de Chande's wife died of shame. His daughter went out into the world and earned her living as a governess.

And now he was free, and was writing to his daughter at Squire Thornyhold's for money.

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A month later, Marie, who had been down to the village in the evening, shopping, returned white and trembling to her home. Reuben was alarmed at her appearance, and she explained that it was a sudden faintness.

But he was not satisfied He had noticed the change in his wife ever since their conversation concerning his uncle and their own pecuniary position, and he believed that she was still worrying herself about the long years of dependence that lay before them.

"I am not well," she said. "I—I want a change. Oh, Rueben, can't we go away?"

"It is impossible, dear. Who would take my place."

"But, Reuben, it will be always so! Can't you make your uncle let you go for a little while? Make him give you money—we have really nothing of her own. What you get only keeps us in clothes and pocket money."

"If we go, we shall go forever! I have no capital—I should have to become someone else's servant to live. You see I have been depending all my life on living here to the end of my days."

"Ah, I shouldn't mind that—I don't want to leave the farm—I have grown to love it as my home!—but—oh, Reuben, ask him to let you have a hundred pounds now—some day it must be yours!"

Reuben shook his head. "I'll try," he said, "but you know what my uncle is. It's his day to go to Worcester to-morrow. I shall drive him to the bank, and I'll talk to him about it then. There's nothing in the world I wouldn't do to make you happy, but—"

He sighed and went out gloomily to the stables, to see that the horses were all properly done up for the night

Reuben Raybold was far from realizing the true cause of his wife's nervous condition.

That evening on her way to the village she had met her father. He had managed to get the money to come to England. He had come to Oldbury and put up at the Thornyhold Arms, giving the name of Dubois, and there he had ascertained that a countrywoman of his had left the Squire's to marry Mr. Raybold of Five Tree Farm.

He had met her and threatened her. On the following day he intended to call at the farm.

The next day soon after 10 o'clock the horse and gig were brought round to the door, and Rueben and his uncle set out on the drive to Worcester. They would not be back till 4 o'clock in the afternoon. As was his custom, old Raybold carefully locked the door of his bedroom and put the key in his pocket.

The house was quiet enough at 11 when Jean de Chande arrived and asked for Mrs. Raybold. He was shown into the parlor, and immediately commenced to address his daughter in her native language.

"This is a friend of my late father, whom I have not seen since I was a child," said Marie to the servant, who was rather startled at what she afterwards described as "Missis and a furriner talking gibberish together."

Marie pleaded to her father not to betray her. She had led everyone to believe that she was an orphan. She begged him, if he had any manhood left, to go away and leave her here where she was a happy wife, beloved and respected by everyone.

The ex-convict listened quietly, and then assured his daughter that he had no desire to interfere with her happiness. All he wanted was the largest sum of money her filial affection might prompt her to give him.

When she explained that she had no money—that though she and her husband were nominally master and mistress they were not allowed to touch the profits of the farm—Jean de Chande shrugged his shoulders.

"It is infamous!" he exclaimed, in righteous indignation. "You are making this old man's fortune and you are paupers! You do all the work and you may not touch the one thing that should be the reward of your labors! If I were in your place——"

The young wife lifted her hand to silence the tempter. "You forget," she said. "My husband has not your ideas; he is an honest, God-fearing man!"

"But he has a miserly madman to deal with. To get by stratagem what is his own is not dishonorable. Everything will be his some day."

"I will not listen to you!" said Marie firmly. "I will not counsel my husband to cheat or to rob!"

"You will make him get you the money I want at any rate!"

"It is impossible."

"Then I must remain here. Your husband, when he knows, will give me the hospitality of his roof."

"He shall not! Do you think I would allow him to have a man here whom I know to be a——"

"Oh, you're afraid I might try my skill on the premises! Is there money about after all, then? The old fellow is a miser—miser's don't trust their savings to a bank. Perhaps——"

Marie Raybold's face flushed crimson, and then went deadly white. The words of her father had suddenly suggested a clue to the mystery of Nicholas Raybold's fear lest anyone should enter his private apartment. She remembered the strange sounds that had been heard in the night—the wounded hand—and she remembered all the stories she had heard of misers with vast hoards of wealth concealed in secret hiding places.

