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THE OLD COUPLE.

They sat in the sun together. Till the day was almost done. And then, at the close, an angel stepped over the threshold stone. He folded their hands together. He touched their eyelids with balm. And their last breath floated upward Like the close of a summer psalm. Like a bridal pair they traversed The unseen, mystical road. That leads to the Beautiful City. Whose builder and maker is God. Perhaps, in that miracle country. They will give her last youth back. And the flowers of a vanished spring-time Shall bloom in the spirit's track. One draught of the living waters Shall restore his sunshower's prime. And eternal years shall measure The love that outlives time. But the shapes they left behind them— The wrinkles and silver hair— Made sacred to us by the kisses The angel imprinted there— We'll hid away in the meadow. When the sun is low in the west. Where the moonbeams cannot find them. Nor the wind disturb their rest. But we'll let no fall-leaf tombstone. With its age and date arise O'er the two who are old no longer. In their Father's house in the skies.

THE SECOND MARRIAGE.

BY MISS CAROLINE KERRIE.

"I cannot write any more," said a letter from one of my most esteemed correspondents. "The soul of my life has fled, only the gaunt skeleton of existence remains to me. There is no more poetry, no more art, no more inspiration for me. My little Ellen is dead."

"But," I wrote in reply, "you are young yet, such despair is unnatural. Twenty-five years cannot have exhausted all the sources of happiness, of contentment. Happiness still dwells in the universe for others; but my heart is consumed, blackened with fire, withered." I knew it was impossible that such feelings should be lasting. Youthful hearts, buoyant by nature and replete with excellences, are fertile in everything but despair. But a change of scene, of association, was very necessary to Aurelia. My next letter contained a pressing invitation for her to spend the winter with me. At first she hesitated; but when, at Michaelmas, I made a journey to Coverdale on purpose to bring her home with me, her good aunt joined her entreaties to mine, and the result was, Aurelia yielded passively, and suffered herself to be brought away.

I anticipated a double pleasure in presenting Aurelia Desmond to my friends—for, in spite of her protestations, I was determined that she should be so introduced. Over and beyond the benefit which I felt sure she would derive from the companionship of a small circle of refined and cultivated, yet mostly original minds, I prophesied a pleasant surprise to more than one of them, in contemplating the purity and simplicity of character which made the young widow so charming; and I imagined that the delicate tints of mystery which I would weave about her should brighten the charm.

Aurelia had been an orphan from infancy. Her mother had been of Quaker parentage, and left her infant, with her dying breath, to the care of her only sister, a member of the order of Friends. By Aurelia's marriage with one of the world's people, she had forfeited the religious sympathy of the congregation; but after the death of her idolized husband, she had been reinstated in their favour, though she had never conformed herself wholly to their rules of dress and speech. Of course, even at the death of her only child, little Ellen, she wore no mourning; and the fact, together with the Quaker-like simplicity which made her like always to be addressed by her first name, determined me to conceal as much as possible of her former history from her new acquaintances. It was partly for her own benefit, too, that I arranged this little plot; since the purpose of her visit would, doubtless, be the more effectually gained if she could be spared all those condolences and expressions of sympathy which the knowledge of her desolate condition would naturally call forth.

Familiar as I was with the pure and noble qualities of her mind, her stately and statuesque beauty, heightened, perhaps, by that dignity which a great grief always imposes, impressed me deeply, and a tender attachment sprang up between us.

She was introduced to my friends only as Aurelia Desmond; and they, appreciating the simple dignity of the appellation, pronounced it with such deep respect that its plainness could not possibly have been offensive to the most fastidious.

I confess that my anticipations of Aurelia were not at first perfectly realized. She certainly attracted as much attention as I could have desired, for the charm of her beauty and intelligence, heightened by the mournful reserve which displayed so perfectly her abstraction of soul and deep acquaintance with sorrow, made her everywhere an object of profound interest. But she herself was little affected by this attention. No eloquence or brilliancy of manner could attract her outward from the intrenched citadel of her sorrowful thoughts; no piquancy of wit or repartee could awaken more than the faintest smile about her beautiful mouth; no display of sympathy, or unspoken appreciation of her unknown grief, could melt her from her high reserve and make her even by sighs com-



AURELIA VISITS MR. RAYMOND'S STUDIO.

nunitive. I felt that my resources were fast falling me, there was but one left.

"Aurelia," I said, one bright winter morning, "let us go and pay a visit. A friend of mine has just finished a beautiful picture, at least he considers it his masterpiece, and invites my inspection. It will be a pleasure to you to accompany me, I am sure."

"Yes," she replied, simply, "I like pictures. I hope it is a landscape, with fine trees, a meadow distance, and a blue thread of a river crossing the foreground. I shall see then if he has clothed his stones with the right kind of moss, and tinted the petals of his blossoms correctly."

It was the first time I had known her to show so much interest. I was encouraged. I watched her as she deliberately completed her toilet, by tying the soft satin bow under her chin, arranging the rich sable furs, drawing on the delicate gloves, taking up the faintly perfumed handkerchief, and the pretty muff, and saying quietly, "Now I am ready."

It was impossible, I thought, not to love one so pure, so sorrowful, so sweet.

"It was very thoughtful in thee," she said, as we walked along—using her pretty Quaker speech, as she sometimes did in confidential moments—"to screen me from comment and inquiry by withholding my story from thy friends. Sometimes, indeed, I feel that I am lending myself to deception; but dost not thou think it an innocent one?"

"Certainly," I replied. "I think it perfectly justifiable under the circumstances."

"And yet I have thought that, if it were discovered, it might lend an unpleasant seeming to our conduct. Dost thou think there is danger?" "Scarcely," I replied. "At least the probability is so remote, if it exists at all, that it isn't worth while to discuss it at present. By-and-by we may perhaps, feel justified in ourselves making the revelation. Father Time is dealing tenderly with you, I think, Aurelia."

Her beautiful eyes filled with tears. "Is it kind or cruel in him," she said, "to stent the sting from our sorrows? When I can no longer nurse my grief, the last moments of my happiness will have passed away."

"Ah!" I said, "the bliter flints, like the sweet, have their seasons of bloom, maturity, and decay. In place of your asphodel will grow up spring violets by-and-by."

She only sighed and shook her head. We had reached the studio, and were entering. At this moment my friend Mr. Raymond was engaged; so we amused ourselves, for a time, with the paintings hung on the walls, the little sketches, half-finished, which were turned their backs towards us—against the ceiling, but which I knew pretty well how to draw forth and exhibit in a proper light.

Yet, while thus entertaining Aurelia, I was not so much admiring the pictures as studying, by side glances, the strange lady with whom Mr. Raymond was talking. She was a very striking person; there was that about her which not only arrested, but riveted my attention. The influence by which my eyes seemed perpetually to turn to her, from whatever station I assumed, reminded me of the ancient arts of fascination and witchery; and I wondered if she exerted the same power over Raymond, who was stooping over the chair in which she sat to catch her murmured tones. Hardly—Raymond was a man of many experiences and much penetration.

Finally she rose, shook out her dainty flouncers with a silken touch, all the while that her full expressive eyes were turned upon Raymond, and having given him her hand in a warm, impressive manner that was full of art, called slowly down the room. As she passed us, I noticed that her eye fell upon Aurelia. There was a quick, and, it seemed to me, malignant glance of recognition, a slight and haughty stoop of the proud form, and she passed on with an added touch of hauteur in her manner. I looked at

Aurelia; her usually pale face was now ashen with a faint flush, and her bright eyes seemed to come and go between her parted lips in points like that of a frightened deer. Mr. Raymond was approaching, however, and I touched her arm to recall her to self-command.

The movement was effectual. The flush subsided, leaving only a faint trace of rose in either cheek, which added inexpressibly to her loveliness. I could see by Raymond's eye, as I introduced my friend, that he was struck by her appearance; and I purposely engaged them in conversation; that they might gain some insight into each other's natures before we commenced speaking of strictly artistic matters. Then I questioned Raymond about the sketches at which we had been looking; and thus it was, perhaps, fifteen minutes before the chief purpose of our visit was bronched, and by that time Aurelia's composure was perfectly restored.

Raymond led us at once to the centre of the room where, in the full light of the sky-window, stood an easel covered with a cloth. The covering was carefully drawn aside, and the next moment there was revealed to us simply the head of a little girl of three years. It was exquisite in outline and colouring, and the expression was life-like; thoughtful, serious, tender almost beyond words, yet childlike without. I indulged in a flood of rapturous exclamations, but, turning to Aurelia, I saw that her eyes were suffused with tears, and, in another instant, I heard her softly murmuring, "My child—my child!"

Raymond was gazing upon her with a deeply penetrating glance.

"Am I mistaken," he asked of me, in a whisper, as Aurelia's preoccupation shielded her from the inquiry, "or is this Mrs. Desmond, the widow of my old friend, Harry?"

But Aurelia's quick ear caught the sound, she blushed crimson; and, extending her hand with the artlessness of a child, exclaimed, "You knew my husband? Ah! then you will be the friend of his wife, and refrain from exposing her to the sharp comments of the world. No one knows my history here but Mrs. Earle."

Raymond readily assented to her discretion, and, thinking to divert her attention from the embarrassing topic, asked her opinion of the picture.

"It is perfect. So like my own little Ellen, too. Ah! Mr. Raymond, I should have thought only a mother's heart could have nourished such an inspiration."

Raymond blushed at the rather embarrassing compliment.

"We artists," he said, "see beauty in all its forms. We gaze upon young children, perhaps, more tenderly than even some maternal eyes—since where shall we catch glimpses of divine beauty, perfect and unvoiced, if not in the human soul fresh from its mother's presence, and unstained as yet by contact with the world? The child is to the man what the clear mountain spring is to the turbulent and roaring river."

That visit to Raymond's studio proved the turning point in Aurelia's history. Raymond came afterwards often to see us, and by his subtle, yet gentle knowledge of human nature, aided, perhaps, by his thorough knowledge of her antecedents, succeeded in that in which so many had failed. He beguiled Aurelia of her grief, and by his graphic powers of conversation, he touched the only chord in her heart which grief had not had power to unstring. Already I began to build up the most gorgeous air-castles for my two friends, rose as the hues of sunset.

I had never inquired of Aurelia concerning her acquaintance with the lady whom he had met in Raymond's studio, thinking that it might perhaps be an unpleasant topic. But, sitting one day in her room, a sketch dropped from her portfolio. My eye rested upon it only a moment—for she immediately swept and replaced it—but its characteristics were too striking not to be readily apprehended. It was

a mere outline of flowing robes, heavy fur mantle, nodding plumes, and dainty muff; but the face which the bonnet encircled was not that of the handsome woman we had seen at Raymond's, but the ugly and distorted head of a serpent, while dimly through the length of the figure I could trace the scaly, serpentine evolutions and stinging tail, which formed the proper continuation of that odious head. It was a strange conception to come from the brain of my magnanimous and high-souled friend.

"Dost thou see her—dost thou not see her?" exclaimed Aurelia, one day, running into my room, with eyes distended, and hair flowing like a whirlwind.

I followed the direction of her eager hand and, looking out, saw that same elegant lady entering the gate.

"I cannot meet her," said Aurelia. "She would sting me so, with her sharp tongue, that I should die of her venom. Go thou down, my dear friend, and say I am preoccupied—ill—anything that is not too gross a deception—that I may escape her. You will see that I am not merely a coward, when you meet her snaky eye and listen to her beguiling accents."

The servant had already admitted her; so there was no alternative but to comply with Aurelia's request. I stepped to my dressing-room to add a hasty touch to my toilet, and, turning, met the servant with a card, which Aurelia had sent to me from the guest below. It was a neat, elegant missive, with this name—

"MRS. HAROLD MOUNTJOY."

A new light dawned upon me as I read that name; and whatever tremors I may have felt, after Aurelia's excited description, they vanished now. I knew with whom I had to deal, and felt sure that whatever game she might play, I knew a secret art by which, if necessary, to checkmate her.

Mrs. Mountjoy rose, as I entered, as if about to greet warmly an old friend. Upon seeing a stranger, a slight change passed quickly over her countenance, and she bowed coldly in answer to my salutation.

"Mrs. Desmond desires to be excused," I said, coolly; for I was quite willing our visit should understand that her presence was unwelcome. "She labours under a slight indisposition, which will prevent her seeing any guests this morning."

"Indeed," replied Mrs. Mountjoy. "I regret it extremely, I assure you. It is some years since I have met Mrs. Desmond, and it would give me great pleasure to renew her acquaintance. Please to present my compliments to her, and say that, since I am so unfortunate this morning, I shall give myself the pleasure of calling again. I heard of her presence here through our mutual friend, Mr. Raymond; and, indeed, I have been greatly stimulated to persevere in my earnest resolve to renew our friendship by that gentleman's enthusiastic description of her. She was Miss Leslie when I knew her, and sufficiently charming; but I can readily believe that time has only matured her loveliness."

I had not heard the hiss of the serpent once throughout all this long speech. Her voice was honeyed sweet tones; but at the conclusion I perceived distinctly the snake-like glitter of her eye.

"Mrs. Desmond is, indeed, a very lovely woman," I said, stupidly; "quite worthy the friendship and esteem of the noblest. She is in peculiar affliction, however, at present, and sees very little society."

"Indeed! I thought her quite gay, and I have admired her resolution in so effectually concealing the deep grief which the death of her little daughter must have caused her. I may add that Miss Leslie and myself were rivals in our girlhood. Please say to her, with my regards, that I consider it a particularly good fortune to me that this opportunity for renewing our acquaintance occurs at a time when my

happy marriage and her touching grief render the indulgence of the old jealousy, which I had certainly reason to indulge in then, utterly absurd. Tell her that I promise good behaviour for the future, if she will but admit me on the list of her friends."

I confess I was more than surprised at such importunity from Mrs. Harold Mountjoy. Her husband was old, wealthy, and gentle; her position, as a leader of fashion, at present an enviable one, however temporarily attained. Why she should so especially care, unless for some sinister motive, to renew her acquaintance with Aurelia, who moved in so entirely different a sphere, I did not at first see clearly. But in an instant I remembered her earnest and impressive manner, as she bade Raymond adieu, that morning, and a great light illumined my mind. I was more than ever determined that Mrs. Mountjoy should not succeed in this perilous scheme of hers.

But Raymond! And here a doubt entered my mind which I had once or twice before entertained. He was a man of noble intellect, of a quick perception of right or wrong; but of the strength of his moral principles, I had then and even now entertained a suspicion. If Mrs. Harold Mountjoy, with her insinuating grace, her artful fascinations, and the strong bribe of her powerful patronage, should throw herself too much in his way, how far would he yield himself to her influence, and while he thought himself accepting of her homage to his father, become in reality the victim of her machinations? For several reasons the question was an interesting one to me.

Raymond called that evening. Aurelia happened to be upstairs at the time, writing a letter; so that I enjoyed the wished-for opportunity of a  *tête-à-tête*  with him.

"A friend of yours called here to-day," I said, "who, it seems, is also an old acquaintance of Aurelia's—Mrs. Mountjoy. She is an interesting character; do tell me about her."

Raymond smiled the peculiar smile of a man of the world.

"Yes. She and Aurelia were rivals once, I think. That is, after Harry's engagement with Miss Leslie, he met Mrs. Mountjoy. That was before her marriage, and she was near breaking off the match. What a schemer she is! And yet I like her."

"What is it that you like in her?"

"Her smartness, her cunning, her utter impetuosity of being sincere make her exceedingly amusing, I assure you. So she called on Aurelia, did she?"

