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THE HEARTHSTONE

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For the *Hearthstone*.
CHANGING.

BY DR. NORMAN SMITH.

I have stood beside the streamlet,
Sparkling in the light of day,
Watching how the little wavelets
Flashed one by one away,
I have listened to its music,
Echoing sweetly o'er the plain,
Till it changed to notes of sadness,
Ending in a mournful strain.

I have seen the rosy sunbeams,
Softly o'er the meadows play,
Till the gloomy shades of evening
Blotted out each golden ray,
I have loved a tender flower
Sweetly blooming by my side,
But, alas, unwisely cherished,
For it faded, drooped and died.

I have seen the form of manhood
Growing up from childhood's hour,
Full of vigor, strength and action,
Full of life and mental power,
I have seen it bowed and trembling
Like a reed before the blast,
And I've seen it cold and lifeless,
Mingling with the dust at last.

Thus we're changing, ever changing
On the shifting sands of time;
Scarcely we catch the morning echoes,
Ere we hear the evening chime,
Passing onward, swiftly onward,
Through our life's eventful day,
Till the silver cord is broken,
And we pass from earth away.

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

BY MRS. ALEXANDER ROSS.

CHAPTER VII.

"Not so long and wide the world is,
Not so rude and rough the way is,
But my wrath shall overtake you,
And my vengeance shall attain you!"

As Margaret left the room Sir Richard rang the bell, and on the appearance of the servant, ordered Adam to be sent to him.

"When was Sir William Hamilton drowned, and where?"

"Eighteen years ago," was the reply, "in the Mediterranean Sea."

"Have you got my room ready for my reception?"

"Yes sir, there is a good fire in the dressing room, and everything is arranged as far as I could, I had no key to your valise, and it is locked, but I have placed toilet requisites upon your table."

"Have breakfast at eight, let the coachman see that the carriage and harness are in good order, I will pay a visit in the forenoon."

Adam bowed low in reply, and has he descended to his own apartment said, speaking to himself, in which pastime the old man frequently indulged,

"Pay a visit; wonders will never cease, he was my master for nineteen years before he went abroad, and I never knew him to pay a visit in all that time; I always blamed the lonesome life she led for my poor Lady's death, poor thing, her eyes were red with crying half the time."

"It was well poor Sir Robert died before the old Laird came home, it would have been a changed house to him, but I dare say it will be that to us all."

He approached the winding staircase which led up to the bedrooms, and looking up continued,

"I'm afraid it will be as bad times with the poor children up there, as ever it was with their father, and Lord help them if it is, as I think it will be; them that never shed a tear. I wish some of the princes at aroo rife in story books would come and steal them both away in a carriage with flying horses; Captain Lindsay I'll never get Miss Agnes that's sure enough."

As Adam left the drawing room, Sir Richard followed him, and carefully putting the catch on the door, lay down at full length on the crimson satin sofa, examined the appointments of the room with a critical eye, the tables, sofas, and chairs were the same that he had left there when he saw it last, but the covers of all were new, and of the costliest kind, new curtains, piano, and harp, fine pictures, statues and mirrors, the last reaching from floor to ceiling.

"My money has been flying at a brisk rate; well perhaps it is as well, Isabel Douglas is a widow, and if I can only persuade her to be a wife, she can spend as she pleases, I know her taste for the beautiful, and I would not like her to see bare walls when she enters my house for the first time; she enters my house" repeated he with a deep sigh. "Oh if I were only sure that she would enter it, I would forget the past, and determine to be the Lord Bountiful of the County for all time, what has my money ever been to me; it was to gain possession of this that I was shut up like a maniac for eighteen years."

His conscience told him, that it was the hate he had fostered in the breast of the child he stole, that had shut him up, but even to himself he would not acknowledge this, not then. "But away with such thoughts, I am master



THE PANEL LEADING TO THE TOWER CELL WAS OPEN.

here again, surrounded by luxury, I would not have given to myself, and provided Isabel Douglas will only share it with me it may be doubled or tripled any day she likes."

He rose and taking from the side table a couple of silver candelabra filled with wax candles, he placed them on each side of a large mirror, and stepping back a few paces surveyed himself therein; the reflection he saw there was to him a pleasing one.

"I have to thank my jailor for giving me eighteen years instead of taking them from me, I have a better face and a stronger frame at fifty five than I had twenty years ago, my face once red and bloated, now so white and firm of flesh, will tell her that the vice she hated is dead; would to God I had kept my promise to her and given up for her sake, what I learned to hate in loneliness and misery. To think that William Hamilton has been dead all the time I was in that prison, well perhaps it is better as it is, she would most surely have spurned me then, drunkard as I was, and now I could not drink if I would, there is no fear of my breaking my vow now. Oh! that she had sufficient love for me to ask for such a vow now."

He paced the apartment with long strides, going from end to end, and ever as he approached the windows, watching the lights in distant Inchdrewer, on its rocky height, until they went out one by one, and the dark night lamps were lost in the distance.

The man was excited beyond what he had ever felt before; the causes were obvious, master in his own castle for the first time in eighteen years, come back to find the dilapidated old house he had last seen with its old fashioned faded furniture, transformed into what seemed to him almost a fairy palace. Yet above all that luxury like a plague spot in a green oasis, was the terrible prison cell where he had spent in loneliness, impotent wrath, and alas often in hunger, thirst, and cold, the best years of his manhood; and now what made his heart beat with accelerated pace, and his cheek, with its more than fifty years, burn with the blush of youth, was the knowledge that she who had been a dream to him all his life long, was now a widow, poor in comparison to his great wealth, and he had determined to try once more to win her for his

bride, although half a century had passed over her head as well as his own.

He felt no need of rest, far less sleep, and taking a taper from one of the tables in the hall, he wandered through the rooms and corridors, so well known with their old memories, yet so new and strange to him whose earliest footsteps had been taken among them; each familiar place was walked over, and looked at, all had been visited except one, he would go to the armory, but not to the chamber under the roof, no; in the state his nerves were now in, he could not go there, he opened the armory door, and looked in, only looked in, now he was there he felt he could not enter; did his eyes deceive him?—the panel leading to the tower cell was open!—how was this?—in coming out he had closed it carefully; it was no door that could open of itself, moved by something in the wall above or below,—but a panel closing, which he, knowing where to look for had difficulty in finding; it could not have been opened by Robert Cuninghame, as lay dying the night Sir Richard made his escape, no one else knew the secret of the spring.

He stood for several minutes in the doorway, half holding the candle above his head, so that he might the better pierce the darkness of the large lofty room, his eyes staring at the open panel; there was no mistake, the panel was wide open, his limbs trembled under him with fear; slamming the door of the armory, and rushing down the staircase leading to the main building, he stayed not his footsteps until within the precincts of the lower drawing room, where surrounded with light and warmth, he could reason as to what could have caused the opening of the panel.

He was now anxious to conceal the story of his life during the last eighteen years, he was well aware it would not place him in a dignified position in the eyes of his fellow men, or increase the chance of his obtaining Lady Hamilton for his wife; its being known now could not punish the jailor, as was beyond that, there was therefore every motive for concealment.

Robert Cuninghame had more than once assured him that he would never be suffered to perish from hunger, and he feared that at the last Adam had been trusted with the secret of the eastern tower; he would speak to the old

man on the subject, and bind him down to secrecy; on the morrow with light and sunshine, he would himself close the panel.

He sought his room to rest not to sleep, the morning had already begun to fill the air and woods, with the songs of birds, the hum of insects, and he lay down with half shut eyes, on his velvet curtained bed, to dream the dream of youth.