Jean de Chande noticed his daughter's alarm, and took in the situation at once.

"That's it, is it?" he said. "Well," if he's got gold about the place I'll find out where it is. "Give me what I ask, and I'll be satisfied with that as my share."

Marie rose, trembling with excitement, and opened the door.

"Go!" she said.

"Don't be foolish! I only want to help you to get some of your husband's own money for him. The old fellow won't miss it. Where is his room?"

"I won't tell you. There is nothing there. He keeps all his money in the bank. And now go—go at once! If you don't I will call in the men about the farm, and tell them you are a thief!"

"The ruffian laughed. "You won't do that," he said, "because I should explain. But you're a bit excited now, and you haven't had time to think over my advice. I won't hurry you. Give me what you've got about you—I must pay as I go at the inn, you know—and come to me this evening. I'll be where I met you last night."

Marie took out her purse and gave him all she had, and her father went, rising his hat politely to her as he closed the garden gate behind him.

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At 4 o'clock that afternoon Reuben pulled up in the yard, and called one of the men to him. His uncle had taken suddenly ill, and he seemed to have fainted. They lifted him out of the trap and carried him upstairs, Marie following them to see if she could be of any assistance. The door was locked, and Reuben had to take the key from the pocket of the still senseless man. They unlocked the door, carried him in, and laid him on the bed. Then Reuben bade one of the men go off at once for a doctor.

"It's a stroke, I'm afraid," he said to his wife. "Stay by him while I go and write a note for the man to take with him. The doctor will know what to bring."

He went down stairs, and Marie was left alone with the invalid. His eyes were closed, and he was breathing heavily.

As she sat by the bedside watching her father's words came back suddenly to her.

She looked round the room she had never been allowed to enter. It was a barely furnished sleeping apartment. Was there really a hidden hoard here? She rose and walked up and down the room slowly, loking now at the walls now at the ceiling. Suddenly she caught her foot and nearly fell. Looking down, she found that the toe of her shoe had caught the edge of a loose board in the flooring. She stooped down, and, lifting the board, found that it had recently been forced out of its place. There were chisel marks all along one edge of it, and near the jagged edge a stain of blood.

It was this board the old man must have been forcing up with a chisel when he cut his hand. She looked at the bed. Old Raybold's eyes were still closed.

She went down on her knees, pulled the board aside, and thrust in her hand. It closed on something soft. She pulled it out. It was a heavy bundle formed by the tying together of the corners of a towell. She opened the bundle cautiously, and found that it was filled with sovereigns and bank notes.

At that moment her husband returned. Marie jumped up and pointed to her discovery.

"See!" she whispered, "there are hundreds and hundreds of pounds there!"

Reuben stared. "Oh, that's what he does with his money, is it?" he said. "Poor old chap! I suppose he's got it into his head that the bank might break some day!"

"Reuben!" gasped Marie, "you ought to take some of this. It will be yours some day. If it's left here it might be stolen—or if the place caught fire—"

"It would certainly be safer in the bank—but we'd better have a witness to see everything is square and above board."

"Reuben—I want a hundred pounds—badly—oh, so badly!—and we want money for ourselves. Think—he may be like that—helpless—for months—perhaps for years—and——"

"Marie—are you mad! This is not ours!"

"It is, Reuben—it is! I'll tell you why I want the money—and you—you ought to have some, too—to put away in case—in case——" Then she added fiercely, "It is ours— there's no one else to have it—and we have a right to take it now we have the chance!"

And then before the bewildered man could answer her she gasped out her terrible secret. She told him that her father's presence would be a perpetual menace to her—that at any moment in a fit of desperation he might tell the truth, and she would be shamed forever.

She took from the hoard a handful of notes and gold, and thrust them into her pocket—then she gave him the rest.

"Take it, Reuben," she said. "He'll never know now—he can't speak—he may lie like that——"

At that moment the sound of a trap was heard outside. The doctor had come. Quickly replacing the board, she thrust the bundle into her husband's hand.

