POETRY.

LITTLE SAM.

Lo, de cabin's empty,
De chilluns' grown an' gone,
De jimpson weeds gro' 'roun' de do',
De grass dun tuck de cohn;
De fish am turned to ashes,
De hoe cake's cold an' c'lam,
I wants ter go ter de Marster now—
He tuck po' little Sam.

Po' little Sam, dat played erronnd de do',
Dat waked me ebry mawnin'
When de chickens 'gin ter crow—
De Marster's royal cherriut
Cum down wid de steeds ob flame;
He had ten billion chilluns,
But he wanted mine, de same.

His coffin wus er ole pine box—
Po' little lonesum waif?
Whut matters whar de cold clay am,
Jes' so de soul am safe?
I pulled him cotton blossums,
'Twas all de flowers I hed;
Like him pluched in mawnin'
Befo' de dew was shed.

Po' little Sam, I'll see him heah no mo',
No mo' on earth he'll call me
When de chickens 'gin ter crow—
De Marster's royal cherriut
Come down wid steeds ob flame,
He hed whole world's ob angels,
But he wanted mine, de same.

Lo, my heart am empty,
My life hopes dey am dead;
Jes' chop down dis ole dry tree, Lord,
De moss am on its head!
Why should de ole man sorrow heah
Sense you tuck little Sam?
Jes' let me be thy servant, Lord,
In de manshun whar he am.

Po' little Sam, dat played erround de do',
Some mohn I'll heah him call me
When de chickens 'gin ter crow—
'An den de Marster's cherriut
Will take me as I am—
Will take dis po' ole nigger home
To be wid little Sam.

SELECT STORY.

AN UNBROKEN PROMISE.

—OR—

A CASTAWAY.

PART II.

CONTINUED.

CHAPTER III.

THE GENERAL MANAGER.

Just about that time many men went into the City who had never previously crossed the boundary of Temple Bar. Scores of them, legions of them; princes of the blood, and peers of the realm; dignitaries of the church, and men holding high positions in the army and navy; young men just beginning life, and old men from whom life had retired; struggling government clerks, and opulent tradesmen; artists with the pencil and the pen, seeking for a short cut to fortune. All these went into the city, most of them in person, swarming down upon the stronghold of the brokers, and the jobbers and the agents on 'Change; questioning, pleading, buying, bargaining; some keeping aloof themselves, and only lending their noble names as directors of boards of management, but all with one and the same idea, the allotment of shares in the companies which were springing up by dozens daily, the immediate sale of these shares at high premium, and hence the speedy fabrication of fortune.

In these days there sprang into existence men who made their money simply by working the lever by which the various companies were started, or "floated" them to use the more correct term, and who, of necessity, had no other connection with the concern (save, indeed, when they knew its value, and chose to hold by it) than the certain number of shares paid to them as part of their hire money, which they disposed of at the first convenient opportunity. "Promoters" they were called, and the profession being a lucrative one, and requiring neither capital nor certificates of character, soon found many followers, among them being Philip Vane.

Sharp, shrewd and unscrupulous, ready-witted and prompt to act, with a good address, a pleasing presence, and fascinating manners, Philip Vane was just the man for a "promoter," and in that capacity his capacity his services were in requisition by half a dozen different persons who knew his value, at the outbreak of the mania. Experience, however, soon taught him that in such matters genius diffused is wasted, and he speedily determined to concentrate his energies on such schemes only as were submitted to him by the one man alone in whose worldly sagacity he had implicit belief. That man was Mr. Delabole.

In long-headiness and foresight, in what is now called "financing," Delabole had few equals and no superior. Philip Vane was brighter and smarter, better educated, and more calculated to insprire confidence among the young, who now-a-day are by no means the most ready to confide, and possessing those very qualifications, the absence of which had always militated against Delabole's social success, a decent appearance, and the manner of a man of the world.