To the surprise of the twin girls, they were received by Sir Richard at breakfast, with a suavity they had not the evening previous thought him capable of exercising. This was a matter of policy on his part, he knew they were favorites with the Lady he would fain make his wife, and if he could win her to love him, he was willing to conceal or conquer if possible, the hatred he felt for the father's children.

Breakfast over, Sir Richard summoned Adam to the Library.

"Adam," he began, "I wish to know when you were last in the armory?" he put the question in the tone and manner, that would imply it was one of little moment.

Adam considered for a moment, and, then answered.

"I cannot tell you Sir, but it must have been before you went abroad; Sir Robert locked the armory after your departure, keeping the key himself, he considered the whole of the eastern tower, in an unsafe state, none of the apartments are ever used."

The answer was most satisfactory; so far, whoever left the panel open, it was not Adam.

"Were there any of the other servants more in Sir Robert's confidence than yourself?"

"Oh no," a ready and decided answer. "Under Sir Robert I ruled everything outside and inside the Castle, when absent for a day, I, in his place attended the young ladies in their walks and drives."

"Tell the coachman to get the carriage in readiness, with his best horses, and his best harness."

Adam bowed and was gone; after his departure, Sir Richard took his way to the armory; seen in the daylight it bore witness to the truth of Adam's testimony, the armory on the walls, everything in and about the place, was covered with dust and cobwebs, only from the door to the sliding panel there was a narrow

path, shewing that there at least a human foot had passed and repassed while everywhere else dust reigned supreme.

"I must have been mistaken," soliloquized he, "in the hurry of my flight I must have fancied I shut the panel, there is no other way of accounting for its being open."

With the broad daylight came a feeling of contempt for the nervous excitement which made him leave the place so quickly the previous evening, he smiled when he thought of the fear which then prevented him, not only from examining the cage, but also impelled his footsteps in leaving the armory, and gaining the inhabited part of the house.

"Strange client!" said he mentally, "that fear produced upon me, instead of making me brave in self defence, I verily believe a child could then, have again shut me up in that horrible cage."

He entered the panel staircase, and ascended to the low apartment, so long his woeful abiding place. Even before putting his foot on its floor, he beheld with dismay, the lantern which had fallen from the hands of the girls, also the food and water they had brought; there indeed was convincing proof that some one must have been in the apartment since his flight; everything else was untouched, the box with the biscuits, the foot water in the bottom of the flagon, he so often that last day tried to drink, and could not; the skins, the shepherd's plaid, the string he had made from one of the skins, and try to hang himself by; all exactly as he had last seen them. The lantern he picked up, it was such an one as was used by the grooms in visiting the stable at night; the sight of that lantern almost turned him from his purpose of going to Inchdrewer.

On the side of the cage furthest from the staircase, was a platter of dried up food, and a flagon of water. Some one else knew the secret of the cage in the eastern tower, yet who could that one be?

"I have heard!" thought he, of dying men who summoning all their strength, achieved by an almost superhuman effort in the last hour of their existence, what they could not do for days, or even weeks previous; most likely he has come to tell me, I must die of starvation, that this was the last food he could ever bring and in his dread at finding his victim gone, with the horrible conviction forced upon him that his captive was free, was now his master, would come back soon to consign him to prison walls, and hard labour for life,—his light fell from his hands, he went back to his bed to die." This explanation was the one which appeared most reasonable and suited him best, and he thought over it until he convinced himself it might be the right one.

He descended the staircase, shut the panel and closing the armory door departed.

It was with mingled feelings of hope and doubt that Sir Richard Cuninghame seated in his handsome carriage, attended by a coachman, and servant in livery approached Inchdrewer Castle, and as he was ushered into the presence of the Lady whose favor he came to seek, the latter feeling greatly preoccupied.

As he entered the drawing room where Lady Hamilton was seated, he heard a light ringing laugh he knew full well, and as he heard, his bounding pulse told him, that it had still the power to thrill his heart to its inmost core as in the old time.

The Lady was seated at a table with writing materials before her, two or three little children playing at her feet; some piquant remark made by one of whom had drawn forth the laugh, that reminded her guest so forcibly of his love.

The Lady held out her hand to him as he entered saying pleasantly, and with no more surprise in her accents than if she had seen him yesterday.

"How do you do Sir Richard Cuninghame; I am very happy to see you."

He took her offered hand, and its touch sent a second and a sharper thrill to his heart, but as he looked on the Lady, a feeling of disappointment arose, she was certainly very different from her bright youthful looking sister, whose lithe figure, and graceful movements Sir Richard expected to see in Lady Hamilton.

The Lady who half rose to greet him, would have appeared to the veriest stranger a middle aged woman, graceful and dignified to be sure; grace and dignity were the birthright of her race, and she could not lose them, but the graceful billowy motion of youth was gone for ever, in its place had come the heavy sweep of the shore bound waves.

The face was still one of great beauty, the eyes and hair had lost nothing of the lustre, by aid of which they had fascinated the young heart of Richard Cuninghame, and held it in sure keeping so many long years, but the eyes had a dreamy look, as if seeking for something they never hoped to find, and the bright hair was folded in heavy braids away under the pure white coil appropriate to widow-hood, the gauzy scarf like ends of which, fell like a veil over the black velvet dress that suited well the large figure, and dignified air of the wearer, the lily on her face was fair as in her youth, but it was the white of alabaster, not of a flower, the rose leaf had fled for ever.

"Pray be seated!" continued the Lady in tones of sure welcome, which at once reassured and gave confidence to her guest. "I was so pleased when Lady Morton informed me of your arrival, so well timed and so unexpected; your grandchildren are sweet as well as beautiful

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girls, and will I am sure make your home a happy one."

Sir Richard replied with the suavity, which to him became a second nature, in the presence of Lady Hamilton, and he thanked her for the kindness she had shown to the twin girls whom he chose to denominate children; he by no means cared for the patriarchal character of Grandfather.

"You have no doubt seen and learned so much in your long wanderings, that you will make us poor stay at home court your society, in order that we may enjoy at second hand, the wonders you have seen in flood and field."

Here was the opportunity he had sought, but the children were in the room, and if they had not been, his tongue clove to the roof of his mouth; as she spoke and smiled she was every moment becoming more and more like the Isabel Douglas he so loved and longed to see, and with the likeness to her old self, came the conviction, stinging like a barbed arrow, that with him she would never wed.

"I don't know," continued the Lady, "if your daughter Agnes has had time to tell you, that she is with the approval of her father, the affianced bride of Arthur Lindsay, whom you saw with my sister last night at Haddon Castle, he has only his sword, no land nor gold, but he is of noble blood, good and true."

"No," replied Sir Richard, "I was not aware of any such engagement, and to tell the truth, I look upon such an arrangement, as very premature, the girl is a mere child, she has only passed her fifteenth year by a few months, her judgment is not sufficiently formed to enable her to decide upon the man who is to make or mar her happiness for life."

"You are right so far," returned Lady Hamilton, "yet I have known a marriage formed at even that early age a most blessed one, as she spoke her dark eyelashes fell on her cheek now whitened to marble, while her lips became scarlet, and trembled with ill suppressed emotion."

"If they are sincerely attached to each other," replied the gentleman, "it will be no punishment for them to wait a year or two; unless something unlooked for occurs, I will of course sanction an engagement approved by her father; as to his means, that is a matter of little consequence; Agnes will have enough for both."

The glance of Lady Hamilton's eye, and her flashing cheek told him, that his last remarks had made a favourable impression on his hearer, they were alone, he would follow it up, her white cheek, her dreamy eyes seemed to tell him he would be unsuccessful, but he must try, it was a quest for the happiness he had once thrown away, and which he would now give worlds if they were his, to possess once more.