"Take it to our room—quick—quick!" she said.

Reuben Raybold, hardly knowing what he was doing—horrified at his wife's revelation, and the knowledge that she had taken money and intended to give it to her father—snatched the bundle and went toward the door with it.

His wife went out before him to receive the doctor downstairs.

At that moment the stricken man opened his eyes, and gave an inarticulate cry. With a great effort he raised himself in the bed, and as the doctor's footsteps sounded on the stairs he rose, and shrieked, "Thief! thief!" and pointed his trembling hand at his nephew.

Reuben, terrified, dropped the bundle, and kicked it beneath the bed.

When the doctor came in the old man had fallen back senseless again, and Reuben, trembling, stood by his side.

He turned to go, but the doctor begged him to stay while he made the examination.

After a little time the doctor's face, which had been grave, became more satisfied.

"It's a slight stroke," he said, "but I don't think it will be fatal. He'll feel the effects of it for the rest of his life, but I think we can pull him around this time. He wants every attention. I'll send for a nurse from Worcester. He ought to have one."

"Can't we—can't my wife—"

"No, no—a professional nurse is best. Skilled nursing is his great chance."

He scribbled a pencil note to the Matron of the Nursing Institution at Worcester, and told Reuben to send a man off with it at once with the trap, and the nurse would return with him.

"I'll stay till she comes," he said. "Send your wife to me. She can help me now."

Reuben Raybold went downstairs to find his wife. The servant told him she had gone to the village in a great hurry, and left word she would be back directly.

In half an hour she was back. Her husband was waiting at the door for her.

"I've seen him," she gasped; "I've given him the money, and he'll leave at once. Thank God—thank God for that!"

He heard her to the end. Then he took her gently by the hand.

"Marie," he said, "my uncle knows all. He will recover, the doctor says, and—God help me!—to the end of my days he will look upon me as a thief who tried to rob him when he was senseless and alone!"

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Jean de Chande went to London, and having made use of his new-found capital too celebrate his good fortune too freely fell into the hands of the police, and being asked to account for the possession of a number of bank notes—the suspicions of the authorities being aroused as to his character—he boldly referred them to his daughter for proofs of the right to them.

An inquiry was made through the Chief of Police at Oldbury, and it arrived on the very day that old Nicholas Raybold, having recovered his power of speech, sent for the head constable, and formally charged his nephew with having attempted to rob him.

There was no choice but for the authorities to proceed. Reuben Raybold and his wife appeared before the magistrates, and Jean de Chande was accused of having received a portion of the stolen property. The money Marie had taken was all that had been touched, but the old miser protested that he had been robbed of hundreds of pounds.

The woman said that she alone was to blame—that she had in her desperation tempted her husband. But the old man swore that he had seen his nephew attempting to remove the property.

There was strong sympathy for Reuben, and he was acquitted, but the wife and her father were sent to prison. All Oldbury believed that the robbery had been planned between them, and that Reuben was the victim of his blind devotion to a worthless woman.

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When the period of her imprisonment was over, Reuben Raybold met his wife at the prison door, and together they went out into the world to seek their bread where their story was unknown.

Old Nicholas Raybold sold his farm, and went to live in a cottage, placing his beloved money in the Bank of England. When he died it was found that by a will made soon after the robbery he had left everything he had in the world to his medical man and his solicitor, neither of whom had ever bothered him to settle his accounts in his lifetime.

Reuben Raybold toils to-day a laborer on another man's land in a far-off spot among strangers, and his wife hushes to sleep the little one who nearly cost her her life, and who is the one solace left to them, with many a tale of the golden meadows and flowery fields of the home that once was theirs in England—the lost Eden to which they can never return.

OLD DAYS IN AUSTRALIA.

More Changes in Thirty Years Than in Any Other Part of the Globe.