Delabole had, however, that which Philip Vane had never possessed, the command of money and a reputation, not merely for wealth, but for luck in speculating, which served his purpose wonderfully at that particular crisis. Morover, he was sufficiently acquainted with commercial matters, and sufficiently mixed up with the city world, to be able to float any affair which he might undertake, with the aid of a few chosen friends, and without having to invoke the assistance of any of the outside world who would afterwards have a claim to participate in the plunder. There was Parkinson, of Thavies Inn, whose door-jambs bore the inscription, "Walters and Parkinson, Solicitors," but who was the only member of the firm, and whose real business was bill-discounting. No one ever saw Parkinson's name in a legal case, but he made believe to be an attorney very hard indeed.

Of this clique, too, was Mr. Naseby, a little man with a worn-out air, who looked like an old peer of the realm, but was a tradesman in Bond street, and a keen man of business. Mr. Bolckoff, a Polish Jew, and an old companion of Delabole's, who had been bankrupt twice, and transported once, and had subsequently made his fortune as a contractor during the American war; Mr. Poss, a tobacco manufacturer in Whitechapel; and little Mr. Van Moysey, the diamond merchant of Amsterdam, assisted in forming the set.

Moneyed men these, ready with their money when necessary, with implicit confidence in Delabole's generalship, and begetting a vast amount of confidence in any scheme with which their names were associated, amongst a certain wealthy class of speculative people. For the general public, however, a certain aristocratic flavoring was necessary, and Mr. Delabole took care that it should be forthcoming.

So at his beck and call, to be used as chairman or vice-chairman, or to take up humbler positions among the directors, according to the amount of strength and apparent stability with which it was necessary to endow the scheme about to be launched, were members of both Houses of the Legislature, baronets, brothers of peers with handles before their names, retired generals and admirals who had seen active service, and made money in every quarter of the globe, and a host of minor dignitaries, each one of whom had some specialty rendering him worthy of his hire. For hire they all received, whether it were in the shape of salaries and emoluments, or gratuitous shares alloted early, and readily converted into gold, of attendance fees and per diem allowances, or of hard cash unblushingly paid down, and as unblushingly received. In that year the Earl of Ballabrophy received more from Mr. Delabole and similar agencies, for the use of his right honorable name than had been paid eo him by his long-suffering land steward for the previous decade; Sir Cannock Chase, a Staffordshire baronet, who had mortgaged his ancestral hall to the proprietors of the colleries subsequently found no his estate, and who, as a great favor, was allowed by his creditors to have the right of shooting over his own manor, made in salaries, premiums, etc., a sufficient sum to help him to Baden, where he had a wonderful run of luck; while the Hon. Pounce Dossitor, for whom Lord Glenthresher, had obtained a clerkship in the Audit Office, during the short spurt while his party was in power, invested the funds which he obtained for the loan of his "honorableship," in a cab and tiger, smart clothes and an opera stall, and by these means won the hand and fortune of a West India heiress.

By the aid of this melange of Jews and Gentiles, patricians, plutocrats and penniless peers, with always the clear intellect of Delabole as its guide, and the shrewdness, tact and worldly knowledge of Philip Vane, acting as the clamping iron which held it together, some of the most extraordinary, even of the schemes which at that time were submitted to the public, made their successful appearance. At the time however, that we again take up our acquaintance with Philip Vane, though several other schemes were on hand, there was one which engrossed the greater part of his attention, and to which all others were subordinate, the Terra del Feugos Silver Mining Company.