Alas, alas, on her fiat was hanging the happiness or misery of more than one.

He approached the low fanteuil where she sat, and leaning on the velvet covered mantel shelf, looked down on her with eyes so full of love and admiration, that had she but raised her eyes, his tale was told without speech.

Sir Richard Cuninghame was a handsome man for his age, gentlemanly, even courtly withal, and that he could woo and win, Isabel Douglas need not be told.

"Lady Hamilton," said he, "will you for one half hour accord to me the liberty to call you by your Christian name?"

"No, Sir Richard," was the quick reply. "To what end would old people like you and I address each other as we did in our childhood. The name William Hamilton gave me when I was his bride is the sweetest I have ever known, dear to ear and heart. There are troubled waters flowing round my Christian name, young as I was when I resigned it, that never came near the name of Hamilton. Call me by that name; I have borne it for nearly forty years."

"Fool that he was not to have stopped there; but he was a gold worshipper, and he read the heart of the pure woman before him from his own standpoint."

"Perhaps I am telling you what you already know, when I say that within the last thirty years my lands have stretched their border down to the sea; the gold I could count by hundreds previous to my uncle's, Sir John Baldwin's, death, I can count by thousands now; one of the finest houses in Aberdeen is mine by the same inheritance for nineteen years back, and I am able to furnish it in velvet and gold, should she whom I love desire it so; that my old habits are all gone, I need only ask you to look on my face and frame."

As he spoke, he bent over her, and endeavoured to take her hand in his; but instantly her chair was pushed back, and her hands crossed on her bosom; his courage nearly failed him, but again he thought of his wealth, his lands and gold, he was reassured and he went on.

"Lady Hamilton, I have come here for the second time, to ask you to be mistress of Haddon Castle, to spend my gold for me. It will be all your own; you can do what seemeth good to you with it all, no one to say, 'What doest thou?'"

She never looked for this, and for the moment she was so astonished she could not answer.

Her silence seemed to him the consent he would give soul and body to buy, and putting his hand on her shoulder, so lightly as scarcely to touch it, and yet that light touch thrilled to his very heart, he said in a voice tremulous with emotion:

"Isabel, I have loved you with an undying love since I was sixteen years old, I have kissed the moss you sat upon, embraced the tree you leant against, the fiend who watches for the souls of men alone made me the wretch you cast from you; while I plighted my vows to another, your image came between me, and my bride at God's Altar, and in those eighteen years men thought me dead, I sat in solitude and wept, thinking and dreaming alone of Isabel. I have not intruded too early on your sorrow; you have had eighteen long years to mourn your dead. You can make me a good man or a fiend, a blessing or a curse."

He stopped speaking, and knelt with clasped hands before her, awaiting the words which were to speak his doom.

"Richard Cuninghame, your words have made me a more sorrowful woman than ever I thought to be in this world again; but I could not marry you were you to offer me the wealth of the Indies; I love you from my heart in the deep green forest of Invermalden, my tears falling down like rain; none but my Guardian Angel and myself knows what it cost me in my early childhood ere I was myself again, and He to whom the record of my tears was brought gave me William Hamilton in your stead. I

loved him in life, I love him in death; we have never parted, and we never shall. William Hamilton is as verily my husband to-day this very hour, as he was when he last clasped my hand in his, I could not, if I would, be your wife."

It was answered, he rose to his feet, and drawing himself up to his full height, he stood for several seconds looking down upon her with a withering stare, as if he would annihilate her where she sat; she saw, and met his gaze with a feeling half sorrow, half surprise.

"Lady Hamilton, farewell, when we meet again, you will sue to me, and I shall do even as I have been done by."

He was gone, and the gentle Lady he left retired to her dormitory to give thanks and praise to God, who in her youth had saved her from becoming the wife of Richard Cuninghame; and to pray earnestly for the poor man who never prayed for himself.

The glory of the setting sun shone on mountain peak and rocky height around the old Castle, shining on the tree tops like burnished gold, and lighting up the tall, spire of the mausoleum where the forefathers of Sir William Hamilton slept the quiet sleep God gives to the holy dead; Margaret Hamilton was laid there in her young beauty, and it was her mother's wont at sunset to go out on the balcony attached to her boudoir to look at the place where her dead child lay, ere the shades of evening had wrapt it round.

The evening of the day on which Sir Richard Cuninghame paid her his last visit she sought the balcony at the usual hour, but her thoughts were concentrated on her husband, and looking towards the mausoleum her feelings shaped themselves into words, as if he who slept so soundly beneath the waves of the Mediterranean Sea could hear her and comprehend what she said while she stood gazing on the burial place of his forefathers.

"No, William Hamilton, not to be Queen of England would I forego my right to clasp your hand, and touch your hair in the high heavens, far better I love your memory, your sea-wet hair, than Sir Richard Cuninghame and all his lands as they stretch from the hills to the sea; nay more, far more, the sweet memory of thee and thine I love better, better far, than all my kith and kin."

She leaned on the balustrade, and pressed her hands on her eyes, as if she would shut out the dazzling glory of the setting sun, the hours passed on, but she knew it not; Isabel Douglas was a happy girl again, wandering under the spreading saugh trees on the shore of Loch Lomond, her hands clasped in handsome William Hamilton's, while with downcast eyes she listened to the sweet old words that are new every time they are spoken, she heard the ripple of the waters as they came low and high on the golden sands at her feet, and her lover's voice went out on the silent air soft and clear.

"I have neither holdings or land in store to give my love, but Isabel, you shall share with me in my father's halls what my fathers have shared with their loves. I cannot deck thee with gems of pomp and pride, but you shall wear in your own bright hair the bluebell on the mountain top, and your step on the hill shall be as stately and free as the bride of a chieftain's should."

A hand laid on her arm, and Lady Morton's voice pronouncing the word "Isabel" recalled her to her present world; she raised her eyes; the stars were coming out in the dark sky.

(To be continued.)

CASTAWAY.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "BLACK SHEEP," "WRECKED IN PORT," &c., &c.

BOOK III.

CHAPTER XIV.

CORNERED.

Things were very bad indeed in the City. Discount was almost as impossible as credit, and the number of iron safes that were pointed at as containing "securities, sir, worth five-and-twenty thousand pounds, upon which, I give you my word, I cannot raise five hundred," was incredible. The City correspondents of the various journals were unanimous in stating that the money-market had a "downward tendency." Consols were lower than they had been within ten years; French rentes were nowhere; and at the Turkish and Egyptian serais, in which a good deal of light and innocent gambling had recently taken place, men shook their heads ominously. The sensation of the week had been the collapse of the Great Discount Company, which two years before had been formed, on the ill-austed liability principle of the old-fashioned house of Reddie and Wryneux, a firm whose word was at any time good for a million. Whether old Mr. Reddie quietly withdrew all his money as soon as the new company was in working order, instead of leaving it, as he promised; whether young Mr. Wryneux not merely drew out his own money, but a great quantity belonging to other people; whether it was through simple mismanagement or base fraud, no one knew, but the company came to a smash, and hundreds of families were plunged into ruin.

Then the panic began in earnest. When people unconnected with the City heard that the house of Reddie and Wryneux no more ever spoke of the company) had failed, they almost began to doubt the stability of the Bank of England. Everybody wanted to withdraw everything from anywhere where it might be deposited. There were "runs" on private banks which had stood the test of the various influences on the money-market during a century, and which now nobly responded to the call; the partners sitting in conclave in the private parlour, and calmly smiling at the eagerness of the mad crowd of customers, who were waving their cheques at the counter. All the telegraph clerks in the country were sending off messages commencing with the words, "Sell at once," and the stock-brokers were nearly worried out of their lives by the multiplicity of the commissions thus forced upon them.