Perhaps there is no cauntry that has changed to such an extent within the space of thirty years as has Australia. Those heroes of romance, the "bushwhackers"—to the uninitiated in antipodean nomenclature, escaped convicts—have for the last fifteen years been a rara avis. The good old gambling days, when individual miners brought their two or tree months' find down to the nearest town, and were content if it saw them through a week's orgy, are gone. So, too, have the gamblers in real estate found their occupation gone. And lastly, the bankers through bitter experience have learned that though they could when money was cheap do those idiotic transactions which at the time they were pleased to call business, it only led to such a holocaust of ruin which culminated two or tree years since in utter prostration of all business.

During the gold rush, I doubt very much if there was ever such a spirit of gambling abroad, even in the old California days. Then it was confined to the miners themselves to a great extent, but in Australia it impregnated all classes of society. I went in to the Port Philip Club Hotel bar one evening to have a drink—it was two days after I landed—and seeing a typical miner whose dress consisted of a pair of what were once white duck trousers, a blue flannel shirt cut very rusty as to appearance, topped off with décollete, a pair of boots particularly rusty as to appearance topped off with a disreputable looking rabbit skin cap, I asked him to join me. Having looked me over, he said: "No, I never drinks with a 'new chum' (new arrival). I makes that a rule, and another rule I makes, my kiddy, is that they has to drink with me. Ain't that so, my dear?" as he turned to the barmaid. "You've got some pals with you," he continued, "so I should say as 'ow we'll just have a case of Chammy, so hurry up, my dear." I demurred at such extravagance, but it made no impression, and he went on: "I suppose you think as 'ow I 'aven't got the rhino. Well, Lucky Bob will ease your bloomin' mind." With this he began to empty his pockets, both seen and unseen, onto the bar. Bankers' drafts, notes, gold nuggets, appeared in profusion, and to wind up he said with a smile to the young lady behind the bar: "Excuse me, miss, but if you'll turn your 'ed for a moment I'd be obleeged," with which he lifted up his shirt and unstrapped from next his skin a thick leather belt made as a pouch, which was full of small nuggets and gold dust. It is needless to say I had no compunctions in joining him then. On my inquiring next morning of the landlord, "O," said he, "that's 'Lucky Bob.' How much has he got? About £6000. How long will it last. About a month, and then I shall give him £50 or £100 to go back to the diggings with. This is the second time he's been down this year. Lucky chap is Bob!"

My next introduction to Bob was in a billiard room, where he was just commencing the feat—before an admiring audience — of eating a brand new £5 note placed between two slices of bread and butter. He accomplished this unique feat of gastronomy with a relish worthy of a London city alderman over his turtle soup.

I once more ran across my erratic friend at Stowell, then a small mining camp. He was then trying to still further diminish what he had left of his pile by laying £100 to £1 against certain shots a confrere of his was trying to make on a dilapidated looking billiard table. By some extraordinary stroke of luck the player won the first bet, which led to a row, when, thinking discretion the better part of valor, I left and never saw Bob afterwards.

The gradual disappearance of the aboriginal has also made a change—very much for the better—in the country. It is not for me to judge, but it has ever been a mystery to me why or for what purpose these animals ever had an existence—I say animals advisedly, though in classing them with dogs, horses, and animals of that character I am doing a grievous wrong. If they are to be classed any higher than the Wombat—a miserable Australian animal of no use that I know of—then the white people have a great deal to answer for, for no doubt their numbers have been greatly thinned by the introduction of the civilized man's whisky, with which they were allowed to kill themselves at discretion, though there is a heavy fine scheduled for allowing them to have it.

There was a grewsome happening in 1870. Some eighty natives were invited to a banquet in the bush; one survived. It was proved that the bread was poizoned, but by whom Government officials could never find out. Of course no one can help shuddering at such a proceeding as this, even if it had been kangaroo—which, for the matter of that, are of more use than the other native, for the former do make splendid soup—for it has been handed down to us that "he who eats our salt shall be safe." Of course, there was a great outcry, but it was only a nine days' wonder after all.