"Yes. Expressed a great intimacy for her, and a strong desire to renew the old acquaintance; told me of your entanglements, and of her entire credence of them. Aurelia wouldn't see her. Do you know, Mr. Raymond, I suspect the woman of sinister designs upon you?"

Raymond smiled, and then, for a moment, looked serious.

"I can tell you," he said, "what I dare not tell Aurelia, that she herself has been my salvation. I met Mrs. Mountjoy in society, in the most usual way in the world. The result was an acquaintance, which time, her nets, and my indifference to consequences were fast ripening into an intimacy. I do not know what her object was, nor do I care. It might have been simply the pleasant sensation which such natures undoubtedly feel in the exercise of their peculiar power. At any rate, her sighs, her eager questions, her half-convincing were doing their work, when Aurelia's noble countenance, and pure, childlike heart, awoke me, by a sense of contrast, to my danger. What do you think about several marriages, my friend? Do you share Aurelia's opinion, that a person can never be twice happy in married life?"

"Not altogether. With some weak, or narrow, or idiosyncratic natures it may be so. But for the woman with the large heart and overflowing sympathies of Aurelia, it is different. Undoubtedly, she will never forget her Harry; but in the years which are to come, I doubt not she may be won to bestow equal, or even deeper, tenderness upon another. And why not? Her nature is deepening day by day."

"And that other would be the happiest man on earth?"

"If you think so, persevere, and win the prize."

Raymond's declaration, which followed but a short time after the above conversation, took Aurelia quite by surprise. I was not disappointed—nor, I think, was she—she gave him an unqualified refusal.

He told her his story; confessed the weakness of which he had been guilty; showed her her power, not so much to sway him from any course which he had deliberately chosen, as by pure associations to influence his choice; pleaded his earnest love and reverence for her, and then left the case in her hands.

"Such assurance," said Aurelia, with a smile, "to make even his faults plead for him?"

"At least it proves his sincerity," I said. "A courtship based upon such candour is free from many dangers."

"I cannot forget," she said, "that that sweet picture once lay warm and pure at his heart. I know he must, at the core, be tender and true. I am willing to be, my I am proud and happy to be his friend, his sister even; but I have been a wife once; and it is over—I cannot be again."

It was nearly spring, and Aurelia returned to her quiet home. Mr. Raymond came often to see me, and I knew that he had not forgotten Aurelia. Mr. Harold Mountjoy died that spring, and left his widow free in the exercise of her peculiar talents. She frequented Raymond's studio more than ever, but to no effect. Her spell once broken, Raymond was too clean-sighted to be caught again.

Aurelia wrote frequently, and I saw by her letters that her home was not to her what it had once been.

"I am haunted," she wrote to me in the early autumn. "I walk out in the woods, and the mellow sunshine mocks me with the loss of loving smiles; the winds, whispering in the



# THE HEARTHSTONE.

branches, remind me of my baby's sweet tones; and a yellow leaf that dropped once upon my forehead made me start—I thought it was her gentle touch; even the birds are happy in the "serenade of all their gentle, loving nature. I only am left desolate. I have told you more than I meant to, but not more than my heart often compels me to think.

"Of course, I had no right to tell Raymond all this; but I did say to him one day, 'You are looking worn. Why don't you spend one of these glorious October days in the country? Run down with my love to Aurelia, and an invitation to come back and spend the winter with me.'"

"I'll go," he said. "It will be the best medicine for me."

When he came back, his countenance was radiant with joy.

"Are you well paid for going?" I asked him.

"Ample. She would give me no promise, but I left a ring upon her finger. Ah! she is a jewel!"

When the spring came again, I went down to Aurelia's wedding. She is a happy wife and mother now; the light of her home; the everyday blessing and inspiration of a circle of warm and true friends.

"Ah!" she said to me, the other day, "nature plans wisely and well. Two are stronger for life's duties than one, meeter for life's pleasures. And for that discipline, which all souls need, in tenderness, and thoughtfulness, and charity, there is nothing like a happy marriage, with its year-by-year growth of experience in love."

Mrs. Harold Montjoy cuts Raymond and his wife. She lives on her lonely, solitary, intriguing life, in the midst of her splendor, bearing a bitter, restless, and craving heart. Who, then, among our readers, would wish to be a serpent for the sake of shining in glittering scales?

## SISTERS AND LOVERS.

### DEUTSCHES STILL-LEBEN.

Tru-la-la-l!  
Der Doctor der ist da.

How merrily sounded the voice of my sister Julia, as thus singing she danced into the room.

"Now, Fraulein Vanda, there he is. I have sent for him, and I am very ill indeed—lying! Ah, me! I have—what aches? Make haste! I hear him on the stairs. What aches, I say? Oh, there! the pain in my chest, my heart, my arm. Ah, me! I am fainting!"

"Bright sister Julia threw herself into the cushions, and put on a miserable face, just as two gentlemen entered the room.

"Doctor, doctor! I am so very bad—quite exhausted. It is I who have sent for you. Ah, me!"

But as Julia raised her moist downcast eyes she saw before her our house doctor, and—a fine tall officer, in full regiments.

She sprang up. "I didn't send for a military nurse into the bargain, Doctor Berg. Why in the world do you introduce soldiers into a sick lady's chamber?"

"Very sick, Fraulein Julia?" said the doctor, laughing.

"Dying! But surely the military nurse has a name."

"And a big one. Allow me, young ladies. I beg to introduce to you my uncle, Major Schnell, a brave soldier, of the soldier's line; can go back to the Seven, the Thirty, and any year's war—to the squabbles of all the German Emperors—aye, to the Crusades. Ladies, Major Schnell belongs to a line of fighters for glory and love; only the latter my worthy uncle has not yet tried, for he is still unmarried. Have I not introduced him well?"

The major stood before us, blushing and confused. I did not know why, but looking at him turned me giddy. Surely I knew nothing of him that his face should affect me, but it did, honest and good as it was.

"Fraulein Vanda, how are you this morning, since the supposed patient appears to have recovered herself?" So said Dr. Berg, as he came gently up to me, looking deep into my eyes, and as Julia and the major were in hilarious conversation, adding softly, "No message for me, Vanda, when Julia sent?"

"Why, doctor, did you want a message? would you not care without it?"

"Vanda, you are always severe; no snaffle for me? Come, will you go into the grounds, say to the lake? I want to say something to you. The two will follow us."

We went. From the castle steps such a beautiful scene lay before us. At the back rose the dusky mountains, not high enough to look formidable, but gently sloping down towards the lake, that spread at our right away into the tree-clad hilly distance. On the mountain top, at the opposite shore, the tall, gaunt ruins of ancient times, over which the morning sun threw a golden shifting light; before us the road planted with cherry trees, and to our left the fields, with the young waving corn; the birds every now and then winging up from the green blades; the grasshoppers chirping sweetly their happy early summer song. We lived in Saxon Switzerland, as it is called; beautiful was the situation of our estate, kindly the people that dwelt around it, and life seemed to smile on us girls, motherless though we were.

Dr. Berg and I went on, turning to the right towards the thick foliage of the lake scenery.

"Now, Vanda, serious again?"

"I shall be serious if you call me so."

"But why not be merry? It maketh my heart glad to see you smile, for I never hear you laugh like Julia."

"No, I could not. Remember, doctor, she is seventeen, and I am twenty-three."

"And, pray, should we not laugh at twenty-three? I am twenty-four."

"A man at twenty-four is as young as a girl at seventeen."

"I don't think so," said the doctor, with a peculiar accent. Somehow I did not like the remark; it stung me. I began to hang behind a little, for Dr. Berg, to whom I was secretly betrothed, had all at once forgotten what he meant to say so particularly. We dawdled along in silence. The others came up, Julia radiant with joy and happiness at being, I suppose, in existence; the major tired almost with laughing at her sallies. He was carrying his arms full of all sorts of trophies they had gathered on the way. Suddenly I found myself by the major's side, and saw Julia in front of me with Dr. Berg, talking briskly, looking at him archly now and then, he bending down to her in return. I did not like it, why I knew not, and my eyes got a little, just a little, moist.

"Tell me something about that rain, Fraulein," said a snoring voice next to me. I had forgotten the major.

"Oh, there is an old, old story clinging to it, about medieval times and the Saxon wars; but the castle is said to have come to ruin for a lady's sake."

"Really?"

"She filled her lover; he joined the freebooters, and then she sat weeping on the top, day after day, lastly casting herself into the lake and leaving a curse on the walls. No one ever cared to live there, and the place crumbled to its present state."

We talked on, gravely, about the beauty of the scenery, the many historical memories of the neighbourhood, and finally a little about ourselves. Every now and then my eyes wandered to the two before me. Suddenly I saw them no more; they had disappeared in the road round the mountain. I turned again giddy, and bent against a tree. Below me was the still blue lake, the eye of the earth, as Helene called it, speaking so softly to my anxious heart. Anxious, I knew not why, for was Dr. Berg not my own choice, and had he not always been the same considerate man, the same pleasing friend? Did my soul ask for more? When he meant to be passionate I had drawn back, as if I feared it was not real—it would not last.

"Are you ill, Fraulein?"

"Oh, no," I gasped.

"But you look ill; you are pale, what is it?"

I just remembered that a strong arm set me down on the grass under the tree, that a quick step ran and brought me water from the lake in a soldier's cup, and that a broad man's hand wetted my cold temples with it. I revived; "Thank you," I said faintly, and looking up, I found two such honest blue eyes fixed upon my face, that I coloured and turned away.

Steps were approaching; the two evidently missed us, and were coming back.

"What is it, Vanda? quick, tell me!" said Dr. Berg, as he bent solicitously over me.

"Nothing, thank you," I answered, coldly.

"Sister darling, are you ill? How pale you look!" Julia added, her face flushing crimson, her eyes swimming with some superabundant feeling of happiness.

"No, thank you, I am quite well!" and, giddy as I was, I managed to rise, and, taking the major's proffered arm, walked homeward, the two silently following us.

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lit of fun? Come away now," and half dragged me off, for my limbs tottered under me.

"Are you sorry for them, Vanda?" said George; "don't you think papa will consent?"

But speech was beyond me; I moved my lips without producing a sound.

"Can't be jealous, Vanda; you know you are too old-looking for him? Did you want him?" George did not know we had been betrothed.

I answered not; I managed to get home, and went shivering to my own room, where I meant to think; think—oh, think—I could not think. Only one thing appeared necessary; to be the first in cutting the knot that tied us. So, shaking as if with ague, I wrote the following lines:—

"DEAR DOCTOR BERG,—I have considered our relative position, and I wish to annul our betrothal; my father, who, with my sister, alone knows me, you might think me rude to return, so I will keep them in remembrance.

"Yours truly,  
"VANDA."

This note I sent off by messenger to the doctor's house in the next town, and then I laid my weary head on my pillow, unable to harbour even an idea.

Dark closed in; my mind was still in a state of aberration; when a soft footstep approached my bed, and my sister's voice said:—

"Vanda—by Vanda, tell me—did you know anything? He has just ridden here furiously; his horse is steaming with heat, Vanda, he has had your letter; do you mean it—do you give him up?"

The frail girl—her words gave me courage.

"Yes, Julia; I never could be happy with him."

"May I, sister? If you do not love him, may I?"

"If you like, Julia."

"Oh, Vanda, thank you—thank you; I shall run and tell him. We love each other so dearly, but we were afraid of you; we were afraid you might be attached to him, as you were betrothed, and you might feel it. Oh, I had not the courage to refuse his love; Vanda, sister, pardon a poor wayward girl. I played at first with him, like a child, till little by little there crept into my heart the great, big, enormous love; and when he said all those wild things to me—that I had, with my childish ways, drawn him into the meshes, that he adored me like a goddess—then I could not say 'Nay.' Vanda, do say you forgive me."

I murmured something, and begged to be left alone; away she flew, to tell the doctor of my forgiveness.

I constrained my feelings; I hid my sorrow; I even looked upon their happiness. Still, every day came some token of the doctor's regard for me; but Julia was surrounded with care, covered with presents, deluged into the clouds. My father shook his head, looked at me, kissed me tenderly, and whispered, "It is best so, Vanda; you were not young enough." What had youth to do with my feelings? Sometimes I could have run to the doctor, and begged him on my knees to give me back my betrothal; but I knew that to do so would show him my great, deep love—a love great enough to renounce him—when I found another would make him happier. Then I opened my eyes. Oh, had I allowed his passionate nature free play—had I been less reserved—perhaps he would have loved me more. At that moment, Julia's elegant form and radiant face appeared opposite to me:

"Tru-la-la-l!  
Der doctor der ist da."

she sang, as she ran downstairs to receive him. I never could do that; I had waited quietly, in the old days, till he came up, she ran to meet him with her glowing nature.

The doctor had never pressed our marriage, but he pressed theirs; my father objected, on account of Julia's age, the doctor was obstinate. Three months, and no more, would he wait; she must be his entirely, or he might lose her.

I helped to prepare all the handsome trousseau, for my father was well off, and our family was of good standing. I was even bridesmaid with my cousins and the doctor's sister. I kissed Julia as she went away after the ceremony; I gave my trembling hand to her husband, and looked at me honestly, with quivering lips, and kissed my hand respectfully.

"Vanda," he said, "I could not have made you happy. I wanted that affection you could or would not give me." And then I had done my duty.

"Father dear," I said to him that evening, "you will allow me to leave you now? I could not see them returned married. *That* I cannot bear, so I shall accept my aunt's invitation, and go home with my cousins. Ernestine, the eldest, will stay and take care of you."

My father drew me to him. "Vanda, why didst thou not tell me? Didst thou care for him?"

I hid them, for the first time my face on his shoulder, and wept, wept, wept, for my lost life and lost happiness.

"Poor child! I am very sorry." He pressed me close to him, and sat by me, quite still, till I had wept enough. He dried my tears and stroked my hair. "Go with them, Vanda; it will be best. I should break my heart to see you grieve, and so would they."

"Hush, father! no one knows that but you."

We came to the fortress town, where my cousins lived. A new life opened to me here. The close regulated society of a whole corps of married officers' families received me, and the eternal round of visits and small social entertainments would not allow me to think. The very first week we went to an officers' ball. I objected to go, as I knew I was becoming almost plain, so little animation was in my face; but they would not hear of it. We entered the brilliantly-lit rooms, we sat down. I looked round, and opposite to me stood Major Schnell. I could not help it—I bowed and smiled. He started, looked, and was by my side in an instant. Ah, that was love I could see; the tall, manly form was leaning towards me with such embarrassment as the doctor never had shown. My vanity was flattered, I felt my colour rise, I felt my tongue loosen. I stood up, and we danced the first "galop." This major was an excellent dancer, and I heard people say, "How handsome a couple! How well they suit each other!" for I was tall and slim too.

Dear major, to have seen him, who would have delighted him the pleasure of a few smiles and kindly words? He looked at me earnestly after the dance; "Fraulein Vanda, you were very cruel once; you thought me abrupt. I heard from Berg; but he did not say you refused me."

"Did the doctor not tell you that?"

"What?"

"Oh nothing; it does not matter;" for I found that the doctor had not told his uncle we had been betrothed at the time of his first proposal.

We danced again and again, till people whispered and smiled, and we had to leave off; but the major positively said that he would not allow me to dance with anyone else. When clocks were taken and adieu offered, he whispered:

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"Fraulein Vanda, I must see you myself tomorrow morning." I looked at him and nodded. At home that night I had to bear all the teasing of my cousins. "Really, Vanda, you are changed; never knew you could dance like that; never thought you half as handsome as you are. Why, you made quite a sensation. You are really much younger looking at night. What glorious hair you have got, and such a sweet smile. Why, you have turned our good dear Major Schnell's head, and no wonder either."