In this state of affairs one would have imagined that the shareholders and others interested in the success of the Terra del Fuegos mine would have felt some little disquietude; doubtless they did; but any of them taking the trouble to make a journey into the City would have had their speculations speedily set at rest, for the forty-eight hours' notice which Garcia had guaranteed to his principals had expired, and arriving at the office the next morning the gentlemanly clerks found on the closed shutters a document, in Mr. Gillman's remarkably neat penmanship, informing the world that "business was temporarily suspended," and referring inquisitive applicants to some accountants' office close by. The gentlemanly clerks were not very much surprised at what they learned; they had been to a certain extent behind the scenes, and were always anticipating some catastrophe; they knew moreover that when the panic was ended they would have little difficulty in getting as good and more reliable situations, and their untroubled holiday.

Not so the public, who came down with a swoop directly the news got wind, and ransacked about the doors, and read the written placard over and over again, and consulted with other in the hopes of hitting upon some method of regaining a portion of the money, out of which, as they one and all fiercely declared, they had been swindled. Some of them were weak enough to go off to the accountants' office indicated on placard, where they found themselves confronted by two very pert clerks, who told them all they knew of the business was, that the books of the company had been handed over to them for inspection, and that a report would be issued as soon as the necessary investigation had been made; they denied all personal knowledge of the directors or officers of the company, and said, as was the truth, that was the first time in which their firm had ever been employed in matters relating to the Terra del Fuegos mine. So the public departed in a crest-fallen condition from the accountants' chambers and went back and loafed about in front of the offices again, deriving some feeble comfort from talking to fresh-comers, and explaining to them the hopeless state of the investment in which they had a common interest.

But the other directors, who, whatever doubt they may have felt as to the continuance of the prosperity of the company, had risked their capital not merely for the sake of the high interest which it produced, but with the firm conviction, that long before the first rumblings of the approaching earth-quake were generally felt, they would have such warnings as would enable them to withdraw their ventures in safety, were wild with rage and disappointment. How the news had spread, in what mysterious fashion the story cross had been sent round, no one could tell; but by twelve o'clock several of the men, whose names had been prominent on the direction of the Terra del Fuegos mine, were met together in the board-room of the Friendly Grasp Insurance Office, the use of which had been temporarily accorded to them by the actuary, to whom most of them were personally known. There was Lord Hallowbury, red-headed, and red-faced, chuckling, stammering, and uttering interjectional outbursts, but yet with a certain air of breeding about him which did not fail to tell, even on his excited colleagues; there was the Honourable Pounce Dossator, for the first time since his marriage with Miss Swanik, grateful that her trustees had invested her money in the product of a capital fund, and left him only a few thousands to look after; there was Sir Canock Chase, not attending much to what was going on, but busied in reading a report from his steward, hinting at the existence of more coal on his Staffordshire property; and there, too, were Mr. Bolckhoff and Mr. Parkinson, who beyond all others, were savage at the turn which affairs had taken—the former sat at the long board-table, white with rage and silent, apparently immersed in certain calculations which he was making on the sheet of blotting-paper before him, while the latter strode up and down the room, speaking now to one man then to another, and from time to time using such language as his view never could have expected would have issued from the lips of that meek and virtuous churchwarden.

"Well, gentlemen," at last said Sir Canock Chase, having finished the report, and deriving some gleam of satisfaction therefrom, "it is no use wasting any more time in these desultory discussions; the question is, can anything be done? If so, let us decide what it is to be; if not, let us clear out of this, as I imagine we all of us have plenty of other things to attend to."

"We must put a bold face on the matter," said Mr. Dossator, whose stake was small, and whose income was good; "we must stand to our guns."

"Stand to our guns!" cried Mr. Bolckhoff, looking off the blotting-paper, and taking his dirty fingers out of his mouth and waving them in the air. "How can I stand to my gun out of the thousand pounds with which I have been robbed?"

"Then your gun was—ho, he—a ten thousand pounder, Bolckhoff?" chuckled Lord Hallowbury.

"Vere is de chairman? vere is de general manager?" cried Mr. Bolckhoff, with more gesticulation.

"If you knew that, Mr. Bolckhoff," said Mr. Dossator, "you might have a chance of getting back a portion of your ten thousand pounds. Mr. Parkinson, you seem to have taken the trouble to make inquiries in this matter; there is no doubt, I suppose, that Delahole and Vane have levanted?"

"About Delahole not the slightest in the world," hissed Parkinson from between his gleaming teeth. "I went round to his rooms in Penally this morning, directly I heard this news. The hall-porter at the chambers told me that Mr. Delahole had gone away in a cab last night, taking two portmanteaus with him. He took no servants, but went alone. The cabman was directed to drive to King's Cross, but that was, of course, merely a blind; no doubt by this time," snarled Mr. Parkinson, dashing his hand upon the mantelpiece against which he was leaning, "he is safe across the Channel, with our plunder in his trunk."

"Do you think he has carried off much?" asked Sir Canock Chase.

"Everything that he could lay his hands on," replied Parkinson.

Mr. Bolckhoff uttered a loud groan and buried his dirty fingers in his stubby grey hair.

"When I say everything," said Parkinson, not heeding the interruption, "I mean everything that is at the same time valuable and portable. His rooms—I made an excuse to go up there to write a letter—are in much their usual state, and on inquiry at his stables, I found that his brogians and horses are still there; though we shall doubtless discover that they have been made away with for their full value. But, by what I learn from two or three brokers who were employed by him, he must have sold out every scrap he held in every company with which he was connected, and realised the lot."

"But if our dear Continent man muss den Palmet telegraphiren und hef ihm oute and send back," said Mr. Bolckhoff, nodding his head vehemently.

"Ah, to be sure!" said Lord Hallowbury, "one could send after him by the 'Blackie,' don't you know? and that sort of thing."

of men, and would be the less scrupulous if provoked. Don't you think we had better leave him alone?"

"Certainly, most decidedly," said Sir Canock Chase, adding in muttered tones, as he looked across the table at Mr. Bolckhoff, "Dum stoupid foreigner!" With both of which sentiments the company assembled seemed generally to agree.

But Mr. Bolckhoff was not to be put down by clamour. "But of Fano," he cried, "you have told me nichts of Fano?"

"Mr. Fano left London three days ago," said Mr. Parkinson. "It was stated at the last board meeting that he required a few days' absence, and so far everything was regular. It was understood that he was going into the country on business connected with his marriage."

"Ach Gott! dat will now be durschgefallen," cried Mr. Bolckhoff. "Ven Fano had made die Penolden seiner frau, then could I my lost money have picked out of her fortune?"

"That's a contingency that is now scarcely likely to occur, Mr. Bolckhoff," said Parkinson. "When Vane hears the news of the smash here, he will doubtless postpone his marriage until he has settled his affairs in such a way as to render Mrs. Bendixen's fortune unavailable to his creditors. I went to his rooms too, but I found he had not been back since he originally started. It is probable, therefore, that the principal assets were the relations between him and the chairman, our friend Mr. Delahole kept him in ignorance of the impending smash."

When Philip Vane found that Sir Geoffrey Heriot, whom he had hitherto looked upon as likely to recover speedily from the attack made upon him, was actually dead, when the sudden thought shot through his brain that he was a murderer, the shock was too much for him, and as we have seen, he fell senseless, coming to himself only to find that his crime was shrewdly suspected by Delahole, and to hear the few short bitter phrases in which his quondam accomplice severed the connection between them, and expressed his regret at the deed which had been committed. Raising himself on his arm, Vane made an impotent attempt to deny Mr. Delahole's departure, to implore him to be silent and secret, and to listen to such feeble explanation as could be offered; but his voice failed him, and ere he could renew the effort, he heard the slamming of the door, and knew that he was alone.