To this undertaking, Delabole had brought his best names, and his most wealthy colleagues. It was not a new affair just "prospected," and thrust upon the market, with the view of getting rid of the shares; some years previously it had been an undertaking high in repute among the mining brokors. The opinion of the mining engineers was that, as a speculation, the Terra del Feugos were decidedly hazardous; the soil in which they were situated being, on the whole, of a loose and shifty nature, bad to work and liable to fall in. What had been prophesied at last occurred; there was a sad accident, the earth fell in upon the men, the works were suspended and finally stopped. An attempt was made to re-open them, but the experimentalists were people without either knowledge or capital, and it failed. Since then, and until within the previous twelve months the mines had been closed. Then the scheme was submitted to Delabole, who went through it cautiously, and finally gave his opinion as to its practicability. One of the cleverest mining engineers in England was sent out, reported favorably, and superintended the sinking of another shaft, where two or three productive lodes were discovered. The success thus begun, continued; lodes after lodes were discovered, and the shares were at a high premium. When appealed to about them, Delabole always recommended them as the best and safest investment; but the engineer, after his return from his second visit, twelve months after the reopening of the mine, quietly went into the market and sold his shares.

To the offices of the Terro del Fuegos, situate in the city, Philip Vane is now hastening, after his elaborate little breakfast in his West End home. He has gotten over the annoyance caused by the row with the itinerant fruiterer, and is leaning back in his brougham placidly smoking his cigar. The chiming of quarter past ten by Big Ben suggests to Philip Vane the consultation of his watch; finding it correct, he is sliding it back into his pocket, when, conspicuous by its new gold amongst the many dainty trifles pendent from his chain, he notices a locket which has been attached there recently. He smiles in a pleasantly conscious manner as this trophy meets his eye, and shakes his head, and would blush if he remembered how. Finally he opens the locket, which has two crossed horse shoes, one in diamonds, the other in turquoise, on one side of it, and an illegible monogram on the other, and smiles again as he looks at its contents. It is the portrait of a woman, past the first bloom of youth, but eminently handsome, with large black eyes and aquiiine profile, full sensuous lips and masses of black hair, heaped up into an eccentric coil on her head.

He contemplated this portrait for some little time, and when he snapped the locket to, he took from his breast-pocket a Russia leather note case containing a few letters, and selected one from amongst them, replacing the others, and opened it carefully. It had been opened before apparently with great care; the paper round the seal had been cut away, and the seal itself was intact. It bore a crest on a widow's lozenge, with the motto, *Quo Fata ducunt*. He looked at this seal before he took out the contents of the envelope, held it up, so that the light might fall upon it, and examined it critically. "I never noticed her seal before," he said to himself. "*Quo Fata ducunt*—whither the Fates lead—I suppose that's her motto; at all events, it's by no means a bad one, and quite suitable to me. I may as well adopt it with the rest of her belongings."

Then he took out the letter and read it carefully through. It was a long letter, covering several sheets of thick paper, and written in a woman's hand.

The perusal seemed quite satisfactory to him.

"I don't think I could do better," he muttered to himself; "I have been tempted often before, but have deferred and deferred, waiting for the ten-strike to come off, the one big thing to turn up! I don't think I need wait any longer! I may go on dipping and dipping, and never have the chance of finding such another prize in the lucky-bag. Sixty thousand pounds, and a very handsome woman who adores me! I don't think I can improve upon that—*Quo Fata ducunt*, eh? and they have led me into rather a neat thing just now I fancy,"

He was aroused from his train of thoughts by his brougham stopping in front of the Terra del Fuegos offices. The porter bustled out to open the carriage door, and said to Philip, in a tone which a combination of asthma and respect rendered eminently husky:—

"Mr. Delabole, sir, has been asking for the general manager."

CHAPTER IV.

THE BUSINESS OF THE BOARD.

THE offices of the Terra del Feugos Mining Company were situated at the corner of a court, wherein were located the business premises of many of those wealthy old city firms. It was part of Delabole's plan that the offces of the company should be in this particular position, situated in the very midst of the wealth and power of the city; but it was equally part of his plan that in themselves they should be plain and simple, and by no means loud, glaring or new. The name of the company was inscribed on the wire blind in the lower room, in small, tasteful letters; the brass plates on the door jambs were simple and unpretending; the hall porter was dressed in sober brown, and the messengers looked like well-to-do waiters.