I slept soundly that night; it was so delightful to know someone cared for you, after all that miserable, lonely time someone who would show you real interest; further I dreamt not yet—but there was no resting on my laurels with the major. He came the next morning. He asked, he pleaded, he implored; he told me he had loved me devotedly from the first moment he saw me; he said I was getting more beautiful, I was his star, he could look up to me; and I dare not refuse him, or put him off again.

I knew I never answered, for that dead love would still come up; but whether I said anything or not, I found myself in strong arms, showers of kisses on my face, my hair and a ring on my finger.

"Be a soldier's bride, Vanda?"

Then that word touched me. I hid my hand on his arms; I looked straight at him. "Will you be faithful?"

"Vanda, child, I could not be otherwise. I have never professed love before."

To him I was a child, for him I was not elderly looking. I glanced up into the glass. Well, I looked another being, and, hiding my face, I said, "Yes."

It was a stormy time, for the major would not leave me. My father consented at once. My trousseau was prepared; I went home, the major followed, and in a few weeks we were married; but not at home. A still small voice said, "Keep away, for the major's sake." So my aunt gave us the wedding, and we started on a long tour.

When a good man loves his new wife, he is evidently inclined to spoil her, and the major did his best to do it. He was moderately rich, but Gross could not have been more generous. "I'll Vanda, his wife, his own." I heard it all day, and for very thoughtfulness I had to caress him and be grateful that he had not allowed God's love to die in my heart, and left me a lone woman all the days of my life. Only such strong affection as his—an affection that would not be denied—could have saved me.

We saw Italy from north to south, and returned home in a twelve-month, going straight to my father's estate. I heard that Julia held her first-born in her arms, and that the doctor was wild with joy. The morning after our arrival I rode over with the major to the doctor's house. I entered softly my sister's room; she had just awoke, and looked up so fresh and bright from her white pillow in her easy chair. When she saw me, and glanced then at her babe, her face was dyed crimson.

"Vanda, dearest sister, you have come at last!" Her small, pretty hand was extended



THE WHIP OF THE SKY.

BY G. P. A.

Wrothy with travel, alarmed with hoarseness, the youth salutes New-England's air; Nor notes, within the azure dome, A vigilant, menacing figure there, Whose thousand hand-swings A whip which sings: "Stop, stop, stop," sings the whip of the sky; "Hurry up, move along, you can if you try!"

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TO THE BITTER END.

By Miss M. E. Braddon.

AUTHOR OF 'LADY AUDLEY'S SECRET,' ETC.

CHAPTER XLV.—(Continued.)

"He's dead, and it can't matter now. You've done your worst. Nothing would have wrung the admission out of me if he were still alive. I did suspect him of taking Grace away, and taxed him with it, as I told you long ago. He denied it—I told you the truth when I said that—but I never believed his denial. There was no one else. She was not a girl to have two lovers, and I had seen those two together one day at Clevedon. But he was such a steady-going fellow, and I thought he might be trusted. I'd known him from a boy, and had never known any harm of him; and there were circumstances in his life, family matters, that made me pity him. Upon my soul, Rick, I don't think I could have been more sorry for what happened if Grace had been my own daughter. But, O, old friend, for God's sake say there was no meaning in your wild talk just now. It was not you who fired that gun last night—Joseph Flood's gun. How should you have come by it?"

"The fellow was loafing about the park with it late last night. I thought that he was up to mischief, somehow, and I followed him a bit, and saw him hide his gun in that old summer-house. It was within reach of my arm when I saw him coming along the avenue, with the moonlight full upon his face. The devil put it in my way, handy. "You must have been mad when you did it." "Not any madder than I am now. It may have been a wild kind of justice, but I meant it for justice." Mr. Wort groaned once more, and sat down upon the raggedest of the office stools, in blank dismal despair.

"What do you mean by coming here to tell me this, Richard Redmayne?" he inquired helplessly. "A pretty pickle you put me in. There's that poor innocent young man in the lock-up hard by, as an honest man, it would be my duty to inform against you." "Do your duty," answered the farmer coolly. "I came here on purpose to give myself in charge." "You did? And do you know what that means?—Maidstone-jail for the next six weeks, to be tried for your life at the next assizes, and to be hung. O, Rick, Rick, to think that any man of your name should come to such an end as that!"

Richard Redmayne shrugged his shoulders, with a gesture that was nonchalant enough, but accompanied by a faint sigh. "It's hard lines," he said; "Heaven knows I've tried to keep that name honest. When I was in debt hereabouts, I felt as if I was scorching through and through with a red-hot branding-iron, because no Redmayne of Briarwood had ever owed money he couldn't pay before my time. I worked hard, and wiped off the stain. But I suppose, when I'm dead and gone, the world will think worse of this business. And yet, John Wort, I'm not sorry that I killed him. I was sorry enough, ready to blow out my brains, when I'd thought I'd shot the wrong man. But, by the heaven above me, I do not repent of having killed my daughter's destroyer!"

"Good God, Richard, what a hardened conscience you must have!" "I don't know anything about my conscience, but I know I've been hardening my heart against that man for the last three years, and it wasn't likely I should deal over-gently with him when his time came. I hunted for him as well as I could; but I'm not good at that kind of hunting, and when I failed in that I thought I'd wait. There's a fate in these things. Providence would throw him in my path sooner or later; the world is hardly wide enough to hide a man from the just wrath of his enemy. So I bided my time quietly enough, but never parted with the hope that I should find him before I died. And when chance did throw him across my path, what would you have had me do?" asked Richard Redmayne, with a sardonic laugh. "Civilly tell him who I was, I suppose, and ask him to apologise for having broken my heart. No, I have dreamt of our meeting often enough, and all my dreams were coloured with blood. Why, I have felt my grip upon his lying throat many a time, and have seen his false face change and darken as my grasp tightened."

"You have nursed your hatred until it has grown into a monomania, Richard. You could hardly have been answerable for what you did last night."

"I was answerable; and I am ready to answer to God and man." "Vengeance is mine," murmured the steward. "Don't seek to justify your sin in the eyes of God, Richard, but try to obtain His pardon. I don't want to preach a sermon to you; it's hard enough to be placed in such a situation as yours, and I don't believe there ever was a man more to be pitied. I only say this—don't take pride in a stubborn heart, Richard. It's wiser to own yourself a sinner." "I'll think of squaring this account by and by," answered the other in his reckless way; "that can stand over. I want to set matters right about that young man they've sent to prison. I want to take my burden on my own shoulders."

M. Wort leant his elbows on his desk, buried his face in his hands, and cogitated profoundly; while Richard Redmayne coolly refilled his pipe, and lighted it at the office lamp. "What was he to do? Give this man into the custody of the patrol from Tunbridge who nightly perambulated the peaceful shades of Kingsbury—pass him on to the jail where Joseph Flood now lay in duress? Do this with the certainty—or something very close to certainty—that he was landing his old friend over to a shameful doom? John Wort felt as if he could not do this thing."

Was there no way of escape? No way by which Richard Redmayne could get clear off, and yet release young Flood from his present peril? Might he not draw up a full confession of his guilt, get his signature attested by some one who should not know the real nature of the document, and then start for Australia, leaving his confession behind him? That would surely exculpate Joseph Flood, and yet leave the guilty man a chance of life and liberty. Mr. Wort was a man who respected the law and all its mysteries, but it did not appear to him that the world in general would be any better for the hanging of Richard Redmayne. He had also a just appreciation of the penalties to which an accessory after the fact would be liable; but he fancied he might suggest his friend's escape without incurring these. There was no money involved in the transaction, nor need the world ever know that he was cognisant of Richard Redmayne's crime.

"Look here, Rick," he said at last. "There's no one can think worse of what you've done than I do; but I know more of what's gone before than the rest of the world, and I won't be the man to hand you over to the hangman." And then Mr. Wort went on to suggest, very clearly and concisely, that line of conduct which it seemed to him Richard might safely adopt.

"If they hunt you down at last," he said in conclusion, "and they'll hardly do that, for you can get a good start of them—why, you'll have had a run for your life anyhow."

"No," said the farmer quietly, "I've done the deed, and I'll stand by it. It doesn't seem half so bad to me to stand in the dock now that I know I killed the right man. I'll face the world, John Wort, and let the world know how a man can punish the destroyer of his child. By heavens, if there were more such rough-and-ready justice in the world, there would be less villainy. The law's a big machine that only moves in a certain groove. Let a man steer clear of that, and he may be as big a sinner as he pleases."

"What do you mean to do, then?" "Give myself over to the police as soon as I leave this office. I thought you would have been in a hurry to do it for me; but as you're not, I suppose I must do it myself."

There was farther parley after this, but Mr. Wort's arguments were of no avail. Richard Redmayne went out into the summer night, and walked along the Tunbridge road till he met the patrol, to whom he told his story.

The man was at first incredulous. He knew Mr. Redmayne by sight, and had heard people talk of the strange secluded life he led at Briarwood. The poor fellow was a little off his head, no doubt, thought the policeman; but finding the poor fellow very resolute, he suggested that they should proceed forthwith to Clevedon—Sir Francis was a justice of the peace—and that Mr. Redmayne should there repeat his extraordinary statement.

It was late when they arrived at Clevedon; but Sir Francis was still in his study, with a London detective for his companion. This man had only arrived an hour before, his services not having been available at the moment the telegram arrived; and to this man Sir Francis had been relating all that George had told him about Richard Redmayne.

"A curious story," remarked Mr. Winch, the detective, coolly; "and it certainly does seem at the first glimpse to have a bearing on the case. Yet it hardly comes to much when taken against the evidence of the gun, which Flood owns to; and of that girl he's been keeping company with, who, from what I can hear of the inquest, seems to have done him no end of harm with her hysterics, and her talk about his jealousy, and being afraid of him, and so on. It does not appear, from anything you tell me, that this Redmayne threatened violence towards you while under that delusion about the miniature; and unless he had threatened, the rest comes to nothing." "A man may mean a good deal without threatening," said Sir Francis; "and you see in this case there has been a wrong done, and there was a strong motive. Lady Clevedon said the man had a desperate air, like a man who was capable of any rash act."

"But how did he come by your groom's gun? How do you get over the gun, sir?" "I leave that problem for you to solve. All I can say is, that I know this Flood to be a good fellow; he's been with me only a twelvemonth, certainly, but I know something of his disposition, and he came to me with an excellent character from a gentleman near here. No, I cannot believe Joseph Flood to be an assassin."

The Brinet and Mr. Winch were still discussing the details of the case, when a servant announced that a policeman, accompanied by another person, wished to see Sir Francis. "Bring them in immediately," said Sir Francis. "Some new evidence, I suppose," he added to the detective. "Yes, sir," replied Mr. Winch, with a sarcastic air; "no doubt you'll have plenty of more's nests brought you by the local police."

The job was a good one, and the accomplished Winch did not wish the local police to cut the ground from under his feet by any abnormal sharpness and activity.

Richard Redmayne walked first into the room, alone, unshackled, with his head more erect than he had carried it for a long time; a noble specimen of the English yeoman class, with something of the free grace of some wild forest creature in his bearing, which was even more noble than the sturdy British ruggedness. He was a handsome man still, in spite of the change and ruin that had come upon him; and as he stood calmly facing Sir Francis in the lamplight, with only the table between them, the Baronet thought that he had never beheld a more striking figure.

He guessed at once that this man must be Richard Redmayne.

The policeman told his story briefly, but with a good many "he says," and "I says," to carry him through it. "And as you was the nearest magistrate, Sir Francis, and concerned in this business, as one may say, begging your pardon, Sir Francis, I thought as how I'd better bring him along here; and if you see any grounds for believing this 'ere rum start, why, you could make out a warrant and commit him. I could get a cart and drive him over to Tunbridge to-night, and he can go on to Maidstone to-morrow; leastways, if you think there's any truth in his story."

"I have reason to know that his story is perfectly true," said Sir Francis, filling in the warrant as he spoke. "Abominable as his crime is, I am glad that he has at last had enough good feeling left to prompt him to give himself up, rather than let an innocent man suffer for his wickedness."

"Yes, Sir Francis," replied the policeman, looking at Richard Redmayne with a lenient countenance; "and I hope as how that, and the luck of him and his living farmed their own land for the last three hundred year, will stand in his favour with the judge and jury."

The guilty man himself spoke not a word, but stood quietly waiting to be handed on upon the next stage of that brief journey which was to convey him to the gallows.

"I should be glad if you would repeat the statement which you made just now to the officer, Mr. Redmayne, here, in the presence of witnesses."

The man obeyed, unhesitatingly, telling his story in the plainest words, with no attempt to extenuate his conduct.

"A bad business from beginning to end," said Sir Francis, with a sigh. "You can remove your prisoner, officer. My people will accommodate you with a conveyance, and you can take a groom to Tunbridge with you, if you want one."

"Better let me go, Sir Francis," interposed Mr. Winch. "I'm better up to this kind of business than a groom; I rose from the ranks myself, sergeant."

Not a word more was said. The information was made out and the warrant granted. Richard Redmayne waited with Mr. Winch in a lobby adjoining the house-keeper's room, while a dog-cart was being got ready for his speedy transport to Tunbridge. They drove at a smart pace through the moonlit country, every inch of which was so familiar to the prisoner. He sat beside the driver with folded arms, silently watching the landscape as it sped past him; as if, looking on hill and valley, copse and hedgerow, for the last time, he would fain have printed every feature of the scene upon his memory, as a picture which he might keep in his mind to brighten the gloom of his narrow cell.

Fear had had none, nor remorse, as yet; but he had a vague feeling that it was sad to turn his back upon so fair a world; to lose the glory of summer sunshine and the freshness of summer winds for ever.

CHAPTER XLVI.

"HOME THEY BROUGHT HER WARRIOR DEAD."

They carried all that remained of Hubert Harcross back to Muston-crescent—secretly, under cover of night, as befitted so solemn a transit. They set up the ponderous coffin on trestles, in that darksome den behind the dining-room, which was filled for the most part with law-books and parliamentary reports; the dismal chamber where the dead man had been wont to spend solitary hours in the stillest watch of the night.

They brought him home stealthily, when Muston-crescent was wrapped in sleep—that sleep of care-takers and lonely housemaids which falls upon west-end London only of the season. They brought him home and laid him in this darkened study, here to wait the final journey to the Vallory vault at Kensal-green, a grim square stone edifice, nearly as large as a modern villa, with an iron door of an Egyptian design that was eminently suggestive of mummies.

Mrs. Harcross came home the day after this midnight journey. George and Sir Francis had done their utmost to persuade her to remain at Clevedon, but in vain.

"You are very kind to wish it, but I would rather be with him," she said pitiously; as if there were indeed as much companionship between herself and that clay-cold corpse as there had been when those two were living man and wife.

George would have gone to London to stay with her, but this offer too Mrs. Harcross declined.

"Indeed, I would rather be alone; nothing can make me less any less or make me think of it any less."

Her father had arrived at Clevedon by this time, having sped thither as swiftly as his gout would suffer him to speed; and under her father's escort, Mrs. Harcross left Clevedon Hall to return to that splendid mansion which had been the cheerless home of her brief wedded life.

It was a dreary journey and a dreary business altogether for Mr. Vallory, and although he was sincerely attached to his daughter, he would gladly have deputed the task to Weston, who was languishing to be useful, and deeply wounded by his cousin's refusal to see him; a lengthy journey, although they travelled express, and shot the stations swift as a falling star. Augusta sat silent, with slow tears rolling down her pale cheeks every now and then. Once or twice Mr. Vallory made some feeble attempt to comfort; but the dead man's untimely end not coming in any way under the category of happy releases, he was sorely put to it to shape even the trifling consolatory sentence.