Alone! and yet not alone. Rising to his feet, and staggering to a chair, Philip Vane saw before him the pallid cheeks and blood-stained features of the old man; saw the eyes closing, and the thin wiry figure slipping from his grasp; heard again the moan, the last sound he had heard in that accursed place. He tried to shut it all out from him, but it rose persistently before his view. He started from his seat, and attempted to proceed with the packing of his portmanteau, but found himself ever and anon pausing in the midst of his work, and recalling some incident or occurrence of the previous twenty-four hours. The mud on his trousers and boots, which Delahole had noticed—he must have got that in crossing the plantation and the lawn. The lawn! He sprang up in guilty terror as he reflected that, with the coming morning light, the track of his footmarks across the lawn would be revealed. The boots and trousers must be destroyed; he would take them with him in his flight, and get rid of them on the first opportunity. In his flight! whither was that flight to be directed? His plans must be all changed now; the necessity for immediate escape was implicitly more urgent than it had been before, and the chances of obtaining funds less possible. He had relied on obtaining a temporary loan from Delahole, but that, of course, was no longer to be thought of, and the funds which he had at command were barely sufficient for his immediate wants.

Nevertheless he must fly, and at once. The dawn light showed him that a new day had begun, before the end of which the murder would probably have been fully discussed, all evidence possible to bear upon it duly sifted, suspicion rightly or wrongly directed, and all the machinery of justice for the detection and the arrest of the criminal set in motion. The problem of his fate would be solved by the next day-dawn; hours; if before they had passed away he could contrive—following the route indicated by Delahole—to be well on the road to Bonicieux, with Spain, his ultimate destination, almost within his reach, he was saved. If not—What is that noise in his ears, as of tumbling table and smashing glass? There it all floats before him again; the book-covered walls, the large easy-chair, the shaded lamp, and the fragile figure with the blood-stained brow. Will it never cease to haunt him? It fades—it has gone.

Now he can bring himself once more to think what steps it is absolutely necessary he should take at once. Money; he must have money; and he must divert his mind of all this unreal fantasy, which from time to time surges up into it; he must shut out that horrible vision, which from time to time unmans him, and must make use of that common sense on which he has hitherto relied, and which has never yet failed him when anything of real importance was to be brought about. Money, where to get money for his immediate wants, that must be his first determination. Now if he were only confident of his power over Mrs. Bendixen, the course was clear. The time at which a clue to the identification of Sir Geoffrey's murderer might be given would depend entirely on Madge; and if he judged her rightly, he was tolerably safe in her hands. The recollection of the tie still existing between them; the remembrance of the old days, now seemed so far distant, and which he knew—for his wife had often told him so—were surrounded by a halo of romance in her eyes; more than all, as he thought her horror while denouncing the murderer, to have at the same time to proclaim him as her husband—for all these reasons her life would be saved. No one could tell whether the man who had sprung past her and hurried her to the ground, and from what he knew of Madge, she was just the woman to avail herself of such a plea as this, and to leave the direction of suspicion to other circumstances. There was no other evidence which he need fear, save Madge. His visit to Springside was entirely unknown, and the fact of the proximate smashing-up of the Terra del Fuegos Mining Company, just announced to him by Delahole, instead of being, as it would have been at any other time, a source of rage and lamentation, was regarded by him as rather advantageous than otherwise, inasmuch as it provided a sufficient excuse for the immediate flight which was absolutely necessary.

Now as to his power over Mrs. Bendixen. From what he knew, he believed it to be sufficient to induce her to brave all the frowns of society, and to run away with him, provided he had sufficient excuse for asking her to consent to such a step. That excuse again he finds in the ruin of the mine. If he could only see her it would not be difficult to tell her a previously planned story, in which he could represent himself as the victim of misplaced confidence in Delahole, and by which her sympathies could be aroused. That once done, the rest was tolerably easy. He knew Mrs. Bendixen's jealous, passionate nature, and had little

doubt about being able to mould it to his will; but to achieve that result he must see her, and there was the difficulty. But one idea occurred to him. He must leave town at once by the very first train which would take him to Dover, and there was no reason why she should not come to him there, and give him an interview before he started for France. If he could induce her to do this, he relied upon himself for carrying out all that he desired.

He finished packing his portmanteau, in which he placed the trousers and boots which he had worn on the previous evening, and wrapping his dressing-gown round him, seated himself at the writing-table. Instantly, between him and the paper which he placed before him, rose the dead figure of the old man as he had just been seen in life, and it required an steady nerve to keep himself in the chair and steadily and doggedly go through his appointed task. Even then his writing was weak and trilling, and nothing like his ordinary firm round hand. He noticed this, but thought it not inconsistent with the anxiety under which he had explained to his correspondent he was suffering, and which induced him to implore her to come to Dover by the first train after the receipt of the note, and to meet him on the pier. When he had sealed this letter, he walked to the window and threw open the shutters. It was already morning; the outlines of the opposite houses stood out grey and dim in the early light, and the black London sparrows were twittering blithely on the covered way. He had ascertained that the first train for Dover left soon after six, and had made up his mind to go by that. One starting a little later, it is true, would have reached Dover sooner; but Vane's chief anxiety was to be out of London, and though he might linger on the road, he would be tolerably safe from recognition. Looking at his watch he found that he would not have too much time to get to the station; and after a little deliberation as to whether he should or should not enlist the services of the gate-porter to carry his portmanteau, he determined to do so, and walking out, roused that functionary from his slumbers, and brought him to the street. The man seemed half asleep, but brightened up sufficiently to drink a glass of spirits which Vane presented to him, and then bore off the portmanteau on his shoulders. The one which was making the Piccadilly pavement echo with its horse's feet was then secured, and in it Vane drove off to the railway.

When he arrived at the station he alighted from the cab, but before dismissing the driver he handed him the letter which he had written to Mrs. Bendixen, and giving a handsome gratuity, bade him take it at once to its address. He was hurrying into the booking-office, when he found the way temporarily blocked by a little procession of men, who were conveying huge bundles of newspapers from the ponderous red carts, which they had hurried to the starting point. The newspapers, it he had forgotten them, by this time the story of the murder must have arrived in town, and these newspapers were about to spread it broadcast through the country and the world; what was known about it, what was conjectured, it was all important that he should know, and yet he felt half afraid to satisfy himself.

He took his ticket, and made his way through the crowd of passengers—who were mostly of the poorer class, for the train was tardy and cheap—to the book-stall. The bundles of newspapers had already arrived there, and the smart young men behind the counter were opening and sorting them and slipping them down with refreshing vigour. An Vane approached, he saw one of those young men select two or three contents-placards from one of the bundles, and after shaking them out and perusing them himself, proceeded to hang them up in front of the counter. "Murder at Springside!" they were in large type, it ought Philip Vane's eyes instantly. He saw nothing else; the rest of the bill was a blank to him. "Murder at Springside!"—why were the letters printed in red, why—Steady! Now his head was reeling, and unless he could put more control over himself he was lost.