Some time in the '60's a family of the name of Wills emigrated from England and settled on a nice sheep run in Victoria. The family consisted of father, mother, son and three daughters. The son, Tommy Wills, had been captain of Rugby School and also captain of the cricket club, and on his departure for Australia was esteemed as one of the most popular cricketers in England, being a great power among the members of I. Zingari, a very swell club. I met him at a small town in Victoria, and one night after dinner I prevailed upon him to tell me the following story, which I give in his own words:

"Well, we had been out here three years, and had settled down comfortably and were doing well; it was just before Christmas, and I had to drive 200 head of cattle and take a lot of wool down to Melbourne and return with the good things for Christmas. I sold everything well, stayed an extra day to see the English fellows play cricket, had a jolly time, and started off with a light heart and laden with presents for home. We had got within about twenty-five miles from home when something came over me, I cannot explain it; it seemed the life had gone out of me, or rather not from me but some one dear to me. I felt so sick that I got off the pony and told the drivers we would camp for a time. We had a good drink, but that did me no good. O, God! the agony I suffered during the twenty-five mile ride, fearful of going too fast, yet wishing to be rid of the awful suspense. At last we got just to the edge of the bush, and in two minutes more I knew my fears would be verified. Old chap, if ever I offered up an honest prayer I did that moment, and when we came within sight of the house. I cannot understand it, I had become quite calm, and the sight which met my gaze did not seem to surprise me in the least; in fact, I believe, I had a cynical smile on my face, to think how clever I was in divining that something was wrong. And my God, there was something wrong, for there, old man, before the very door, were the heads of mother, father, and three sisters stuck on sticks, placed in a row. Ah, I didn't blubber like this then; I seemed turned to stone. I turned to the drovers, who were crying like children, and ordered them to gallop to the neighboring 'runs' to spread the news. Before morning thirty good men and true were at the door, among them two native trackers, who were friendly to us, who said there were about forty in the gang. If you ever saw men set out to kill it was these. There was 'death to the devils' written on every face.

"After eight hours' galloping we came up with the band about 3 o'clock in the afternoon. What a shout went up as we sighted them! How we galloped down upon them! I cannot tell all that happened, but I know we killed all in sight. Just as we thought that they were all settled I happened to see a dirty, shrinking, greasy brute with my Zingari jacket on sneaking off. O, the desecration of it! Fancy my Zingari jacket! O, didn't I gallop after him, and when I got alongside I emptied the whole six barrels of my revolver into him, the brute."

Such was poor old Tommy Wills' tale, but the pathos with which he surrounded it, and the indignation expressed at the fellow who dared to wear his Zingari jacket, cannot be portrayed in cold print, Tommy, poor fellow, took to drink, and became a perfect wreck, and if anyone ever had an excuse for doing so surely he had. It was woe betide any native that came acrosss Tommy Wills, for he was allowed to have a sort of general prescriptive right to rid the country of what he called d——d vermin.

But then all this was in the good old days.

G.

SINGLE TAX DEPARTMENT

BOOMING IN DELAWARE.

The Single Tax campaign work in Delaware gathers force and volume as its current rolls on. The last number of "Justice," the Wilmington Single Tax weekly, is inspiring reading. We can only quote a few desultory items to give an idea of what is being done:

AN INCIDENT.

At the Fourth and Market meeting Frank Stephens made a speech that will be remembered at least through the lifetime of one smart citizen of Wilmington. This gentleman persistently questioned Mr. Stephens, and was answered with persistent courtesy. Finally the argument reached the "confiscation" stage, and the questioner insisted that the Government could give a perfect title to any property, which could not be taken away without confiscation.

"Even to negro slaves?" asked Mr. Stephens.

"Yes," replied the questioner. Then the negro listeners—there were half a dozen—crowded around.

"Tell that to these negroes," said Mr. Stephens. "Tell them that the Government had the right to give titles to white men to own them."

A burly black man here took up the debate. Turning to the questioner in the crowd he thundered:

"Enslave my people? Put us in slavery again?"

There was silence for a minute. But Stephens pressed the questioner.

"Talk to the colored men," he continued. "Turn to them and tell them that the Government can give good titles to any property. Face them. Tell them what you have told me." But the questioner kept his back to the colored men and hung his head. His argument was ended.

SUNDRY SHORT SUBJECTS.

Dr. McGlynn was to speak on May 29th at Newcastle.