Across the dull agony of Augusta's grief there shot the sting of a sharper anguish—the biting pain of remorse. True that she had loved the dead man as deeply after her own nature as wife ever loved husband, but she had not the less cheated him of his due, locked her love in her own breast, starved him with cold words and disdainful looks, kept him at arm's-length as it were, lest in coming too near he should discover that she was a very woman at best.

She had cheated him; that was the cruel truth which came home to her now. She had been proud of him, but had never acknowledged her pride; had paid him none of that tender tribute of praise and even sweet-savour'd flattery which loving women give to their husbands, the humble flowers of speech which strew the path matrimonial, as village children scatter their blossoms before the feet of bridegroom and bride. Every man is more or less godlike in his own estimation, and the world must seem cold to that unappreciated hero for whom no altar fire burns at home. Hubert Harcross had been made to do without such domestic homage. If he came home to Muston-crescent glowing with a professional victory, and in a moment of expansion communicated the particulars of his success, no rapture beamed in the eyes of his wife, no sympathetic word encouraged him to dilate upon his triumph; he was only told that that odious court had made him late for dinner, or that he had only half an hour to dress if he meant to keep his engagement in Portman-square.

She remembered these trifles, and many other details of her married life, to-day as she travelled swiftly towards that worse than empty house where her dead husband was lying. She remembered that interview in the picture-gallery at Clevedon Hall, when he had told her the secret of his life; remembered with a bitter pang how she had refrained from any expression of pity for him, and thought only of herself, and compassionated only herself, as if the great wrong done to him had been only a wrong against her. It was a bitter thing to reckon these small injustices, these petty slights, now, when the victim of them had passed beyond the reach of apology or atonement. Down to the grave must she carry this burden of a great debt; farther than the grave she could not look. She was a religious woman, in a church-going, strictly conforming sense, but she was not spiritual enough to be able to say, "We shall meet in a fair far-off land, where he will read my heart and forgive me!"

Very lately was the funeral which for one brief hour evidenced the emptiness of Muston-crescent. All that can be done by solemn plumes and costly trappings, by solemn-voiced eulogies and eulogical eulogies, by mourning-coaches and close-shuttered broughams, was done to do honour to the dead. Augusta Harcross could not be dissuaded from accompanying her husband in that last journey. She went with her father in the first of the mourning-coaches, silent, ashy pale, but fearless. She stood beside the vault of the Vallorys, and saw the massive oaken coffin deposited in its stony niche, and looked at the empty place beside it, where she might lie when her time should come.

And so ended the story of her married life. She went home desolate to that abode of horrors, a spacious and splendid mansion where "love, domestic love no longer nestles;" went home to find the blinds drawn up, open windows admitting the summer air, the rooms and balconies bright with flowers; a smirking pretence that there had been no such thing as a death in the family palpable everywhere.

A strange fancy seized her when she had sent her father home to Acropolis-square to nurse his gout, and had thus got rid of his clumsy attempts at consolation—a fancy for looking at the dead man's rooms on the third floor, the very thought whereof in this day of remorse had been one of her small tortures. Those third-floor rooms were one of the many trivial sights she had put upon him, one of the little ways by which she had suffered him and the home-hold to know that he was only a secondary personage in that establishment.

She went up the servants' staircase, a roomy staircase enough, for everything in this stately district was built on wide lines, but of a somewhat chilling aspect, the stairs covered with floor-cloth, the walls painted a dingy drab. She went up to the spacious chamber which she had so rarely entered during her husband's lifetime. It was not a cheerful room; the windows on this story had been designed with a view to external effect; the sills were breast high, the lower panes of plate glass obscured by the stone cornice outside them. There was plenty of light, but the windows revealed nothing of the outer world, only three patches of summer sky, no glimpse of verdant park or cheerful squares. The room was large and bare. Mr. Harcross had repudiated all finery. A huge metal bath occupied one end, with all its works and pipes exposed like a skeleton clock. There was a barren desert of floor-cloth, a low wide mahogany wardrobe, full of long narrow drawers (for the presiding genius of the tailoring art has discovered that to hang a coat is destruction); one cushioned oak arm-chair stood before the dressing-table, a chair of the severest school of upholstery, such a chair as Canute the Dane may have sat in when he put his flatterers to the blush on the edge of Southampton Water; two grim rows of boots on a stand masked the fireplace, half a dozen railway time-tables and a legal almanac adorned the space above the mantelpiece; picture, or bronze, or bust, or object of luxury there was none.

Augusta seated herself in the arm-chair, and looked round the room drearily. For how many conventional dinner-parties, for how many joyless receptions, Hubert Harcross had dressed himself in this room! How often and how often had he mounted that cheerless stair and put on the regulation costume, when it would have suited his humour so much better to dine at home and to dawdle away a lazy evening after his own pleasure, sleeping a little, reading a little, enjoying the rare privilege of rest! How often had he gone up to that room to dress, feeling like a slave at a wheel, grinding for an over!

It was not possible that Augusta could fully comprehend how joyless this life of fashionable pleasure had been to him; but she did know that she had often insisted on his going out when he would rather have remained at home, that she had squandered his days and hours by the rule and compass of her particular world, that she had never let him live his own life.

Very bitter is the memory of such small injuries when the victim of them lies dead.

Her eyes wandered slowly about the room that was so strange to her. The sparsely-furnished chamber had no strong individuality of its own; it was not a room which even hinted at the history of its last occupant. There were no scattered evidence of his favourite pursuits, no traces of his presence. It was a room entirely without litter, and it is litter which most bespeaks the character of the tenant. You may read the history of a household on a dustheap sometimes better than in the tric-a-ban of a carefully arranged drawing-room.

"The room is like himself," Augusta thought; "it tells nothing of his life."

On one side of the fire-place there were three or four trunks and portmanteaux, one iron-clamped box, much larger than the rest, a shabby much-battered receptacle, decorated with the disfigured labels of various railway companies, the very box in which Hubert Harcross had carried his books to Briarwood. On this massive chest Augusta's eyes lingered thoughtfully.

"I daresay he kept his papers in that," she said to herself—"old letters, secrets perhaps; a man who told so little must have had secrets."

She took a bunch of keys from her pocket, and looked at them with a faint and bitter smile; the dead man's keys, on a ring with his name and address engraved upon it, each key distinguished by a neat ivory label.

"If he had any secrets, they are all in my power now," she thought. "Or was that one secret of his birth the only thing he ever kept from me? Whatever papers he has left, I had better examine and burn them. I don't want all the world to know my husband's history."

She moved a couple of empty portmanteaux which surrounded the iron-clamped box, and then knelt down before it and opened it.

There were no papers in that capacious chest. Only a tangle of unmade silk dresses and cashmere shawls, French silks, ivory-backed hair-brushes, daintily carved by the cunning hand of some Chinese artisan, fans, scent-bottles, packets of primrose and lavender gloves—the things Mr. Walgrave had bought years ago for Grace Redmayne.

Mrs. Harcross dragged these objects out of the chest one by one, at arm's length, as if the very touch of them might have defiled her, and flung them in a heap on the floor. What did they mean? None of them had been used. They were tumbled and injured from rough packing, but all un worn. No scrap of paper, no vestige of letter or memorandum, helped to solve the mystery. There was nothing but this confusion of woman's clothing, a multitude of delicate and costly objects crumpled pell-mell into a big box.

Having cast them forth in this way, Mrs. Harcross was presently obliged to put them back again. It would never do for the prying eyes of Tullion or of any domestic in that house to rest upon those inscrutable silks and slippers and cashmires and hair-brushes. She thrust them back into the chest, leaving them if possible in a worse condition than the state in which she had found them, put down the lid hastily, and locked and double-locked the receptacle. Then with a little waiting eye she clasped her hands across her brow, and sat, fixed as Niobe, upon the ground beside that box.

"They must have belonged to some one he loved," she said to herself. "What other reason could he have had for keeping them?" Her quick eye had told her that the things were of modern fashion, made within the last few years; things that could not by any possibility have belonged to his mother, who had died more than thirty years ago. She could not comfort herself with that idea, as she might have done otherwise.

"That pale apple-green was in fashion the summer before my marriage," she said to herself, thinking of one of the delicate fabrics which she had stuffed reluctantly into the box. "Bouffante made me a dress of that very shade for a garden-party."

This was the bitterest pang of all. She could have forgiven the dead man for loving her with a measured affection, but not for bestowing unmeasured love elsewhere.

"He must have loved the owner of those things very dearly," she thought, "or he would hardly have run such a risk as to keep them." Those cashmires and packets of gloves and plumed and painted fans, such a heap of unworn finery discarded, had a look of luxury and recklessness. She thought of all the stories she had heard from worldly-wise narrators of high villas in the shades of Fulham or St. John's Wood, and it seemed to her that these things must have been part of the belongings of such a villa. The thought led her into a labyrinth of painful speculations. The last idea that could have entered her imagination was that only for a village maiden, tender and pure and true, had these fineries been chosen.

(To be continued.)

KITE-FLYING IN PRUSSIA.—The Marquis de Beauvoir, in his recent book of travel, *Around the World*, tells us that the old man of Prussia—the "grown-up children of China"—may often be seen holding the string of an enormous and fantastic kite, or winged dragon, or eagle, eighteen or twenty feet in spread, which they guide deftly through the crowded streets of the city, outwitting the time with sails of native-wit. Attached to the kite is sometimes an invisible Zöllan apparatus, which imitates with the most infernal noise the song of birds, or the human voice. The fall of a pigeon from contact with one of these strings explained to our author the mystery of the somnolent waves of harmony which he had for days heard soaring through the air and rising into the higher atmospheric regions. The pigeon carried across the fathoms of his tail, at its root, a charming Zöllan harp, light as a soap-bubble, and exquisitely made. The birds, as they cleave the air, gave a harsh tremolo, or a plaintive note, according to the rapidity of their flight. Instead of this being, as he thought at first, one of the hundred thousand absurd fancies of the disciples of Confucius, our traveller learnt that the object of these harps is to preserve the hapless pigeons from the talons of the vultures which circle in flocks round the battlements.

TONIC WASH FOR THE HAIR.—When the hair is falling off, the following tonic wash will be found very useful: Take half a fluid ounce of tincture of quinine, one drachm of bicarbonate of ammonia, and five and a half ounces of rose water; first dissolve the ammonia in water, then add the tincture. Apply it gently to the roots of the hair twice a week or oftener, if found to be beneficial.



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In an early number next month, we will commence the publication of another story of Montreal life, which will be entitled,

HARD TO BEAT.

The story is replete with incident, and contains several local sketches which cannot fail to be interesting.

MR. J. A. PHILLIPS, Author of "From Bad to Worse," &c. and will be handsomely illustrated by our artist.

THE VIENNA EXHIBITION.

The grand "World's Fair" to be held in the Austrian capital will open on 1st May, 1873, and close on 31st October following. Vienna is now ringing with sounds of preparation; the exhibition building will be unusually large, a much greater space being devoted to exhibitors than at any former exhibition; the guaranteed fund is ample; and the Government seems determined to spare no effort to make the Vienna Exhibition as great a success as either of its predecessors, if not greater.

OLD NEWSPAPERS.

Nothing is more acceptable to a sick room than a newspaper, and nothing more thoroughly relieves the tedium of convalescence. It is better than a book, as its contents are more varied, more entertaining, and the articles generally long enough to interest without tiring.

pitals and charitable institutions than are made at present. We say old papers, because, to the sufferers pined up in a hospital yesterday's news appears almost as good as to-day's, and answers very nearly the same purpose, and last week's periodical has not lost its freshness to them; and then old newspapers are, comparatively speaking, such useless things to the owners that they can very well afford to part with them to others who possess no facilities for obtaining them for themselves.

OUR PRIZE STORIES.

We must ask the competitors for the prizes offered by us for stories to have a little patience. We had a very large response to our offers, receiving upwards of sixty stories of various lengths making the task of reading a much longer and heavier one than we had anticipated. As we are unable to devote our whole time to reading it will take us some time yet to get through, but we think a couple of weeks more will suffice.

LITERARY ITEMS.

SCHUBNER'S MONTHLY. New York: Scribner & Co. The November number contains the first chapters of Dr. J. G. Holland's new novel, "Arthur Bonnettsie." It will be a New England story in autobiographical form. In the opening chapter the hero describes a notable event of his childhood, and introduces the reader to some curious characters. The exquisite design by Miss Hall, which stands at the head of the installment, is itself a story and a poem.

THE SCHOOL AND THE ARMY IN GERMANY AND FRANCE. By H. von Moltke. Gen'l W. B. Hazen, U. S. A. New York: Harper & Brothers. Montreal: Dawson Bros. 8vo. Cloth; pp. 408. \$2.00.

General Hazen has evidently studied, with great care, the different army systems of Germany and France, and, although his predilection is evidently in favour of Germany, he gives us a very fair statement of the existing state of both armies previous to the war, as well as his experiences during the war. From the termination of the contest he draws the conclusion that his opinion of the superiority of the German system is correct, which, certainly, is very feasible. The book is full of valuable information, evidently the result of long research and actual investigation, and, therefore, far superior to the general run of "War Histories" so common now-a-days, when so much inaccuracy and nonsense creep into what is styled history, but what is really only a rehash of correspondents' letters and telegraphic reports. The book is well worth the reading, and is written in a pleasant, agreeable style.

To-day, Philadelphia: MacLenn, Stoddart & Co. We have received the first number of this paper, edited by Dr. Dio Lewis. It is a well made-up paper of sixteen pages; contains the initial chapters of two serials, and a quantity of good reading matter. Dr. Lewis' "Five Minute Chats" promise to be interesting, and the new cover has an amount of dash and style about it which looks like success. Terms, \$2.00 per annum.

WISE AND OTHERWISE.

THE THIMBLE.—The name of this little instrument was originally derived from the words "thumb" and "bell," being at first thimble, and afterwards thimble. It is of Chinese invention, and was introduced into England about the year 1665, by John Lotting, who came from Holland, and commenced its manufacture at Islington, near London, pursuing it with great profit and success. Formerly iron and brass were used, but latterly steel, silver and gold have taken their places.

A MAS who has lately visited the grand pyramid of Cheops, wading in the sand fourteen hundred feet before he had passed one of its sides, and between five and six thousand feet before he had made its circuit, gives a true illustration of its vast bulk. He says, that taking one hundred city churches of the ordinary width, and arranging them in a hollow square, twenty-five on a side, you would have scarcely the base of the pyramid. Take another hundred, and throw the material in the hollow square, and it would not be full; pile all the bricks and mortar in the city of New York, and the structure would not be so high and solid as this great work of man.

Amongst the thousand and one superstitions which some people are always worrying about, is one that says that an unlucky month for marrying. All sorts of evils are supposed to attend the bride who rashly enters the nuptial state in this unlucky month. Apropos of this a "Down East" editor tells a story of a young damsel in his neighbourhood who was wooed and won by a smart descendant of Uncle Sam, and the youth proposed May as a good time for the wedding. The lady tenderly hinted that May was an unlucky month for marrying. "Well, make it June, then," he honestly replied the swain, anxious to accommodate. The damsel paused a moment, hesitated, cast down her eyes, and said, with a blush, "Wouldn't April do as well?"

As a literary curiosity the following stanza is given, in which "e" is the only vowel used: "Eve, Eden's Empress, needs defended by; The serpent greets her when she seeks the tree, As serene she sees the apple tempter creep; Then, then, then, seeks the mother roll!" And only "i" is used in these four lines:—"Ilding I sit in this mild twilight dim; Whilst birds in wild swift vigils rising skim; Light winds in sighing sink, till, rising bright, Night's virgin pilgrim swims in vivid light."