"We don't want an fuss or flurry," said Delabole, speaking on this point; "we are a mining company, and not all the brass plates or polished furniture in the world would increase by one the yield or the value of the lode. No, the quieter we keep in that way the better." Thus said Delabole to his brother directors, addtng, "The real publicity which we want is to be gained by advertising, by squaring newspaper proprietors and city correspondents, and fellows who go about and earwig people. Put aside a certain sum for them, and go it!" And they went it accordingly.

After dismissing his brougham, Philip Vane preceded by the porter, who opened the doors for him, passed through the outer public offices, where a dozen clerks were bending over their desks, and entered an inner room, the glass half of the door of which bore the word "Private." A large, comfortable room, lit by a skylight, the big square writing table covered with documents, tape-tied, docketted, and neatly arranged; with several easy chairs about, and a high standing desk in one corner. One of the walls was covered by a frame of maps, and over the mantelpiece hung a large and admirably executed photograph of the central shaft of the Terra del Fuegos mine, with smaller ones representing other portions of the works. In the corner of the room stood a large square glass case, containing various specimens of the ore, each duly labelled; and standing opposite to this glass, and apparently deeply interested in the examination of its contents, Philip found Delabole.

That gentleman turned at the sound of the opening door, and nodded to his friend.

"You here already?" said Philp; "there must be something particularly attractive in the worm line hereabouts, to bring such a bird from his nest so early."

"No," said Delabole, "my early birdiness is rather due to the fact that I was feverlsh and could not rest. I rather imagine that this confounded hot weather is knocking me out; I must run away somewhere and get change of air."

"Not yet," said Philip, sharply, looking steadily at him. "There are as you know, two or three affairs connected with this place now in the balance, and until they are settled you must not go."

"What a man of business he has become!" murmured Delabole, looking at his companion admiringly through his half-shut eyes. "What energy, what industay, what determination! And all his friends too. No thought of himself in any one of his proceedings." Then louder: "You are perfectly right, my good fellow, I should not dream of leaving London until these matters were settled."

"Have you taken any further steps as regards Irving?"

"My dear fellow, I am always taking steps as regards everybody! By-the-way, I expected to find you on duty in Harley street last night."

"No, I was asked, but on the whole, I thought it better not to go. It is a little too soon to announce the affair so publicly. Don't you agree with me?"

"Are you perfectly sure of your positian?"

"Perfectly."

"You proposed yesterday as you intended?"

"I did."

"And she accepted you?"

"She did."

"That will do," said Delabole. "I congratulate you. It is your modesty, I suppose, that prevented you dining there last night," he added, with a grin.

"What some people would call modesty, but what I call tact," said Philip. "Had you a pleasant party?"

"Very pleasant. Mrs. Benidixen herself looked splendidly handsome, and was in capital form, no doubt the result of her morning's interview with you. Then there were Poss and his wife, both very nervous, looking round to see how other people behaved and ate; a good looking woman whose name I could not catch, a grass widow; old Lord McTaggart, who came screwing up to me after dinner, and asked me to put him on to something good, he didn't care what; Asprey and a dueced good-looking young fellow, whose name I have been trying to recollect but can't. Queer name, too. However, Asprey got talking to me about this young fellow after dinner. It appears that he is the adopted son of some old lady with an immense lot of money, all of which, when the old lady dies, it is supposed he will inherit. The old lady is very ill just now, and Asprey is attending her."

"Indeed," said Philip. "If Asprey is attending her, that looks well for the youth's chances of speedy inheritance, particularly if the doctor is interested in the matter."

"The doctor is a very wide-awake customer, as you know perfectly well, my dear Philip; and as you know, equally well, believes in us, and is in heavily with us. He thinks it very advisable that we should get hold of this young—Gerald Hardinge; that's the fellow's name."

"Gerald Hardinge!" repeated Vane.

"Yes," said Delabole, quickly. "Do you know him?"