Harold Sudell is the treasurer of the campaign fund. His specialty is monthly contributions, but he does not object to single donations, down to ten cents in stamps. His address is Newcastle, state of Delaware, U.S.

Mr. Samuel Milliken of Philadelphia has decided to give at least a summer's work as a contribution to the campaign. Mr. Milliken arrived at headquarters on Monday afternoon to begin his service.

Four silk flags were given to the association by Mr. Milliken and were used Saturday night, one at each of the Market street meetings. They are held by the man that is to follow the speaker so that there will be no uncertainty on his part or the speaker's as to some one being on hand to go on. This is borrowing thunder from the Salvation Army.

Dr. Law ran an independent campaign outside of the committee assignment, and taking Miss Musson with him, spoke at thirteen meetings throughout the State. At every one of these meetings large numbers of women attended, and I have seen women run up to Miss Musson after the meeting, and throw their arms about her, and say: "God bless you for having told us the truth."

The Single Tax fife and drum corps—18 pieces—practices with a teacher every Monday and Thursday evening in the large committee room, first floor Wilmington headquarters. Those wishing to join the corps or the brass band which will be organized later, should apply to Mr. Graham Jewell. Those who play guitars, mandolins or banjos should aply to any of the string club now at headquarters.

A SAMPLE VOLUNTEER.

No more serviceable volunteer has joined the force than Mr. D. Cavanaugh of New York. He arrived Saturday afternoon, put on the uniform at once, turned his banjo and gave the players at headquarters a lesson, took the banjo to Fifth and Market and played long enough to get together a crowd that nearly filled the street from curb to curb and listened to him whilst he talked Single Tax for almost two hours. Then going to Seventh and Market he took the stand, and with one short intermission, talked till midnight. He then adjourned to a restaurant for supper and talked to a crowd of listeners till after 2 a.m. Beside his own banjo he brought another as a present to the Association. Mr. Cavanaugh remained in Wilmington until Wedensday. When he returns to New York he wil write to several of the metropolitan papers about the campaign.

NEW YORK WITH BOTH HANDS.

The "Delaware" meeting of New York Single Taxers, held on Thursday, 14th May, was one of the most picturesque and inspiriting in the history of the movement. Six campaigners, Messrs. Milliken, Price, Hetzel, Stephens, Sudell and McDonald, dressed in full uniform, with semi-sombreros, knapsacks and blankets of bright red bound thereon and strapped to the backs of the spellbinders—these representatives of the campaign were received on the platform of the Lenox Lyceum with cheering that ceased only with the speaking until the meeting closed.

Henry George was amongst the speakers, and so was Herman Hetzel, who was pelted by some subsidised hoodlums at Middleton the other day when addressing a meeting. Mr. Hetzel said in concluding: "I want to call your attention again to the magnitude of the movement down there. It is bigger than most people are aware. It is one of the movements that only come at times to the world. It is a privilege to be in it, to aid it. Men have gone into wars and into reforms. But I think those who are engaged in this movement are engaged in a far greater movement are engaged in lition of chattelism. That has not brought the abolition of slavery. It exists now in the worst form. Industrial slavery has fastened itself on men and it would seem that a change is imminent. Men will not put up with it. They ought not to put up with it. By going to the ballot-box, they are going to get rid of the monopolies that crush down the people to-day. To my mind, the way is to make a beginning at the biggest monopoly of all—landlordism. And the way to kill landlordism is to begin somewhere. We are told that we are mere theorizers. Why do you not do something? We are doing something, and we are going to fight it to the finish."

Mr. C. B. Fillebrown of Boston, made the final appeal for funds. His short, witty speeches were equalled only by the goodness and generosity of the people to whom he spoke. They subscribed in dollars and hundreds of dollars till over $1050 was raised, and promises of constant support given as long as the war might last.

PROPORTIONAL REPRESENTATION.

It is interesting and instructive to compare the working of the single vote with that of the Hare-Spence. We take the illustrative case of a large or "grouped" constituency, returnng seven members. Under the single vote you would vote for one man only. Under the Hare-Spence system you would mark your ballot for seven candidates in the order of your choice, but your vote would count for only one. If the candidate of your first choice did not need your vote, it would be passed on to your second choice, and so on.