THIS is how he did it; but his lady-love don't understand it: A Mohtana lover discovered that his "dearest and best," somehow or other, "learned to love another," and that the said "another" wasn't averse. The first didn't get angry and wasn't a dose of lead into his rival's bottle, nor tickle his ribs with the "weapon of woe." No, but he manipulated a successful "corner" on him—that is, he gave him fifty dollars to withdraw his attentions from the aforesaid "dearest and best," and now she is at a loss to know why that nice young fellow don't come around any more and talk sweetly as he used to.

New York is going into a new business. It has been thought sufficient to send missionaries to foreign countries, but New York lately exported an entire church, which is intended to be erected in the small town of Ancon, Peru, a fashionable watering place for the inhabitants of Lima. The church is built entirely of iron, is 135 feet long, by 45 feet wide, and cost \$150,000. It has a lofty, steeple, vestry and altar, and is quite complete, needing only to be put together.

The milkmen of Rio Janeiro seem to be a wonderfully honest race for milkmen; and they have an ingenious way of delivering the milk, which certainly defies adulteration. The milk is taken about on legs instead of wheels, and has a tail and horns; in fact the cow herself is taken around and milked for each customer's benefit, thus ensuring the "cow juice"—as our American friends sometimes call the lactical fluid—being in as pure a condition as the cow herself knows how to make it.

The old difficulty of not finding a policeman when you want him seems to have been met and overcome in London, where there are now over two hundred places where a policeman can always be found. The men are independent of the patrol, and are relieved from the nearest stations, formation being sent there as soon as a man is called from his post, and another dispatched to take his place.

It is a curious historical fact that during the three hundred and fifty years the Tuilleries has been a royal dwelling, no French monarch has died within its walls. Another curious fact is that since 1588 every French sovereign who has made the Tuilleries his abode has been compelled, at some time or other, to quit the shelter of its roof. FIFTEEN miles is a long stretch for a bridge; yet that is the length of the one constructed over the Tensasaw and Mobile rivers, on the Mobile and Montgomery Railroad. It has ten draws. The bridge itself is of wood, but the supports are iron cylinders. The structure costs \$1,500,000, and has been three years in the course of construction.

By a recent invention an additional protection against fraud is given to the drawers of checks and drafts. A new style of colored paper, of a delicate French gray shade, is so prepared that figures once made upon it can not be erased or chemically removed without leaving a mark that would lead to immediate detection.

The French Prince Imperial has grown into a tall, frank fellow, with swarthy complexion, hair parted in the middle, and an unprepossessing phiz. But there are in his face certain elements of strength. He grows more and more like his mother, but doesn't resemble the old gentleman a particle.

TENS THOUSANDS of bushels of apples will be left to rot on the ground in the orchards of western

Massachusetts, this autumn. In some towns the farmers are offering elder at one dollar and fifty cents per barrel, and it is difficult to find purchasers sufficient to exhaust half the apples at any price.

The process of embalming Mazzini's body is continued, notwithstanding earnest remonstrances from all quarters, and the often expressed wish of Mazzini himself that he should be buried privately. An appeal has been made to Garibaldi to interfere, apparently without effect.

We have heard a good deal about "ecological music," but in future the Ecologists are to have the music of civilization, an enterprising London firm having sent a magnificent grand piano as a wedding present to the new Empress of China.

MADAME DE STAEL, said, "If I were mistress of fifty languages, I would think in the deep German, converse in the gay French, write in the copious English, sing in the majestic Spanish, deliver in the noble Greek, and make love in the soft Italian."

One of the amusements of an Illinois plowman was to place a silver dollar in a plate, covering it with molasses to the depth of an inch, and then let the boys try and take out the dollar with their teeth.

ALEXANDRO D'ANGELIS, a noble Roman, and a professor of painting, has spent ten hours a day in the water, during the summer, for the past twenty-five years. And yet he is not happy.

THE POWER OF PLANTS.

Alluding to the law which impels nature, however small, to put forth a constantly renewed effort to resume sway over all portions of the earth, Huxley and Hume incidentally give several examples illustrating the almost marvellous force a growing plant or tree can manifest. Here is one of them:

A tree in the garden of a nobleman lay an asphaltic wall of the most perfect manner. The work of coal-tar and gravel was a complete success, and apparently as hard as stone. What was his dismay to find one morning a sudden bulge in the wall of which he was so proud! He attributed it to imperfect workmanship; but the next morning the cause of the disengagement revealed itself. A piece of the wall, several inches across, was sealed off, where the former bulging had appeared, and underneath was found the source of the mischief—a common garden slug! Had we not seen this, we should have found it difficult to believe that a mere fungus, the tissue of which are so soft that they can be crushed by the fingers, could exercise such a wonderful force.

A tree is mentioned which, gaining foothold in the slight cleft of a rock of many tons weight, has, by gradual force of development, separated the huge mass into two distinct parts. It is certainly strange that a tree, in its beginning in the soft pulp, should be able to accomplish more than the combined power of 10,000 men. The remark of an observing friend is quoted to the effect that, should the City of New York be suddenly depopulated, it would, in less than ten years, become an impenetrable thicket of forest, the growth of the Atlantic and Pacific Silver Pines, and these would underlie and bring to the ground the most noble buildings of which we boast. Not only the higher but the lower forms of vegetation are ever ready to engage in the work of destroying our "enduring monuments." In tropical climates, vegetation most rapidly resumes its reign when not opposed by the constant warfare of man, and in our more temperate regions plant life, though more slowly, but not less surely, is in constant opposition to exclusive human occupation of any portion of earth's surface.

EPITOME OF LATEST NEWS.

USPEN STRIPS.—The jury in the case of Thomas Callan, on trial for murdering Joseph McWilliams at Chicago, have returned a verdict of guilty. Sentenced to penitentiary for life. The sums which Callan received for his services in robbing a train of the city of New York, through a Legislative Act, foot up to \$10,000. No clue yet to his whereabouts. A World's Washington special says that it is well known that Grant has been desirous of adopting more stringent measures for protecting American interests in Cuba; and now that the troubles with Great Britain are adjusted, a different policy towards the Mother Isle is reported to be in the air. A. M. Daniels, brother to the former American Minister, resident of Turin, is about to begin the publication of a daily English paper at Rome. Mrs. G. G. G. is reported dying. Her husband has been constantly at her bedside.

Between six and seven thousand Alsatians have arrived at New York since January. Many more are coming, owing to the German occupation of their country. An attempt was made to wreck a train of eight coaches on the New York and Harlem Railroad, between Morris and Morrisania, on Saturday night, by blocking a cross tie on the track. A reward of \$1,000 is offered by the Company for the perpetrators. A whole batch of new indictments against the Rine parties is expected this week. Work has been commenced on three divisions of the Texas Pacific Railroad, Dallas east to Comstock, west to Marshall, and from Comstock west to Marshall has been commenced. A Washington special says that it is stated at the Treasury Department that the policy of Mr. Boutwell is not to issue one dollar of the 41 millions reserve, although it has been decided that he has the right to do so if necessary. The Rev. Rev. Michael O'Connor, formerly Bishop of Pittsburgh, died on 18th ultimo at Woodstock College, near Baltimore.

CANADA.—Lieut. Governor Archibald, of Manitoba, accompanied by Mr. Henri Bouthillier, his private secretary, has arrived in Ottawa on a visit. A sportsman, who has been sixty miles up the Madawaska, reports that he has seen and shot a pair of snow on the ground in that part of the country. A number of old and infirm members of the Civil Service will be placed on the superannuated list in Western Canada. Telegraph Companies are both pushing their lines to completion along the Intercolonial Railway from Amherst to Truro. The Reformatory Prison at St. Vincent de Paul, near Montreal, will be converted into a penitentiary for the Province of Quebec shortly after the 1st of January next, when about 200 convicts now confined in the Kingston Penitentiary, will be removed to the new institution. The custom-master-general has reduced the rate of letter postage between Canada and Newfoundland from 12 cents to 6 cents, and all other postage to Canadian rates. A new stone quarry has been opened at Port Phillip, Cumberland County, N. S., and shipments of granite and building stone are being made to the United States. The authorities of Ottawa University are having plans prepared for a new building for the purpose of being erected for the purpose of the institution on the site of the present University. The new building will cost fully \$200,000. Counterfeit 50 cent pieces are in circulation in the Province of Ontario, and the grammar of the Cree Indian language, which has been engraved on for many years, is about to be published. The Government will take a number of copies for distribution in the North West. The Intercolonial road will be open for traffic between the cities of Halifax and St. John on the 4th of November. The necessary arrangements are being made for that purpose.

ENGLAND.—Rev. Mr. Pugh, a prominent Unitarian of Brighton, who was tried and condemned last year by an ecclesiastical court of the established church, died on 10th ult. The London Board of Public Works voted almost unanimously in favour of removing the tolls on the Waterloo and other toll-bridges across the Thames River, and in favour with the Government for carrying out the measures which will shortly be held. The written document in the San Juan Arbitration has already been given by the jurists, to whom the case was submitted; it only

wants the signature of the Emperor. It decides in favour of the United States, and of sinking Canal de Haro the boundary. The cause of a day in commencing the judgment in the British diplomatic intrigue is on foot, the object of which is to modify the Emperor's judgment as to cause the Arbitration to be held in London. A large meeting in favour of the Emperor's judgment was held on 23rd ult. in Manchester, at which Isaac Butt, M. P., leader of the Irish Home Rule party, was the principal speaker. He also spoke in terms of vigorous censure of the treatment accorded the prisoners, who, he alleges, have suffered during their confinement, gross cruelties at the hands of the gaolers. Alderman Sir Sydney Waterlow proposes that a tribunal of commerce be established in London. The Australian telegraph line is completed, and communication is now open between London and Melbourne. The appointment of Roundell Palmer as Lord Chancellor is gazetted. The gallery of a circus at Sheffield gave way on night of 21st ult., while filled with spectators, and a number of persons were killed and injured. Thirty persons were injured by the accident, and in the panic which ensued.

FRANCE.—Prince Napoleon has appealed to the Minister of the Interior, the Prefect of Police, and others who took part in his expedition from France. The appeal is made in accordance with the provisions of the Penal Code. The Government has resolved to support in the approaching session of the Assembly a motion for the appointment of a commission to investigate the acts of the late Provisional Cabinets, preparatory to the impeachment of the Imperial Minister on the charge of having provoked war with Prussia. The Count de Chambord has written a letter pointing out the necessity of establishing the Republic as a permanent form of Government. He says the monarchy alone can save France, and there is no difference between the party of violence which promises peace to men while it declares war on God, and those prudent men who seek to do in the same end by violent means. Several Communist prisoners in Castle Oleron are to be released, and the number of Communist hard-liners. The specie in the Bank of France has increased 7,000,000 francs during the past week.

JAPAN.—The authorities have notified foreigners residing in Japan of foreign settlements to return at once, and the Japanese were forbidden to leave their residences abroad to them. A telegraphic line from Yeddo to Yokohama has been opened. Korea has sent more threatening letters to Japan. Sailing vessels, escorted by a party of British warships, have been sent to the coast, preparatory to further measures on the part of the Japanese Government. Several foreign war vessels have been ordered to Chelung, in several Japanese ships, shipped on the Formosa Island, were captured by the natives. The King of the Two Kongs has sent an embassy to Yeddo for aid to avenge their death.

SPAIN.—A bill has been introduced in the Cortes which would give the power of death for political offences, and a bill for the regulation of the insurance companies in Spain. Several of the latter were captured by the troops, and about 50 were captured in the mountains. The remainder have disappeared. The Cortes have passed a law which has been presented to the Cortes requesting the Government to enter into negotiations with the Government of Great Britain for the cessation of Gibraltar to Spain.

CUBA.—The correspondents of the Havana journals in Havana are excited about the affairs at Portofino, and the differences between the liberals and conservatives are thought to be at their height. The insurgents under Diaz attacked the village of Cono, one league from Manzanillo. The fighting was severe, but a reinforcement of 1,000 men arrived, and the insurgents were compelled to retire. Six rebels and three Spaniards were killed. Another band of three Spaniards made an attack upon Lassa, but it proved unsuccessful. It is believed that the cigar manufacturers will be compelled at an early date to grant operatives a further increase of salary.

SOUTH AMERICA.—A new line of steamships, from Valparaiso to Europe, is to be the Chilean flag. A riot took place at San Diego, between artillerymen and police. One policeman killed and many wounded. The ringleaders were arrested. The attitude of opinion in Nicaragua on the boundary question is not considered conciliatory. The new President of Panama was inaugurated on the 1st ult.

MEXICO.—The political situation is improving, and it is thought the administration of Lerdo de Tejada will be successful. The result of the election of the 13th ult. Lerdo de Tejada's nomination was successful, and the result will probably be decided in favour of him to enter upon the regular term of office, which is the first of December.

RUSSIA.—Official advices report the discovery of a conspiracy in the Caucasus for the overthrow of Russian authority in that province. A general rising of the tribes was intended, but the leaders who contemplated the revolt were secured and thrown into prison. Quiet now prevails.

PRUSSIA.—The Prussian Diet re-assembled on 22nd ult. The budget was presented, and the receipts from all sources for the year 1872 are estimated at \$51,551,451, and the total expenditure at \$50,000,000. The revenue of 1873 is expected to exceed that of this year by \$19,000,000.

MARKET REPORT.

HEARTHSTONE OFFICE.

The weather during the past week has for the most part, been pleasant and warm, although a slight fall of rain occurred early on Monday morning, followed by an overcast sky throughout the remainder of the day; but the sun was always shining. The prevalence of an epidemic among the horses somewhat interfered with the transportation of goods, but it is understood that the disease is being quickly dispelled. The arrivals in large numbers, and building activity prevails upon the whole.

Grain—Superior Extra, nominal, \$0.00 to \$0.00; Extra, \$0.30 to \$0.30; Family, \$0.30 to \$0.40; Fresh Super (Western) \$0.30 to \$0.35; Ordinary Super, (Canada) \$0.30 to \$0.35; Bakers' \$0.30 to \$0.35; Super from Western Wheat (Welland Canal) fresh ground \$0.00 to \$0.05; Super City brand (Western Wheat) \$0.35 to \$0.40; Canadian Super, No. 2, \$0.35 to \$0.40; Western States, No. 2, \$0.30 to \$0.35; Fine, \$0.30 to \$0.35; Middle, \$0.35 to \$0.40; Poor, \$0.25 to \$0.30; Upper Canada Flour, \$0.10 to \$0.15; \$0.25 to \$0.30; Oily bags, (dressed), \$0.20 to \$0.25; \$0.25 to \$0.30. Market quiet: 6 cars of U. C. Spring brought \$1.35.

Flour.—Superior Extra, nominal, \$0.00 to \$0.00; Extra, \$0.30 to \$0.30; Family, \$0.30 to \$0.40; Fresh Super (Western) \$0.30 to \$0.35; Ordinary Super, (Canada) \$0.30 to \$0.35; Bakers' \$0.30 to \$0.35; Super from Western Wheat (Welland Canal) fresh ground \$0.00 to \$0.05; Super City brand (Western Wheat) \$0.35 to \$0.40; Canadian Super, No. 2, \$0.35 to \$0.40; Western States, No. 2, \$0.30 to \$0.35; Fine, \$0.30 to \$0.35; Middle, \$0.35 to \$0.40; Poor, \$0.25 to \$0.30; Upper Canada Flour, \$0.10 to \$0.15; \$0.25 to \$0.30; Oily bags, (dressed), \$0.20 to \$0.25; \$0.25 to \$0.30. Market quiet: 6 cars of U. C. Spring brought \$1.35.