He steadied himself with an effort, walked to the stall and purchased a newspaper, which he placed in his pocket, and hurried to the train. There was no difficulty in securing a first-class carriage to himself, and hiding the guard lock the door, he threw himself into one of the furthest seats, and drawing his travelling cap over his eyes, buried his face in the upturned collar of his coat, and did not move until the train was fairly in motion; then he took the paper from his pocket, shook it open with trembling hands, and soon read as follows:

"Murder at Springside (by telegraph).—Sir Geoffrey Heriot, K.C.B., was murdered last night at his residence, Whiteroot, near this city. The person apprehended and charged with the commission of the crime is a discarded son of the deceased gentleman, who, it is stated, has been heard to vow vengeance on his father. Circumstantial evidence against him is very strong. Greatest excitement prevails in the city and the neighbourhood."

"My luck again!" cried Vane, bringing his hand down upon the arm of the carriage. "The arrest of this man gives me another twenty-four hours to the good, and when I have once seen Esther, and arranged with her to join me abroad, I may stomp my fingers at them." The person apprehended and charged with the commission of the crime? by Jove, then, Madge must be loyal to me after all, or she would have denounced me at once, and never have allowed this man—whoever he may be—to be taken into custody."

He threw the paper down, and for the rest of the journey remained buried in thought. The train lolled along, stopping at every little station, where porters came up and roared unreluctantly, where Jolly Kentish yeomen, and red-checked Kentish lasses, looked in through the window at the solitary traveller, muffled in his wraps, who never looked up or took heed of aught that was passing around him. Now Folkestone, and then glimpses of the sea, the sun a great red globe of fire, shining down upon it. Now Dover, and Philip Vane has his portmanteau taken to the cloak-room; for he has been reflecting during the journey, and decided, as he cannot cross over till the night boat, and as it is essential that he should not be seen at the Lord Wuxton, or any other of the places in the town where he is known, he must loiter about until the time for his interview with Mrs. Bendixen on the pier, and afterwards get some refreshment at a third-rate tavern.

Three hours at least must elapse before Mrs. Bendixen could arrive at Dover, even if she rose immediately on the receipt of her letter, and started by the next train; three long hours to be got through somehow. Under such circumstances he could have employed them well enough; he could have found friends staying at the hotels, could have watched the arrival and departure of the boats, or amused himself in a thousand ways. But now he must keep out of the chance of observation, and notwithstanding the comparative security which he felt since reading the newspaper paragraph, that horrible scene kept ever rising before his mind. He walked out to River—a pretty little village in the neighbourhood, which he recollected having visited with a pleasant party years before. Jack into Dover, and on to the heights, whence

he saw a light thin vapour, like a filmy veil, rise from the surface of the sea, and gradually approach the town, which it finally enveloped, completely hiding it from his view. Back into the town again, where the streets were tolerably empty, the promenaders having been driven in by the damp mist. There was a small knot, however, collected before a window in the high-street. Philip Vane, looking up, saw that it was a newspaper office, and that the people were reading copies of the latest telegrams, written on flimsy paper, and stuck in the window. There were two or three slips side by side: mechanically he ran his eyes over them—the state of the money-market and the price of stocks, the dissolution of the Spanish Cortes, the resignation of the Austrian Premier, the verdict and damages in a breach-of-promise case. What is this on the last sheet, which evidently has the greatest attraction for the bystanders? Philip Vane pushes among them and reads:

"The Springside Murder.—Strong rumours are prevalent of testimony conclusive as to the innocence of accused. Mr. L. Moss is here, engaged for the defence. The housekeeper has recovered, and will give evidence.

As Philip Vane's eyes lighted on these last words, the writing became indistinct; he reeled heavily to one side, and would have fallen, but for the strong arm of a friendly boatman, who might hold of him, propped him up, and asked him what was the matter. Philip Vane muttered something—that he was not well, that the mist had affected him.

"No harm in that, master," said the boatman, "it is but a sea fog; gets down your throat and makes all damp and uncomfortable, but no real harm in it. Coming on thick though now, ain't it? Won't be able to see your hands before your face soon—getting pretty dark, that it is; and yet believe three mile out at sea it is as clear as noon-day."

"Let us clear it out of our throats with a dram," said Vane, for he felt the necessity of some such support; and he and the boatman went into the nearest tavern, and swallowed each a glass of brandy.

When they came out the boatman made his companion good-bye, avowing that the darkness of the fog had spoiled any chance of his getting a job, and that he should go home; while Vane made his way towards the pier. In the broad open space before him, just by the commencement of the pier, the air was lighter, and it seemed as though the mist were clearing off; this effect, however, was but momentary, and as Vane ascended the steps a black mass of vapour, thicker and denser than ever, came stealing silently from the sea like a moving wall.

The half-dozen promenaders who had been tempted out again by the momentary gleam of sunshine, and were now hurrying back, gazed with curiosity at the man about to face such weather, and some of the young ladies uttered as Philip passed. Black and blacker still. He heard the rough voice of the coast-guardman, addressing him as "mate," and bid him be careful how he stepped, but he could not distinguish his frame. Below him he heard the voices of two or three sailors in the steamer alongside the pier, and could just make out the outline of their middle-box and their funnel; still he pressed on.

"The housekeeper has recovered and will give evidence." That must be Mudge, he thought, that must be the position she was filling at Wheateroff, that was how she was brought into frequent communication with Drage, the parson. "Would recover and give evidence." Recover! then she must have been ill, or hurt, or frightened, and that was how the dead man's son had been given into custody unknown to her. "Would give evidence!" That connected with the rumour of testimony to establish the innocence of the accused, means that Mudge will state what she was, and give the name of the man whom she recognized as the murderer. No time to be lost, then. This interview with Esther Bendken once rightly settled—What's that? A huge block of stone, an iron crane, a windlass and—gently now, this must be the end of the pier where the works are yet in progress. Dark just here; let him creep along the side of the wall, let him—The next instant he had caught his foot and stumbled, and was fighting with the calm placid water below. He was swimming, and coming to the surface again, had but little fear; three strokes brought him to the great wall of masonry sunk in the sea, but it was cold, and smooth, and slippery, with shining weeds which broke away under his hands. No chance for hand-hold or foot-hold either, no power of seeing aught more than half-dozen feet in front of him. He shouted, but his voice fell flat and muffled on the heavy air, and he knew that his shouts could not be heard. He struggled again, but he was overweighed with his clothes, and his strength was failing. Let him keep his head now and make one more trial; again the cold smooth wall and the trailing yielding seaweed; then a conviction of the impossibility to fight much more, a few struggles, and one piercing cry.

CHAPTER XIV

AT LAST.

Two months have elapsed since the date of the preceding last recorded, and the newspapers, for lack of something more exciting, have begun to chronicle the movements of the barometer, and the prospects of a severe winter. If, however, throughout England the elements were as it is, Torrey's bright sun & morning, the weather prophets would be considerably out in their calculations, and the disappointment of the school-boys and the outlaws, who were looking forward to a three weeks' skating season, would be intense, for here the air is soft and balmy, the sun bright and hot—so hot, that the gentleman toiling slowly up the hill stops just opposite the club, and unbuttons his long great-coat, and lifts his hat to let the sea-breeze cool his forehead. Then reinvigorated, he proceeds, though his step is still slow, and his breathing somewhat laboured; his destination is, however, close at hand. Through the trim and pretty garden he approaches a willow, and a young lady, who has been apparently watching for his arrival from the window, meets him at the hall with outstretched hands, and with a face bright with pleasure.

"You are come at last, Mr. Drage," she said. "You may be certain I come as soon as I could," said the rector, bending down, and kissing her forehead; "but it took some time to settle my father's affairs, and put matters in train for disposing of his share of the business to his partner. However, all that required my personal superintendence is now at an end, and I have escaped from London. And Margaret?"

"Still progressing slowly, but surely. You will find her greatly changed in appearance, dear Mr. Drage; she is still very weak and very thin, but she has improved wonderfully since she came to this place, and day by day we see a happy difference in her."