Now, the full process of counting in the single vote is just the same as the first step of the counting in the Hare system; that is to say, if, after counting the first choice votes in the Hare system, the returning officer stopped there, took seven candidates having the largest number of first-choice votes, and declared them elected, that would be the same method as that of the single vote; except of course that it would have been unnecessary for the voter to mark any but his first-choice men upon the ballot. Now, the important point of comparison is this: that whilst the Hare system is as near a perfect theoretical system as we can get, yet in practice the single vote brings nearly the same results; because, as a rule, the transfer of votes seems to make little or no difference in the results, as the same candidates would be elected in either case.

Hon. L F. C. Garvin, writing in the Proportional Representation Review, says that an examination of the votes cast at the last two annual elections of the Mechanics' Institute of San Francisco shows that only in one instance, namely, that of the lowest candidate in the election of 1894, did the transfer of votes make any change in the result; and in that single exception, owing to the element of choice which enters into any method of transferring surplus votes, it is doubtful whether the will of the constituency was ascertained more accurately than it would have been under the single vote.

EFFECT OF THE SINGLE VOTE.

Under the Single Vote, although a minority of the electors vote for defeated candidates, and it might appear at first glance that these voters "lose their votes," yet in fact this is not so, because of the large number of candidates in the field, some of whom would have been so acceptable to those who voted for defeated candidates that they would have placed them upon their ballots as second or third or subsequent choice, if voting under the Hare-Spence system. If you are voting, it is evident that you cannot have the man you most want unless a sufficient number of your fellow-voters agree with you in that choice. Otherwise, you must be content with a second or third or lower choice; and you are in no worse position than if your best man had not been runing at all. But in a single-number constituency, when only two candidates are running, and you cast your ballot for the defeated candidate, the successful candidate is sure to be one that you strongly object to—one who cannot in any real sense represent you.

The only objection to the Single Vote is that if the constituency is divided into two or more parties, and one man on one side is very popular, he may draw so many votes from his associates in the same party that the opposite party may get in one man extra. This, however, can be remedied by an application of the principle of the Swiss Free List, of which we shall have something to say.

FORGERY OF A SHAKESPEARE PLAY.

Success With Bogus Relics Lead to Failure With a Tragedy.

THE CAREER OF A BRILLIANT FRAUD.

Just about a century ago, "Vortigern and Rowena" was performed for the first and last time at Drury Lane. Up to the very evening or the performance great numbers of people hoped, and many believed, that a genuine play of Shakespeare's had been discovered. But one representation was sufficient to dispel these hopes and to expose to the amusement and amazement of the world perhaps the most brilliantly impudent forgery on record.

The real author of this blank cerse play, William Henry Ireland, was almost a boy. Born in 1777, by the time he was nineteen he had proved himself as "marvelous" a boy as Chatterton, whose story always had a remarkable fascinatin for him from the time when his father read it aloud to him. Old Samuel Ireland was himself a remarkable man, who, starting life as a Spitalfields weaver, had become an engraver, and an author of some note, and had received a medal from the Society of Arts.

There is considerable doubt as to the legitimacy of his son William Henry, but, however, that may have been, the father spared no pains in the education of the son, and after a couse of private schools in London and France took up the finishing of his instruction himself. Perhaps the two items which told most upo the boy's subsequent career were tat reading aloud of the story of Chatterton and a visit to Stratford-on-Avon about 1794, in the couse of which they imbibed a number of ridiculous fables, particularly one as to a recent destruction of a mass of Shakespearean manuscripts by an ignorant owner of Clopton House.

In the autumn of 1784 William Henry entered upon his career of fraud. Getting hold of some old-looking kind of ink, he inscribed on the fly-leaf of an Elizabethan tract a dedicatory letter from the author of Queen Elizabeth. Encouraged by the complete manner in which this document duped his father, he proceeded in December to the first of the Shakespearean forgeries, which he was soon to carry to such lengths.