Wheat.—Superior Extra, nominal, \$0.00 to \$0.00; Extra, \$0.30 to \$0.30; Family, \$0.30 to \$0.40; Fresh Super (Western) \$0.30 to \$0.35; Ordinary Super, (Canada) \$0.30 to \$0.35; Bakers' \$0.30 to \$0.35; Super from Western Wheat (Welland Canal) fresh ground \$0.00 to \$0.05; Super City brand (Western Wheat) \$0.35 to \$0.40; Canadian Super, No. 2, \$0.35 to \$0.40; Western States, No. 2, \$0.30 to \$0.35; Fine, \$0.30 to \$0.35; Middle, \$0.35 to \$0.40; Poor, \$0.25 to \$0.30; Upper Canada Flour, \$0.10 to \$0.15; \$0.25 to \$0.30; Oily bags, (dressed), \$0.20 to \$0.25; \$0.25 to \$0.30. Market quiet: 6 cars of U. C. Spring brought \$1.35.



# THE HEARTHSTONE.

## IN BONDAGE.

BY MAX.

Ambition entered in my heart,  
And took her seat as on a throne;  
She held her place, she kept her part,  
And claimed the kingdom for her own.  
And day and night she asked of me  
To bow to her on bended knee.

She lured me first with winning smiles,  
She reined with one and debauchery,  
I could not free me of her wiles,  
She was so beautiful and fair;  
When once she feigned to go, I laid  
My hand on hers and so she stayed.

She stayed and I cried out "tis well,"  
And counted her my dearest prize—  
Forgetting why the angels fell  
So long ago from Paradise;  
While my enchantress sat in state,  
Saying "Thou shalt be rich and great."

Her voice was music in my ear,  
I did what she bade me do;  
First willingly and all sincere,  
Because my task was wholly new;  
I did not know that she would be  
A very tyrant unto me.

The lovely summer came and went,  
And still she reigned upon her throne,  
Till nearly all my strength was spent,  
And I would fain be free alone;  
But my enchantress held her part,  
And kept the place within my heart.

And kept the place, ay, many a day,  
And made me bow the knee to her;  
Till I was changed to pass that way,  
And saw my sorrow and despair;  
Then bringing help she came to me,  
And left me not till I was free.

Free to pursue my lowly way,  
To love as I had loved before;  
To sleep by night, to toil by day,  
And give from out my little store,  
O life! O love! how fair to me,  
All things are grown now I am free.

## THE DISCARDED WIFE.

A Romance of the Affections.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "THE CHIMES"

CHAPTER IX.—Continued.

Phoebe was afraid of Jabez Bourke—very much afraid of him, since that little scene in the fields, when he had shown his teeth.

She had, up to then, treated him as a sort of jocular lover—a sort of Caliban—to be flirted with when it took her fancy so to do. She had taken him up when it pleased her, and dropped him again with very little ceremony; but now she began to be afraid that she had made a great mistake in the character of her plaything.

She had hitherto taken him to be a stupid lout; but he was, without a dangerous lout—morose, savage, revengeful; capable indeed of acts of violence which a while ago she would not have believed to be possible.

Yes, this ugly face, which forced itself unbidden upon her attention, caused her some considerable uneasiness.

How must he be disposed of?  
Of course, his threats had been but empty air.

She was certain of that. He never dare lay a finger upon her.  
And yet, somehow, although she was so positive upon this point, she did not feel at all comfortable.

The ill-conditioned blacksmith had throughout the day been skulking round and about the "Blue Dragon"; and when Percy Hardwicke, overnight, had been amusing himself by playing a game at stiles with some roystering horse-dealer stopping at the inn, the blacksmith had made himself very officious in picking up the pins, and had been very thoughtful and obsequious for such a stray halfpence as were thrown to him by the fine gentleman thus disporting himself.

He was a very fine gentleman, indeed, in the estimation of such as frequented the hostelry where he had taken up his abode.

"Who is he?"  
"Where does he come from?"  
"What's he call himself?"

These were the questions which the admiring rustics asked one another.  
There was no very satisfactory information obtainable upon any of these hints; and even the best-informed—there are always some persons who are mighty wise in every small village, the wisest in the smallest, of course—were obliged to confess, when pressed upon the subject, that they knew nothing at all about it.

But what was known was this:  
"He's a mighty fine gentleman!"  
"He must be somebody!"  
"Oh, that's certain—sure!"  
"Any one could tell that, with half an eye, at the first glance!"  
"He looks it!"

By this they meant money, of course, not impudence; though, for that matter, the new arrival had plenty of the latter, and to spare. He was a great favourite before he had remained there very long, because he was very liberal, and willingly stood treat to all who would drink at his expense; and you may be sure that he found very little trouble in gathering together a crowd of persons who were that way of thinking.

There soon collected a number of hangers-on, who eagerly watched for his coming, laid in wait for him, and sponged upon him at every turn.

A body guard of mercenary vagabonds followed him about, and kept their eye fixed upon him, ready to obey his wishes in the slightest particular.

He had a somewhat imperative style of address, which was not a little insulting; but they bore with this very contentedly, and were willing to take his kicks in the hopes of receiving a share of his halfpence.

He was greatly admired, too, by good Mrs. Miles, who was never weary of singing his praises.

What were pretty Phoebe's sentiments respecting him we know already; and Mr. Miles, who was a mild man, very henpecked and humble, was in duty bound to admire what his good lady admired, and ask no questions, or form no opinion of his own upon the subject.

Percy Hardwicke, then, having shown that he was a man of money, soon found the "Blue Dragon" a very comfortable inn, and had little to desire in a small way that was not provided for him.

He made up his mind to stop for a time, anyhow, until he was weary of his flirtation with pretty Phoebe.

"If I ran away with her," he thought, "there would be a great bother about it, I suppose. But then, surely, she is worth a little trouble and vexation."

He was thus reflecting, when, having concluded his morning meal, he stood by the inn

door, gazing idly down the quiet street, which lay basking in the sun, very still and drowsy-looking.

Raising his eyes, he saw a gloomy visage scowling at him from the tap-room window.

It was the face of the blacksmith, who, catching his eye, made a rough sort of bow.

"Come here, erson," said Mr. Hardwicke, "I want to speak to you."

"The man came slouching heavily forth, and stood cringing before him, pulling his forelock.

"What an ill-looking beggar you are," said Hardwicke, candidly. "Do you ever wash yourself?"

"When I've time," replied the other.

"That's not often, I should think, by the look of you."

"My trade's a dirty one, sir."

"Trade, eh? What many that be?"

"Yes, yes, so I've heard; but you never seem to be at work."

"There is not much work in these parts."

"Not much, I suppose. A deadly, lively sort of hole."

"You're right there, master."

"Your native village, I presume?"

"I don't know, I'm sure. It's the first place I recollect, anyhow."

"Parents live here?"

"No; I can't say who it is for, I am sure; some person or other at the inn. My wife wanted it delivered to him."

"Allow me to take it?"

"No, no! You are coming home with me to have lunch."

"I am afraid I cannot do that, as I have made an engagement for this afternoon."

"What, found some friend?"

"Yes—yes. Made an acquaintance, that is."

"I wish you could have thrown it over," said Jerrold, though it must be confessed that he did not persist very earnestly in this invitation.

Percy Hardwicke would not be persuaded, and, after a few brief sentences on either side, he turned to depart.

"If you will kindly take this letter, and it will not trouble you," said the Captain. "I did not know that my wife would send any message, or, of course, I would have taken it when I went at first. But as I was coming back, I met the girl carrying the letter, and asked where she was going. I suppose it is of vital importance," he said, with a smile, "for she wrote it directly I was gone, and sent it immediately."

"I am glad to hear that she was well enough to sit up and write," said Hardwicke, to whom only a few moments before Jerrold had been

and also that Jerrold was very much vexed at hearing of the circumstance, as the trees had been associated with many of his earliest and happiest recollections.

It would, indeed, have been a cruel thing to have them cut down without there was some pressing necessity for so doing.

"Perhaps, after all that, the man was mistaken."

"Are you quite positive?" he asked.

"Positive of what, sir?"

"That those trees were not struck by lightning?"

"Quite, sir."

"Now, be quite sure, for I have a most particular reason for wishing to know."

"I would stake my life on it, sir."

Jerrold turned away without another word.

There could be no doubt on the matter.

For some reason or other, Eleanor had told him a lie.

## CHAPTER X.

UPON THE BRINK OF A DISCOVERY.

Percy Hardwicke, upon his way back to the Blue Dragon, turned over and over in his hand the letter with which Edward Jerrold had entrusted him.



ON THE BRINK OF A DISCOVERY.

"Know nothing about 'em, master. The traps left me, I'm told, because, I suppose, I wasn't worth carrying any farther."

"Most probably, my friend," replied the smiling gentleman; "only I'm surprised they don't come for you, now you've grown up so promising."

The grimy giant scowled at the speaker somewhat menacingly for a moment, as though he seemed to be upon the point of resenting the insulting manner in which he was addressed.

But he quickly enough swallowed his indignation, and grinned and cringed as before.

"You wouldn't be sorry to leave this little village, I presume, my grumpy friend?"

"I shouldn't shed many tears, master!"

"I hate it!"

"Ah! I suppose you think it very strange that I should stop here for pleasure?"

The lout made no reply, but scowled darkly at him, as before. Perhaps he could have given a very shrewd guess at the motive which prompted the fine gentleman to honour the little village with his presence, and yet he refrained from making any suggestion upon the subject for reasons of his own.

Meanwhile, Percy Hardwicke was thinking to himself: though the subject of his thoughts he did not deem it necessary to communicate to his companion.

"If you wouldn't take offence, master," said Bourke, tugging at his forelock.

"Offence at what?"

"I beg your pardon, master; but it at any time you should chance upon—"

"Well?"

"If you knew any one as wanted a servant, sir, to travel anywhere. I shouldn't care how far."

"Ah! that's kind of you, too. Certainly, you would pay for dressing in livery, you would. I'll think of it, my unwashed aspirant, if I hear of any one in want of a pretty page; and now I've had enough of your society, so go back to your forge, or stay, here's a shilling; go and fuddle yourself instead, that will be better."

The blacksmith took the proffered coin which the gentleman flung to him, as he might have flung a bone to a dog, and stretched away to the tap-room.

Hardwicke looked after him admiringly.

"If I should ever require the services of any unprincipled scoundrel, I shall know where to lay my hands upon him," he thought. "If I do carry away that pretty little girl, my friend, the unwashed miscreant will be the very man to assist me—the very man!"

Perhaps not! Percy Hardwicke had not the vaguest notion what were the lout's sentiments upon this subject, or perhaps he would have felt rather uneasy in his company.

He supposed that he had found the very tool for the purpose; and in the meantime went on very happily planning his little villainies, and smiling sweetly to himself.

He took a stroll down the village street, and was absent from the inn about half an hour. On his return, he learnt considerably to his annoyance, that Edward Jerrold had called almost directly he had gone out.

"If I had only been in," he thought, "it would have saved me the trouble of going there. I must go now, I suppose, to make a morning call, and ask how that fanciful wife of his is getting on."

With this intention, he set out across the fields; but when within sight of Jerrold's house, he met the Captain returning to the village.

Some few words were exchanged, and Percy Hardwicke had made some polite inquiries respecting the health of the lady, when Jerrold said, "By the by, I was on my way to your inn with—"

giving an account of his wife's illness, wherein he represented that she could not raise her head from the pillow, so great were her sufferings.

The worthy Captain, who, until then, had never noticed anything curious in these rather contradictory circumstances, felt rather confused, and looked even more so.

"I daresay she had written it before," he stammered; and then twisting the letter over and over, continued, "I wonder who she wants to write to at a public-house. However, if you will be so kind—"

The smiling gentleman was only too delighted, and straightway departed.

"Poor fool!" he said to himself, as he glanced back at the house. "He's got her to do just what she likes. She seems to twist him round her finger any way she chooses. I don't know how it is, but upon my word I would willingly give a good round sum for the sake of getting up a little disorder in that worthy household. And if she was not a dreadful dourly provincial, I should feel half inclined to venture on a mild flirtation. By the way, I wonder what she is like?"

How was it I did not look at her portrait when I was there the other evening? I suppose there is one."

The Captain, on his way back to the house, certainly did think more of the little circumstance of the letter than he had done hitherto.

It was rather odd that his wife should not have mentioned her desire to send a letter when he was going to the inn.

"The girl's manner, too, when he had met her, seemed to imply some sort of attempt at secrecy."

How, again, was it that his wife should write to some one at a public-house? And what was it about?

It was altogether very odd, indeed; and again did a feeling of gathering uneasiness creep over him.

Of course, there were a hundred and one reasons why she should have acted as she did; but yet he felt somewhat uncomfortable, in spite of his efforts not to do so.

Somehow, during the last two or three days so many odd circumstances had occurred, all of which might possibly have been explained with the greatest ease, but yet were not explained, and left a rather unpleasant impression behind them.

Thoughts such as these I have described ran through his brain, and puzzled and vexed him more than would be readily believed.

But he was doomed to greater vexation still, before the end of his walk.

Falling into conversation with an old labouring man, who, recognising him, bade him good day, they began to talk about various matters connected with the sea, for the labourer had at one time been a sailor.

"You have storms on land, too, now and then," said Jerrold; "even down in such a sheltered nook as this."

"A storm here, sir?" repeated the man, in surprise.

"Yes, you had a bad thunder storm, had you not, some time ago? Why, the lightning struck those great trees at the corner of the garden?"

The man smiled incredulously.

"When, sir?" he asked.

"I don't know when, but it did occur, did it not?"

"Not as I've heard of," said the man. "I was one that helped to cut them down. They were as fine a piece of timber as you could wish to see, but they were not injured in the least."

Jerrold listened in amazement.

Could he be dreaming? Did he hear aright?

He felt quite positive that Eleanor had told him that the reason why the trees had been felled was that they had been struck by lightning.

The reader will recollect this circumstance,

With one of his blindest smiles, he read the superscription.

"Mr. Slider," he said.

"Slider," he repeated to himself. "I have heard the name, I fancy, but I can't exactly say who it belongs to. One of those lazy, horse-looking fellows hanging about the inn-yard, and carousing in the tap-room. Slider, Slider, I am certain I ought to know him."

He could not, however, settle it to his satisfaction, as he walked along, pondering upon the subject.

"It is rather strange, though," he thought, "that she should write to one of those fellows at the inn. What can it be about? I'll find out which the fellow is, and have a good look at him before I give him the letter. If I were only to light upon some little bit of scandal, but, no, I am afraid there is no such luck."

He walked on at a more rapid pace, and soon reached the inn door.

There he found Miles ready, as usual, to accompany him a gracious welcome.

Hardwicke began chatting about the fine weather and the number of guests at the inn.

"Was that Mr. Slider I was playing with last night?" he asked.

"I forget, sir. Ah, though, I remember, but I don't know the gentleman's name, Mr. Slider is in the parlour. He wears a white hat."

"Will you bring me a glass of ale into the parlour?" said Hardwicke. "I want to sit and rest awhile."

A white hat! What incident connected with a white hat was it that flashed across his mind when he heard the words?

He found a rather shabby-looking gentleman seated before the fire, who had evidently done him good service, for it was weather-stained and indented in several places.

Hardwicke took a seat in the corner and observed the stranger quietly.

He was a man about twenty-eight years of age, tall and well-made, but with anything but a pleasing cast of countenance.