"You told me in your letter that she had made no allusion to anything that occurred during that dreadful time."

"Nor has she up to this moment. She is perfectly tranquil, and apparently not unhappy,

speaks frequently of Gerald, and seems anxious that we should be married as soon as possible; but sometimes she will lie for hours without speaking, and when I steal quietly up to her, I find the traces of tears upon her cheeks."

"Poor dear Margaret! She knows I am coming?"

"Oh, yes; and has been expecting you very anxiously. If you like I will take you to her now."

Mr. Drage left his hat and coat in the pretty little hall where this conversation took place, and followed Rose Pierpoint into the drawing-room. On a couch before the window overlooking the sea lay Mudge, looking very pale and very delicate, but, as the rector thought, wonderfully beautiful, looking, as the rector also thought, more like a pictured saint than a human being; with her long brown hair hanging over her shoulders, and her white hands clasped in front of her. Her eyes were closed, and she did not open them until Rose said, "Mudge, darling, here is our best friend!" then she looked up, and a bright burning flush overspread her face, as she partially raised herself on one arm, and stretched out the other hand. The rector took the hand, and lifted it to his lips, dropping into the easy-chair placed by the sofa as Rose left the room.

Margaret was the first to speak. "Do you find me much changed?" she said.

"No," said the rector brightly, "nothing like so much as I had anticipated. You have had a severe illness, and you are still very weak, but your eyes are bright, and your voice is clear, as it was in the old days."

"The old days," echoed Mudge, "how far off they seem! I part and parcel of another life almost, so indistinct are they to me. Do you know that up to this hour my ideas of what happened at that fearful time are dim and blurred? Do you know that I have asked no one, not even Gerald, not even Rose, for any details of those events? Do you know why I have been so silent?"

"The rector bent his head. "Because," she continued, "I was waiting for you, to whom I have given my utmost confidence, to tell me all that had occurred. I could not trust myself to talk on the subject with them; I can with you."

"Margaret," said the rector, gently, "you have just allowed that you are still very weak; don't you think that any conversation of this kind had better be postponed?"

"Not for one moment," she said; "I am strong enough to hear anything, and shall merely be restive and uneasy until I know how much of what is constantly recurring in my mind is true, and how much false. Tell me, then, at once. I remember nothing after fainting in the court. 'Stay,' she said, seeing him hesitate, "you fear to distress me. But I already know that Philip Vane is dead. Did he die by his own hand?"

"That is not positively known," said the rector, but it is believed that he accidentally fell from the pier at Dover. The body was found two days afterwards off St. Margaret's, and was recognized as that of a man who had left a portmanteau in the cloak-room at the railway. On being opened the portmanteau was found to contain a shirt with blood-stained wrists, and heavily-matted trowsers and boots; the latter corresponding exactly with the foot-marks on Wheateroff's lawn. Further inquiry proved that he had been in Springside on that dreadful day, having actually called at my house and spoken to my servant; and all these circumstances, corroborated with your evidence, left no doubt on the minds of the magistrates, who discharged Mr. Heriot; while the coroner's jury brought in a verdict of wilful murder against Philip Vane. You are distressed, Margaret, I had better stop?"

"No; pray go on. And Gerald was liberated at once?"

"Not merely liberated, but became the idol of the hour. The revulsion of popular feeling was extraordinary. Nothing, however, not even his restoration to Rose's arms, I think, gave him so much joy as my discovery of a letter amongst poor Sir Geoffrey's papers, written two days before his death, a letter addressed to George, in which he confessed his harsh treatment of him, and implored him to return to his position and his home. You are crying? Margaret?"

"They are tears of joy, dear friend. I had no idea that letter had been written, though Sir Geoffrey had spoken of his intention of writing it. Thank God he lived to carry that intention into effect. And Gerald—George—is now happy?"

"Intensely happy. I know not which is the happier, he or Rose. Your illness has been the only blot on their felicity."

"I suppose they will be married at once?" asked Mudge.

"Now that you are convalescent, there is no occasion for any further delay. Sir Geoffrey died intestate, and Gerald is consequently sole heir. He is going to sell Wheateroff, and, for some time at least, travel abroad. So soon as you are able to bear the fatigue of the journey, they will be married and start."

"Did they purpose taking me with them?"

"They did; they have talked of it often. George Heriot was only speaking to me about it two days ago in London."

"I shall relieve them of that responsibility," said Mudge, with a smile; "they shall have no querulous invalid to destroy the happiness of their bridal tour."

"And what will you do, Margaret?"

"Wait till I am a little stronger, and then seek for a new situation."

A sharp expression of pain passed across the rector's face.

"Margaret," he said, bending over her couch, "a month ago I asked you to become my wife. There was an obstacle then, and now, more, that obstacle no longer exists. Since then I have seen you surrounded by dangers, and difficulties, and trials of no ordinary kind, and in them all your goodness and your purity have been triumphant, and rendered you more than ever dear to me. Margaret, I ask you once again: for pity's sake, do not give me the same reply."

"I—I could not go back to Springside," she said.

"Nor is there any occasion for it, dearest one. By my father's death, I am rendered more than rich. The physician, whom I consulted in London, spoke to me words of hope, more cheering than I could have imagined; he told me that, by wintering in a warm climate, my life may yet be prolonged to the ordinary span. It is for you to give me an interest in that life, Margaret. What will you do?"

"I would give my life to save yours," she whispered. "I will devote half of mine to tending yours."

She raised her eyes to his, and in them he saw the dawn of life and hope.

"My darling, my own!"

Mr. Delabole's friends at the board of the extinct Terra del Fuego Silver Mining Company did him injustice in suggesting that he had intended to mislead by giving King's Cross as the address to the cabin. He proceeded to that station, thence to Peterborough, thence, per Great Eastern Railway, to Harwich, and thence, per steamer to Rotterdam. Remaining on the Continent a few months, and baffling all attempts to track him, he finally made his way

to Havre, and then took ship for America. Mr. Delabole, being possessed of a large sum of money and great business talents, found admirable scope for financing operations in the United States, and is now one of the leading lights of Wall-street.

Mrs. Bendken never received the letter which Philip Vane addressed to her on the morning of his flight, and knew nothing of her intended husband's crime and fate until she read of both in a newspaper. The shock sobered her for a time, and she disappeared from society. There are rumours, however, that she has seen sufficient of the charms of solitude, and intends reappearing this season with an addition to her establishment, in the person of a husband—a German tenor of military appearance and a flute-like voice.

George Heriot and Rose have their home in Florence; the artistic society of which pleasantest of cities delights both of them.

Last autumn, while the Triennial Musical Festival was being held at Wexeter, a lady suddenly detached herself from a large party, which was crossing the cathedral yard, and running up to old Miss Cave, who was standing looking on in admiration, seized her by both hands and kissed her on the cheek. They had a short but animated conversation, then the lady hurried off to rejoin her friends.

"More friends among the quality, Susan?" said Susan Cave, as he leaned up to her. "Who was that lady just now—the bishop's wife or the new deacon's daughter?"

"Neither one nor the other, Sam," said old Miss Cave, half laughing, half crying. "You have seen that lady often before. She is staying at the Beauvoir now with her husband, who is a clergyman; but you recollect her when she was our leading lady, and was called Mudge Pierpoint."

THE END.

MY FIRST LECTURE.

BY MARK TWAIN.