On a piece cut out of an Elizabethan parchment deed, to which he had access, he drew up a deed of mortgage between Shakespeare and John Hemminge on the one part, and Richard Frazer and his wife on the other, imitating the poet's signature from a fac simile of a genuine deed of 1612, and adding seals abstracted from various genuine deeds of Shakespeare's time. Renewed success encouraged him to a perfect hailstorm of "Shakespearean" relics. Verses and letters of the poet inscribed on fly-leaves, old printed books with Shakespeare's name on the title page, and notes and verses i nthe same handwriting in the margin followed in bewildering succession. There were even extracts from "Hamlet," and a transcript of "King Lear," the latter differing in a few small details from the current version—a highly ingenious stroke on the forger's part.

A young friend of the youth accidentally discovered him constructing one of these relics, but was prevailed upon to say nothing, and even to corroborate the great "M.H." story, which he invented to explain the mystery of these "discoveries," in his father. "M.H." was a rich gentleman in whose possession these documents were, and who was so fond of Ireland that he put them at his disposal. In face, "M.H." presently began to send letters about it to the old man, inclosing, among other things, a play called "'William the Conqueror," admittedly by young Ireland, and high commended by his generous patron, "M.H."

In February, 1795, there was a show of all the relics of old Ireland's house, and many of the leading literary men of the day were deceived. The officers of the College of Arms announced themselves as champions of the authenticity of the relics: Dr. Joseph Wharton declared that a certain "profession of faith by Shakespeare," was finer than anything in the Liturgy; Boswell fell on his knees and kissed the documents; and the Laureate Pye and sixteen other literary lights signed a certificate of belief.

Finally, in March, the young man produced "Vortigern," and Henry II." the last in his own handwriting, but professing to be a copy of Shakespeare's play of that name. There was also a corroborative deed showing that an Ireland of Shakespear's day had saved the poet from drowning, and had been rewarded by having the privilege of publication of Shakespeare's unknown plays assigned to him and his descendants. It was afterward contended that a youth nineteen could never have been clever enough to produce such a forgery as "Vortigern," but Ireland's subsequent publications sufficiently disprove this objection, and he satisfactorily confuted it himself in after days. Old Ireland and others were completely deceived at the time, and the old man, even after his son's confession, seems to hae gone down in his grave in the belief that Shakespeare really wrote "Vortigern." But Malone, Stevens and others saw through the fraud from the first.

There was an exciting newspaper war about the question, and Porson, by way of ridiculing the affair, published a Greek version of "Three Children Sliding on the Ice," which he attributed to Sophocles. Sheridan of Drury Lane agreed to present the play, but Kemble's doubts caused its production to be delayed. Mrs. Siddons and Mrs. Palmer backed out of appearing in it on the ground of "ill-health," and Ireland rejected the prologue written for it by Pye as not being confident enough. On the very eve of its production appeared Malone's "Inquiry into the Authenticity," to which Ireland replied by a handbill begging the public to give the play a chance. And so, on April 2, Drury Lane was crowded. Kemble, indeed, had urged that April 1 would be a more appropriate day, and had insisted on including the farce, "My Grandmother," in the program, while Covent Garden, by way of being nasty, produced, "The Lie of the Day." But Kemble did his best, and the utter failure of the play was simply because the public saw through the imposture. At the words, "And when this solemn mockery is o'er," in Act V., scene 2, the whole house broke into a roar of laughter, and they howled down the announcement of a second performance.

That one representatio brought in over £500, of which old Ireland received abonut £100, but there was no second. Ireland confessed the truth to his sister at once, and, though he attempted to brazen it out before the world for a time and a Committee of Investigation was appointed, he suddenly bolted. "Later on he published a full confession in order to vindicate his father against the unfounded charge of complicity, and there was an end of it all, except for the old man's stubborn belief. The young man for a time was almost a beggar. He lived for a while upon the clothes and furniture of the woman who courageously married him immediately after his exposure, and then things began slowly to end. He started a library in Kensington, and sold copies of his forgeries. Finally he became a publisher's hack. He died in 1835.