The expression of his eyes was anything but a good one, and they were a great deal too close together. They were very restless eyes, too, which wandered to and fro in all directions save that of the face of the speaker whom their owner addressed.

His jaw was cut very square, and was ornamented by a dirty beard of several days' growth.

He had a very ugly scar, too, crossing his nose, with the beauty of the outline of which it had very seriously interfered.

No, he was not a nice-looking gentleman, this Mr. Slider; and there was written on his face, in unmistakable characters, blackguard and thief.

He was very slantly attired, and with a great affectation of smartness; but he was, without, very dirty and squallid.

Percy Hardwicke had plenty of time to notice all these particulars, for Mr. Slider was deeply engaged with the *Sporting Life*, and did not turn his eyes toward the new-comer, after one brief glance of scrutiny.

"Why on earth can Jerrold's wife want to tell to that fellow?" Hardwicke asked himself, and could find no ready answer to the query.

"Perhaps," he thought, "she may want to buy a dog of him. He looks to be something in the dog-stealing way, or a horse copier, or does the pickpocket or cut-throat, when professionally engaged? It would be rather hard to tell what is his particular line, but it's something felonious, that's certain."

The object of his thoughts was pulling at a large cigar. His dirty fingers were ornamented with a show, but not too costly jewellery.

"I wonder whether he owes a long bill?" thought Hardwicke.

He held the letter in his hands, but he hesitated about giving it. He felt extraordinarily curious about his disreputable acquaintance, and resolved upon finding out as much as pos-

sible before he delivered over the epistle with which he had been entrusted.

How, though, was this information to be obtained?

Perhaps the best way to begin with was to make a few more enquiries of the landlady, and then delicately to question Mr. Slider himself, and see how their statements agreed.

With this intention he left the room, and went to the bar to purchase some cigars.

He was a very ingenious gentleman, and so very easily brought the conversation round to the desired point.

"I didn't know that gentleman was Mr. Slider," he said. "I thought it was the name of another gentleman."

"That is Mr. Slider, sir, I believe."

"He wasn't here yesterday, was he?"

"It was away at the horse way, I suppose?"

"Something in the horse way, sir, I don't know what he calls himself, I'm sure. He doesn't seem to do much."

"Not a favourite of yours, Mrs. Miles?"

"Persons who keep an inn, sir, have no right to like and dislike."

"No, no; you mustn't talk about them, at any rate—except among friends."

"To be sure, sir. I know you would not repeat what I said."

"My dear madam!"

"I don't half like that Mr. Slider, then, sir, if you must know the truth, and I'm not over comfortable about it; but, then, Mr. Miles is so easy about every thing, and is really no more in the house than a child unborn."

"Made rather a long stay, I presume?" said Hardwicke.

"We have been some time, certainly, sir, without seeing the colour of his money; but then, I'm sure, I've no right to say anything, only I really don't like the look of Mr. Slider."

"How long has he been here?"

"It's more than a fortnight now."

"I suppose he has friends in the neighbourhood?"

"I suppose he knows somebody, such as you are, I never heard of any body having seen him with anyone unless it was—"

"Yes, Mrs. Miles."

"Some one said they met him in company with some well-dressed female one night, on the fields leading to the valley; but, then, they weren't quite sure that it was him after all."

"In the fields, was it?" asked Hardwicke, with gathering interest. "You don't know who the female was, though, I suppose?"

"No, sir, a stranger, I believe. Anyhow, she had on a thick veil, and though the party who told me tried all what she could to catch a glimpse of her face, or hear her voice, she could not succeed."

"And so you don't know what trade or profession he is?"

"I have no idea, sir."

"Captain Jerrold's house is down in the valley you speak of—is it not?"

"Yes, sir."

"I thought that was the valley you meant; and that reminds me I must go down and make another inquiry respecting Mrs. Jerrold."

"I beg your pardon, sir, but is anything the matter?"

"She is seriously ill, I believe."

"I am very sorry to hear it, I am sure. She is a very nice lady. One of the kindest-hearted and most charitable; but you know her, sir?"

"I have never seen her."

"She is as good as beautiful, and that is saying a good deal too."

"Beautiful, eh? How old is she?"

"Quite a girl; twenty-two at most."

"You don't mean that? Dear me, I had formed quite another idea respecting her."

"Has Captain Jerrold never spoken of her, sir?"

"Oh, yes—of course. But he never said whether she was old or young, or pretty or plain."

"It was a love match, sir, I believe," continued the landlady. "They met one another somewhere at the seaside. Mrs. Jerrold was an orphan, living with an elderly aunt. She had no family, and very few friends, I believe, and they lived very quietly. The country families hereabouts are very proud and exclusive, and so—"

"So what?"

"So that may be why they have shown her the cold shoulder to some extent, though how they could find in their hearts to do so puzzles me."

"Very good looking, is she," said Hardwicke, musing, "and tall?"

"About the middle height, sir."

"Soft voice?"

"Very soft and musical."

Hardwicke turned away, having learnt all that he could from this quarter.

When he returned to the parlour, he found Mr. Slider had finished his newspaper, and was smoking hard at his cigar.

"Fine day," said Hardwicke.

"Very tidy, sir," replied Mr. Slider.

"At the fair yesterday?"

"Yes—an hour or so."



# THE HEARTHSTONE.

## CHAPTER XI.

### PERCY HARDWICKE'S PLOT.

"Now for the mystery!" said Hardwicke. He drew a long breath, as he tore open the envelope. Then for a moment he paused and listened again, for he fancied that he heard a slight rattling of the handle of the room door. But no, it was a false alarm. There was no danger of interruption, and, indeed, if there had been, what was there to be afraid of? But conscience makes cowards of us all, and the smiling gentleman was very pale, and trembled slightly, in spite of his efforts to appear calm. But a moment's reflection caused him to laugh at his fears, and taking the letter from its cover he spread it before him, and set himself steadily to its perusal. It had been evidently written in great haste, and it was smeared and blotched as though the writer had no time to wait until it got dry before it was folded and directed. The words which it contained were these:—

"In mercy's name, go! Leave an address where I can send to you.  
"Do not be afraid that I will not send. You ought to know by this time that I shall not fail to keep my word after what I have suffered for your sake.  
"That in mercy's name, leave the village, or all shall be discovered, and I shall be ruined."  
"P."

Percy Hardwicke slowly perused this strange epistle, then again read it, then folded it, replaced it in its envelope, and put it away in a place of safety.

After this he made several draws at his cigar, which had gone out unheeded, lit it again, and lit it out again, puffed at it after it was extinguished, then flung it from him into the fireplace.

He rose to his feet, and, walking to the window, started out into the village street, the gambols in which of a plectric pig appeared most deeply to interest him.

Not for very long, however. He came back and stood before the fireplace, over which hung a dusty almanac that seemed to afford him matter for deep contemplation and reflection for several minutes. Again he turned away, and this time paced the room.

Then coming to a halt once more in front of the open window, he broke in a smile of even greater benignity than was usual with him.

"I wouldn't have missed that letter for fifty pounds!" said he. "No, not for fifty at the very least; and only to think what a very near chance I had of losing it altogether. There was a moment when I was actually on the point of giving it away."

He became suddenly serious, as the thought of such a calamity occurred to him.

"I had my suspicions," he continued, after a brief pause; "but one likes more than a suspicion to go upon, if it's anything more serious than hanging a pick-pocket. Of course I knew how it would be, and of course I supposed that this letter would throw some sort of light upon the affair; but who on earth could have imagined that it would be such a letter—such a damning proof—I must have another look at it!"

Again he drew it forth from his pocket, and read it with a chuckle of intense satisfaction.

Indeed, though, as a rule, anything but an impressionable or impulsive person, Percy Hardwicke upon this occasion could not refrain from pressing to his lips this little epistle, which had afforded him so much satisfaction.

"There are boobies," said he, "who collect and treasure up the autographs of dead men who have made a name in the world, who would not give me a penny for this paper, when I would give the contents of all their museums for it, and yet think it cheaply purchased."

At the conclusion of this somewhat extravagant soliloquy, chancing to look up, he saw the eyes of Bourke, the blacksmith, fixed upon him, and drew back from the window with some slight confusion.

"Curse that fellow!" he muttered. "He is for everlastingly peeping and prying round some corner. It's very sure I should not be able to carry off pretty Miss Phebe without taking him as an accomplice. What an ill-looking vagabond he is, though! I should be almost afraid of the fellow, if he were not such a heavy-headed, blundering idiot! Pretty little Phebe! I am not quite sure that there is not higher game to aim at than a publican's daughter, pretty though she is!"

Bourke was still scowling out from his ambush, wondering to himself what letter that was his rival was reading, and fancying, of course, that it was some epistle of an amatory nature which he had received from the fitful Miss Phebe.

It is probable that if Percy Hardwicke could have seen this heavy-headed, blundering idiot, as he chose to designate him, and had known what thoughts were rankling in his mind, the knowledge thereof might have led him very seriously to consider what was the best course to pursue, and whether it would not have been the advisable course to turn his back for ever upon the village and its inmates, instead of fluttering round a flame which, in the end, was doomed to prove fatal to him.

He had other and more important matters, though, according to his estimation of them, to occupy his attention.

"What shall I do?" he said to himself, consulting his reflections upon the subject of the letter. "Suppose I wait until she recovers from this indisposition, and then seek an interview. Then if there is any truth in the statements which this woman here makes about her beauty, the knowledge that I possess must place her in my power."

Another reflection, however, very soon occurred to him.

Would he be able to see her? Jerrald had said something about change of air. She might go away before he was successful in obtaining an interview.

If she were bent upon not seeing him, it would be easy enough to avoid him.

"And she does not want to see me, I am certain—though why?"

That was a question which must be answered upon some future occasion.

Why, on earth, could she desire to avoid him? Upon the first night of his arrival she could have known that he was coming, unless somehow, by the way, she had caught a glimpse of him in her husband's company.

The second evening, though, there could be no mistake. Jerrald had told him that her sudden illness came on just after he had pointed out Hardwicke's approaching figure.

"Does she know me?" Hardwicke asked himself. "If so, I must know her. Though, how is it she is afraid to meet me? It ought to be the other way. There are several women whom I would rather avoid if they are still alive, which I sincerely trust she must be some one whose back I will not hear looking into! Some one who knows I know all about her, and is afraid I shall tell this poor fool, Jerrald, her secrets! Well, she shan't hoodwink me, at any rate, however easily she may have deceived my sea-faring friend!"

However he was to act one thing was most

necessary, did he wish successfully to carry out his schemes, and that was, the employment of the greatest possible caution.

What was the first step?

Hardwicke ordered another cigar, and under its soothing influence, a great idea occurred to him.

He rang the bell, and ordered pen, ink, and paper, then sat down and wrote to his friend Edward Jerrald.

"MY DEAR JERRALD," he wrote, "Some business will oblige me to go away for a few days, perhaps a week. When I return, I will take my chance of seeing you. Trusting that Mrs. Jerrald will soon recover from her indisposition, I am, with best compliments to her and to you, yours very truly, PERCY HARDWICKE."

After having written the above, he smiled at himself in the glass with extreme self-satisfaction, ordered dinner at six, and went out for a stroll.

(To be continued.)

## RING THE BELL SOFTLY.

BY DEXTER SMITH.

Some one has gone from this strange world of ours, No more to gather its thorns with its flowers; No more to linger where subtle odors float, Where, on all beauty, death's fingers are laid; Weary with mingling life's bitter and sweet, Weary with parting and never to meet.

Some one has gone to the bright, golden shore; Ring the bell softly, there's escape on the door.

Some one is resting from sorrow and sin, Happy where angels' feet tread not; Joyous as birds, when the morning is bright, When the sweet zephyrs have brought us their light.

Wear with sorrow and never to reap, Weary with labor, and welcoming sleep, Some one's departed to Heaven's bright shore, Ring the bell softly, there's escape on the door.

Angels were anxiously longing to meet One who walks with them in Heaven's bright street; Loved ones have whispered that some one is best—

Free from earth's trials, and taking sweet rest, Yes! there is one more in angelic bliss— One less in cherub, and one less to kiss; One more departed to Heaven's bright shore, Ring the bell softly, there's escape on the door.

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## IN AFTER-YEARS; OR, FROM DEATH TO LIFE.

BY MRS. ALEXANDER ROSS.

CHAPTER XXXII.

Adam went to arouse the servants, that the last office for the dead might be performed. The dead laid out in the guise of the dead—the white sheet on bed and floor and wall—the candles lit at the feet of him who could not see them.

Ere he ascended to the chamber of death Adam opened the Hall door to breathe for a few minutes in the sweet morning air. The oak of Haddon lay prostrate on the ground, its roots pointing up to the grey morning sky, its leafless head resting on the stone steps leading to the Castle door.

It was late in the afternoon before Mr. Alexander Waddell, the new head of the firm, arrived at Haddon Castle.

Adam informed him of all that had happened previous to the demise of Sir Richard, delivering to him the letter written by the doctor and signed by Sir Richard, the key of the secret cupboard and also that of the desk containing the money which Catchem would have appropriated to himself if he could. It was then that Adam for the first time thought of Catchem, who had as he fancied been a prisoner in the armoury since the day before without tasting food; it was impossible to send to Haddon Village for a policeman as Adam had intended, simply because Frazer's services were required in his master's sick room, consequently he could not be spared to go so far as Haddon Village.

Adam told Mr. Waddell of the prisoner in the armoury, at the same time saying: that he was sure if Sir Richard had been still in life he would have considered the punishment the man had already undergone, imprisoned in a cold room without a bed or food for such a long time, sufficient without now sending him to prison.

Mr. Waddell knew nothing whatever of Catchem; concluding he was some hanger on, or poor friend whose honesty was not proof against the temptation of so much money within his reach which he fancied no one except himself knew was in the house; and at once adopted Adam's view of the case.

"You had better release the fellow," said Mr. Waddell, "but before you do so, I will go with you to the armoury and have a look at both him and it."

Although Mr. Waddell was ignorant of Sir Richard's residence in the tower chamber he had heard of the place itself from his father, and wished to ascertain for himself if there really was such a chamber.

On opening the armoury door to Adam's great surprise Catchem was not to be seen. Mr. Waddell at once looked round for the entrance to the staircase leading to the cage chamber, and seeing the open panel pointed it out to Adam, suggesting the expedience as the staircase seemed quite dark of obtaining a lantern, in order to make a search for the escaped prisoner; a light was soon brought. A Mr. Waddell accompanied by Adam ascending the stone steps soon discovered the chamber with Catchem quite worn out with the exertion of keeping the rats at bay during the night, and faint from hunger, crouching in one corner of the cage, his bloodshot eyes fixed on the hole into which he showed the last rat run long after daylight.

"Come out of that," said Adam addressing the poor wretch, who had no more power to come out than if he had been tied hand and foot.

"Ye'er going to get your liberty from this gentleman here that's come frae Aberdeen, where I was going to send ye to the jail; but he says if ye give your solemn promise never to try to steal either men or siller he'll let ye off this time; but mind what I say, I would na like to be in your skin if ye ever fall into his hand for foul play again."

Mr. Waddell fairly stared at the long speech Adam had put into his mouth without leave asked or given, and rather at a loss what he meant by coupling stealing men with his offence of the day before.

Catchem merely replied by a groan, pointing to the bars of the cage. They understood him and tried in vain to open or find any fastening or door; each bar was exactly the counterpart of the others, nothing to give them any clue to where the cage opened or shut. All efforts were vain, and it was at last judged best to send to Haddon Village for a blacksmith to open it by force; a supply of food and water was brought to Catchem who modestly requested a glass of brandy to infuse warmth and life into his chilled flesh and sore bones.