"The name somehow seems familiar to me, said Philip, pondering. "I think I recollect the name as a scene painter, or samething of that sort, in the same theatrical company with that Miss Pierrepoint, the girl, you may remember, I spoke to you about, who I thought would suit Wuff, but who would not go."

"I recollect," satd Delabole, "there was a good deal of promise about that girl. Did you ever hear what became of her?"

Not I. I had no interest in her, and only thought to do Wuff a turn. She's married, I suppose, or dead."

"Ah!" said Delabole, pretty much the same thing in her profession. I am not at all sure that this is not your man; there was some talk about his painting, I recollect, and Asprey said his was a rather romantic story. The Doctor promised to come here this morning and tell me about it."

"I am glad he is coming," said Philip, with apparent heartiness; "a capital fellow, Asprey, and one who has been of much service to us."

"Yes," said Delabole; "he has been very useful to us, and has probably been the means of bringing better people and more money into our various concerns than any of the outsiders. I never met with another man with that peculiar power of propogating his ideas without unduly forcing them, or in the least committing himself."

"Do you think that it would be tolerably easy to get hold of this young fellow?"

"My dear Philip, the mere notion that the fellow is young, conveys to me the notion that it is easy to get hold of him either for good or evil, but certainly for evil. The mere fact that he has been poor, and he must have been poor when this old woman adopted him, conveys to me the certainty tnat he will be covetous and grasping, when he finds himself rich without any merit or labor of his own. He will want, without trouble, to double the fortune that will be left him, and—we will show him the way."

Then came a tap on the door, followed by the entrance of a messenger. who announced "Doctor Asprey."

"Show him in," said Vane.

"By all means," added Delabole; "the very man we were wishing to see."

Hundreds of people had wished to see Doctor Asprey; people of very different kinds, and had wished to see him for very different reasons. Men stricken with what might be mortal illness, lying in their beds, listening with eager ears for the roll of his chariot wheels, or the soft sound of his footstep on the stairs, for the doctor's popularity and practice were immense. Women, too, delighted to see him, for he had a soft voice and pretty manners, and humored and played with their weaknesses without degrading himselt or them; and he was adored by children, whose diseases he had made a special study, and whom he would comfort and cure as much by his kindness as by his prescriptions.

His appearance was decidedly in his favor. A tall upright man, with high forehead and regular features, iron-grey hair and whiskers, and white teeth; dressed in a dark blue, closely buttoned frock coat and grey trousers, black high neckerchief, the whitest of linen, and the brightest of boots. His manner earnest witout being grave, and pleasant without being undignified; his smile infrequent, but marvellously winning when it came; his interest in the person whom he was addressing intense and undivided. Such outwardly was John Asprey, M. D., of Cavendish square, and principal physician to St. Vitus' Hospital.

"The very man we were wishing to see," repeated Delabole, as the doctor entered, and having given the hands of each of his friends a strong squeeze—there was always immense meaning in his handshake—sank gracefully into an easy chair.

"I am delighted to hear you say so." said the doctor; "not frightened of me? Some men are always uneasy in the presence of the doctor, but with a chest and a constitution like yours, my dear Delabole——"

"Yes," interrupted Delabole, who was, nevertheless chafing under the doctor's fixed look; for he was perfectly conscious of the inelegance of his figure, and hated any attention being called to it; quite so, as you say. And what is the news this morning?"

"I have not yet seen the paper," said the doctor, unconsciously parodying a great statesman. "That was a charming dinner we had last night. I fully expected to see you there, Vane," he continued, turning to Philip.

"Mrs. Bendixen was good enough to ask me," replied Vane; "but I was unfortunately detained here until it was too late to go home and dress; the slave of the lamp, you know, doctor."

"Why not, my dear Vane," said the doctor, bending forward with a pleasant smile, "why not transform yourself into the slave of the ring? Do you blush? Is there any truth in the rumors which the little birds are whispering about?"

"The little birds are canards, doctor, and you know what faith is to be put in them."

TO BE CONTINUED.

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