Ere Mr. Waddell could answer Adam replied: "No, no, ye'll get no brandy here, ye'er bad enough ye dinna need brandy to make ye worse than ye are."

Catchem gave him a half scared look, he could not comprehend how in some unaccountable way Adam who had been an object of almost implacable hatred to Sir Richard, no sooner made his appearance in the sick man's room than he was almost as if by magic not only restored to favour but to all appearance made virtually master in the Castle, holding the position Catchem had desired for himself. He knew he was recognized as the one who helped to place the old man in Pounder's power, and he feared Adam's turn was come to be signally revenged.

Mr. Waddell inquired how the door had been shut upon him; he described his inadvertency in pulling the strip of deerskin from the knob and his instantly having been drawn up into the place where the bars met in the centre.

"Try if you can't get up to it, and again pull it down by your own weight," said Mr. Waddell.

"I have been trying it at intervals as long as the light lasted last night, and I was at it to-day until all my bones ached with the falls I have got in trying to reach it."

"Tut man," said Mr. Waddell "you have not tried much, if I were in there I think I would not sit so contented as you do, if only for putting down that knob I could get out, it may be night before a blacksmith can be got from Haddon Village."

"It will be all that," said Adam "Frazer is off for John Longman, to come and bid here till after the funeral, the Castle o' Haddon cannot be left with only me and another to serve all the gentles that'll be coming and going for eight days to come; Frazer is no very clever about his errands, and John Longman is very dreech of drawing, forbye that his wife'll no let him off without two or three clean shirts, and this is only Wednesday, they may be washed but they're no ironed that's sure enough; and if we pit that and that together, if six o'clock sees them at the Castle it's more than I think, an' none o' them will be willing to go to Haddon Village after dark on a winter's night for the sake o' a whizzer in like that; pur body if he has to bid here till to-morrow's morning he'll be in cauld quarters, but if it's sue I'll bring up a blanket from one o' the servants' beds to him."

"Oh, I can never pass another night here," howled Catchem; "I'll be devoured by rats."

"The rats!" exclaimed Adam, looking round as if he expected to see them running about his feet. "That's nonsense; what for would rats come here?"

"I don't know what they come for," said Catchem; "but they were here in such numbers last night that I was obliged to climb the bars of the cage as high as I could reach, and even then to take off my neckerchief to beat them off with. I'll be devoured alive if I am left another night here."

"I'll give you a candle and that'll keep them off," said Adam, who did not believe there was a rat in the place except in the imagination of the lawyer.

"Try again to pull the knob down; that's your best chance to escape both rats and cold," said Mr. Waddell, who pitied the man and thought that by exerting himself he could certainly pull down the knob. He himself, being a man of six feet in height, measured Catchem's powers by what he thought would be his own if in the same predicament.

Catchem raised himself from the crouching position he had held since the departure of the rats. He was tired out with his exertions during the night, and hanging to the cross bars of the cage, together with the cold, had numbed and stiffened his joints so, that he could with difficulty stand upright. He was a small man at best; and although Mr. Waddell still urged him to try if possible to reach the knob by taking a spring and so catching hold of it, he had little hope of the poor worn-out looking creature accomplishing his desire.

Catchem bent himself down, almost knees and head meeting each other, and then with all the strength he had left sprung up towards the top of the cage, continuing this three or four times until at last he came sprawling down flat on his back in the middle of the cage, the dust flying about in clouds and almost stifling himself and the two spectators of his fall. Catchem gave a wild howl as he fell, uttering some scarcely audible imprecations on Scotland and the Scotch. Mr. Waddell, who had been highly tickled by the several attempts Catchem made to reach the knob, now fairly roared with laughter, which so exasperated the fallen Catchem that he sprang up and rushed to the side of the cage in which Mr. Waddell stood, indulging in a flood of invectives against Adam, screaming at the extreme pitch of his voice.

"May I be kept and guarded!" exclaimed Adam, who saw nothing either to laugh or swear at in Catchem's fall, it being a very matter-of-fact thing in his eyes, and was shocked beyond measure at any sort of noise occurring in the house where his dead master lay.

"May I be kept and guarded, such a noise to be kicked up in Haddon Castle and the dead lights burning for the Laird. Haud your whizzer you ill-favored thief loon that ye are. If I hear another word out o' your crooked mouth I'll give you neither food nor drink for itther twenty-four hours, and that'll maybe gnir ye keep a quiet tongue in your head."

Catchem was silenced at once. He remembered how determinedly Adam had kept to his word when being less so would have been manifestly to his worldly advantage; and now, when he was master of the situation, he doubted not he would put his threat in execution. Catchem was already ravenous with hunger, and had no desire to gratify his temper at the expense of his appetite.

Mr. Waddell was as fully alive to the indecorum of a noise in the house where the dead lay as Adam was, although he did not view it in the same serious light as the old man did. Adam evidently thinking the whole affair, Mr. Waddell's laughter as well as Catchem's oaths, not only

indecorous but absolutely sinful; and as he followed Adam down the staircase, said, as if in palliation of his ill-timed mirth:

"That poor wretch, in his attempts to reach the knob, reminded me so much of scenes I have seen in my boyhood at the circus that it was impossible to control my laughter."

"I well believe that, Mr. Waddell; but there's an excuse for foolish bairns laughing at a merryman that grown men wouldna like to be evoked to them. There's a time for all things, as the wise man said, a time to weep and a time to laugh; but when there's a dead corpse in the house, and the dead man was the master only two or three hours since, it seems to me that the laughing going on above his head can only be compared to what the Scripture speaks o' when they tell o' the laughter that's like o' the crackling o' thorns under a pot."

"Yes, Adam, the laughter of fools, that's what the wise man of old called it, eh?" said Mr. Waddell, good-humouredly; "you are in the right, it is not seemly to have mirth in the house of mourning. However, the dead cannot hear it, and there are no living relations of Sir Richard within many a mile of the old Castle."

"Ye're right there, Mr. Waddell. There's name o' Sir Richard's sin to mourn for him, and I'm afraid it will only be strangers that will go with him to the mausoleum yonder; but his old servant man, Adam Johnston, will keep order and decency in the house till the burial is past, as was done for both his father and his son."

They were now in the armoury; and Mr. Waddell, fearful that Adam would carry out his threat of making Catchem prolong his fast, said, "You'll send that poor creature some food and a sup of tea, won't you, Adam?"

"Oh, ay; I'll send Frazer up wi' some bread and beef and a drink o' water, but I scud nae kickshaws or delicacies o' tea or the like o' that to such a ne'er-do-weel as him. I have me liberty o' conscience to waste the mairies on the like o' him."

As there will be no necessity for any further notice of Catchem, it will be well to let the reader know what ultimately became of him. He was not released from the cage until he had been there four days in worse than durane vilo, it being that time ere a blacksmith could be procured. When at last he was liberated, Adam accompanied him to the servants' hall, where he saw the lawyer eat a very hearty, though plain, dinner of Scotch broth and bread, and then giving him in charge to John Longman, requested the latter not to lose sight of him until he was on the other side of the Castle gate, saying to Catchem by way of goodbye, as she stood in the postern to see him off, "Gang ye're ways hame to London, Mr. Catchem, and try to have less o' the cat and mair o' the man about ye for the time to come."

Mr. Catchem did go home to London, to find that nearly the whole of his ill-gotten gains, which he had placed in the hands of Sir John Paul, had been swallowed up in the ruin which came to all who had money in that bad man's hands, who now, after thirty years have passed away, is still wearing out his life in toil and exile, as a slight expiation not only of the wrong he has done, not only to such evil-doers as Catchem, but the wrong he did to hundreds of poor widows and orphans whose means were placed in his hands.

Catchem then tried to get into the old way of business in which he had scraped together enough to keep himself and cheat his clerk in the old time before he met Sir Richard; but the story of his doings in sending Adam to Pounder's mad-house had got abroad. His name was in the newspaper notices, N. C. Catchem, Cecil Street, Strand, in full, and those who had known him fought shy of him. They knew, to use Mr. Hopkins' graphic expression when speaking to his son-in-law, Mr. George Cox, of his first instructor in Law, "that he was a bad lot, and it was best to keep the lock-smith's fingers between their silver and him," and somehow he was unable now to find dupes as he did ten years before. Perhaps it may have been in consequence of his nose having become somewhat swollen and red, or it may have been that his clothes were poor now, and he had lost the jaunty air he used to have which imposed on people and made them fancy he was what he represented himself to be, a lawyer in good practice among the upper classes. He still haunts the old places in the Strand and the streets branching off from it; and when Mr. George Cox, who is now Factor for Lord Cranston on his Devonshire estates, comes up to London for a few days, he is sure to meet a slished, almost hatless, dissipated-looking fellow, who has the effrontery to claim acquaintance on the score of Mr. George having been his articled clerk, and to whom the good-natured clerk, forgetting the past, lends five shillings, which goes for brandy as soon as it is in the possession of the poor useless drunkard, who now lost to all feeling, has no wish left but to satisfy the cravings of his appetite for strong drink, and entertains his bar-room acquaintance with anecdotes invented for the occasion, of his old friend Sir Richard Cuninghame, and hints that before Sir Richard's death Lord Cranston, the Morton family, Sir Arthur Lindsay, and even the great Duke himself, were on the list of his acquaintances, to whose houses he was always welcome. His pot companions occasionally stared in wonder at the down-fall he had experienced, sometimes told him he lied, according to their own crudelity or the quantity of liquor they had imbibed.

We must now go back to the day on which Lady Hamilton had her last interview with Sir Richard.

Immediately upon leaving the Castle, Lady Hamilton, instead of entering her carriage, signed to her coachman to come down from his seat on the box. The man was an old and faithful servant of the family, and one who was as able to judge of the sign she went to seek, as her Ladyship herself.

"Tell Morrison to attend to the horses, and come with me, Andrews. I am going to the mausoleum of the Cuninghames."

The man did as he was desired, giving the footman strict injunctions with regard to the left hand horse, and wondering what his Lady could have to do in the vicinity of the Haddon mausoleum, followed her in silence.

On their arrival at their destination Lady Hamilton gave the key to Andrews, desiring him to open the door. This done she entered, at once finding the coffin, covered with serge, it being the only one not lowered down into the vault.

"Remove the cover of that coffin, Andrews, and try to open it. I ought to have got some instrument for the purpose before leaving the

Castle. If you cannot succeed without, you must return to procure one."

While she was yet speaking the serge pall was thrown aside and the dead coffin unscrowed, showing a leaden one of elaborate and costly make inside.

"Do you think you can open that coffin, Andrews? I fear this will be a work of time."

"No, my Lady," replied her servant, answering the latter part of her Ladyship's speech; "it will not take many minutes to open this coffin; it is Sir Robert Cuninghame's. Adam took me to see the body after it was placed in this coffin and showed me how it was to be closed. It was made to open and shut like the young ladies might open it if they would like to see their father. It was to please Miss Margaret it was made this way."

The clasps were soon undone, the lead coffin opened, and Lady Hamilton herself then removed the muslin laid across the face.

The dead man looked as if he had not been dead a day. His hands were crossed on his breast, in one of which was a piece of wall-flower, easily distinguishable as such. The dead face bore every lineament, the very expression of her husband's face as she had seen it while he lay asleep. She remembered the last time she had looked on that still, cold face, then only a few hours dead, and the sudden start it gave her then. It was a sore trial, but for the poor mother thus to meet her baby boy whom for forty-four years she had thought upon as being in the care of the angels of God. Verily, so he was; the Angels of God are round about us all the time, although the wise men of the nineteenth century know better than to believe in the cloud of witnesses; the ministering spirits sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation, whom righteous Paul, taught by the Holy Spirit, spoke and wrote of.

It was a sore trial; but she had steered her heart to go through it. She had suffered much in the long ago; the Lord had given her grace and strength then, He would do so now. Even this must be borne.

"Andrews, whose face is that?"

"It is Sir Robert Cuninghame's face, my Lady; but I know well what's passing in your mind. When I saw him lying in his coffin up at the Castle twelve years since, I thought I had never seen a face so like Sir William Hamilton's."

"Andrews, that face was never on a Cuninghame."

"Who could he be, my Lady? He's twenty years too young to be Sir William."

Lady Hamilton answered not, but lifting the right arm of the body she folded back the shirt sleeve which covered it, and behold, there was the Hamilton leaf in the thick of the arm nine or ten inches below the shoulder, a W. surrounded by dots on one side of the leaf, an H. surrounded by dots on the other, both W. and H. made by the man who now looked with bewildered eyes on the mark that was on Sir William Hamilton's heir at his birth, and the marks he himself had put to please the child, and received a severe rebuke from his master for so doing.

"My Lady," said the man with distended eyes, looking from the marks on the arm to the dead face, and in a voice almost choked with emotion, "that's little Master Willie!"

Lady Hamilton, with closed eyes, laid her face down on the dead face, so cold, so dear, overcome by contending emotions—love stronger than death—grief that would have its way—praise to God for his saving mercy in the dread past that might have been so bitter, so bitter, but that He, the Holy One of Israel, set His angel to watch the steps of her child;—and amid the tears that fell like rain she raised her face to Heaven, and with clasped hands exclaimed, "Blessed be the Lord, who hath mercy ever!"

Next day a small funeral cortège entered the gate of Haddon Castle, the foremost among whom was Lady Hamilton in her mourning coach, which had not been used since the death of her daughter, thirty-seven years before.

The lead coffin containing the body of Lady Hamilton's son was lifted out from the pine box it had been placed in by Sir Richard's orders, and put in a rosewood shell brought from Aberdeen for the purpose.

The body was brought to Incheadrew, and there lay in state for the time given to relatives to mourn their dead. A strange coming back to his home for the boy who went out to play in the woods so full of life and beauty forty-four years before, spending his life in sight of his home and knowing it not.

Are we not all doing the like, walking about in sight of our spirits' home that is so near, and knowing it not, because our eyes are hidden and we deem it so very far off, because we see it not with those eyes of flesh that are so dim, and our faith is so weak we fear to pierce through the gloom which so ensnare us and separate us from the dim beyond.

On the same day as that appointed for Sir Richard Cuninghame's funeral, Lady Hamilton's son, Sir William Hamilton, was placed in the mausoleum of his fathers. Lady Hamilton knew not it was the day of Sir Richard's funeral she had appointed for that of her son. If she had known it, she would not have had it so.

The appointed day came, and the Hall in Incheadrew Castle where the body was laid out in state was so crowded with guests from all parts of the country that the drawing-room and library had to be thrown open to receive them. The dining-rooms were laid for a hundred people, and yet the tables had to be relaid several times as the guests came pouring in.

Sir William Hamilton and his wife Rosabelle St. Clair were laid side by side with his sister Margaret Hamilton, who, but for the mercy of Him who slumbereth not nor sleepeth, and who knoweth the end from the beginning, would have been her brother's bride.

The remains of Sir Richard Cuninghame were followed to the tomb by his lawyer, his tenant, and old Adam Johnston. Everything was conducted decently and in order, yet no man shed a tear, none heaved a sigh, none sorrowed for their Lord and master who lay so lonely there, save a large Newfoundland dog, the playmate of his little dead son, who, when the so-called mourners had departed and the mausoleum door was shut, lay down on the stone step outside, refusing to be taken from the spot where he knew they had laid his master; and when the short winter day faded into twilight and the night came out with her pale light of stars, the dog rose, and looking up to the heavens with loud cries told his sorrow to the cold, reluking moon.

Adam did not perform his promise of going back to his own cottage there to spend a few weeks with his sister and her family. The old