I was home again in San Francisco without means and without employment. I turned my brain for a saving scheme of some kind, and at last a public lecture occurred to me. I sat down and wrote one in a fever of anticipation. I showed it to several friends, but they all shook their heads. They said nobody would come to hear me, and I would make a humiliating failure of it. They said that as I had never spoken in public I would break down in the delivery, anyhow. I was disconsolate now. But at last an editor slipped me on the back and told me to go on. "I said, 'Take the largest house in town, and charge a dollar a ticket.' The audacity of the proposition was alarming; it seemed fraught with uncalculated worldly wisdom, however. The proprietors of the several theatres endorsed the advice and said I might have their handsome new opera house at half price—fifty dollars. In sheer desperation I took it—an credit for sufficient reasons. In three days I did a hundred and fifty dollars' worth of printing and advertising, and was the most distressed and frightened creature on the Pacific coast. I could not sleep;—who could understand circumstances? For another week there was futurity in the line of my posters, but to me it was plaintive with a pang when I wrote it—

"Doors open at 7 1/2 o'clock. The trouble will begin at 8."

That line has done good service since. I have seen it appended to a newspaper advertisement, reminding school pupils in vocation what time next term would begin. As those three days of suspense dragged by I grew more and more unhappy. I had sold two hundred tickets among my personal friends, but I feared they might not come. My lecture, which had seemed "impossible" to me at first, now steadily grew more dreary, till not a vestige of fun remained left, and I believed that I could not bring a coffin on the stage and turn the thing into a funeral. I was so panic-stricken at last that I went to three old friends, giants in stature, cordial by nature, and stormy-voiced, and said:

"This thing is going to be a failure; the joke is in it as you do that nobody will ever see them. I would like to have you sit in the parquette and help me through."

They said they would. Then I went to the wife of a popular citizen, and said that if she was willing to do me a very great kindness, I would be glad if she and her husband would sit prominently in the left-hand stage box, where the whole house could see them. I explained that I should need help, and would turn towards her and smile, as a signal, when I had been delivered of an obscene joke—"and then," I answered, "don't wait to investigate, but respond!"

She promised. Down the street I met a man I had never seen before. He had been drinking, and was bawling with smiles and good nature. He said:

"My name is Sawyer. You don't know me, but that don't matter. I haven't got a cent, but if you know how best to get a ticket, you'd give me a ticket. Come now, what do you say?"

"Is your lung hung on a half-trigger?—that is, is it critical, or can you get it off easy?"

"My drawing inability of speech so affected him that he laughed at a specimen or two that struck me as being about the article I wanted, and I gave him a ticket, and appointed him to sit in the second circle in the centre, and be responsible for that division of the house. I gave him minute instructions about how to detect indistinct jokes, and then went away and left him chuckling over the novelty of the event."

"I had nothing on the last three eventful days but only suffered. I had advertised that on the third day the office would be opened for the sale of reserved seats. I crept down to the theatre at 4 o'clock in the afternoon to see if any sales had been made. The ticket-seller was gone, the box-office was locked up. I had to swallow suddenly, or my heart would have got out. 'No sales,' I said to myself. I might have known it. I thought of suicide, pretended illness, flight. I thought of those things in earnest, for I was very miserable and scared. But of course I had to drive them away, and prepare to meet my fate. I could not wait for half past 7; I wanted to face the horror and end the feeling of a man doomed to be hung, no doubt. I went down a back street at 6 o'clock, and entered the theatre by the back door. I stumbled my way in the dark among the ranks of canvas scenery, and stood on the stage. The house was gloomy and silent, and its emptiness depressing. I went into the dark among the scenes again, and for an hour and a half gave myself up to the horrors, wholly unconscious of everything else. Then I heard a murmur; it rose higher and higher, and ended in a crash, mingled with cheers. It made my hair rise, it was so close to me and so loud. There was a pause, and then another, presently came a third, and before I well knew what I was about I was in the middle of the stage, staring at a son of faces, bewildered by the fierce glare of lights, and quaking in every limb with a terror that seemed like to take my life away. The house was full—also and all!

The tumult in my heart, and brain, and legs continued a full minute before I could gain my

command over myself. Then I recognised the charity and the friendliness in the faces before me, and little by little my fright melted away; and I began to talk. Within three or four minutes I was comfortable and even content. My three choruses, with three auxiliaries, were on hand, in the parquette, all sitting together, all armed with bludgeons, and already to make an onslaught upon the feeblest joke that might show its head. And whenever a joke did fall, their bludgeons came down and their faces seemed to split from ear to ear. Sawyer, whose hearty countenance was seen looking rody in the centre of the second circle, took it up, and the house was carried handsomely. Inferior jokes never fired so royally before. Presently I delivered a bit of serious matter with impressive unction (it was my pet), and the audience listened with an absorbed hush that gratified me more than any applause; and as I dropped the last word of the clause, I happened to turn and catch Mrs.———'s intent and wailing eyes; my own conviction with her flushed upon me, and an exclamation I could do I smiled. She took it for the signal, and promptly delivered a mellow haunch that touched of the whole audience, and the explosion that followed was the triumph of the evening. I thought that the honest man Sawyer would choke himself; and as for the bludgeons, they performed like pile-drivers. But my poor little morsel of pathos was ruined. It was taken in good faith as an intentional joke, and the prize one of the entertainment, and I wisely let it go at that.

All the papers were kind in the morning; my appetite returned; I had abundance of money. "All's well that ends well!"

PLAYING-CARDS.

Five who sit down to a pleasant game at whist or piquet have any idea how many countries these painted bits of card have furnished amusement to the human race. Far away into the times of unwritten history the Chinese, Hindus, and Arabs were making their different combinations of a warlike game, bearing many relations to their sister chess. On thin slips of ivory, mother-of-pearl, or wood, the devices were painted for the hands of Oriental despots; no less than eight armies and eight players struggled for the victory, under the command of a king, a viceroy, and an elephant. China seems to have been the home of their invention; from thence they passed on to India about 1250, and were soon adopted by the Arabs. The Crusades in their turn learned the game of their foes; and from the number of decrees forbidding their use issued by the Church, we may believe that they were soon spread all over Europe. The first authentic mention that occurs of them is in a chronicle of Nicolas de Coveluzes, a native of Viterbo, which says: "In 1379 the game of cards was introduced at Viterbo, from the land of the Saracens, and which is called by them *malh*."

Not can we suppose, with some learned critics, that the cards were but the amusement of the idle, the amusement of St. Bernard's sermons, and St. Bernard would scarcely have used such strong language against their use had it been so. On the 4th of May, 1423, the former, standing on the steps of the Church of St. Petrus, spoke to an immense crowd assembled round him, poured forth his fulminations against games of chance, and exercised so much power over his audience that every one ran to fetch his cards, dice, and chess, and having brought them to this public place, burned them with his own hand, in the presence of the chief of the republic. This terrible *malh* brought a curd-matter, who was rebuked by St. Bernard's sermons, the holy man, saying with tears, "Father, I am a manufacturer of cards; I have no other trade by which I can live; by hindering me from doing my work you condemn me to die of hunger." "If you know how to paint," was the reply, "copy this image." And he showed him a sun surrounded by rays of glory, in the centre of which was the monogram of Christ—I. H. S. The card-maker followed his advice, and soon enriched himself by this painting, which St. Bernard adopted for his symbol.

The first printed cards probably came from Germany. A pack of these are still in existence, engraved with the birds, which are supposed to be the work of Finetucera or Mantegna, and at any rate belong to this period of Italian art. The design is at once simple and good in outline, the engraving fine and harmonious; they are divided into five series, each of ten cards, and bear the names of the muses, sciences, the heavenly bodies, and the virtues. The so-called cards of Charles VI. of France, which are now in the Bibliothèque du Roi, in Paris, are probably the most ancient of any that are preserved in the various public collections of Europe. There are but seventeen, painted with all the beauty of the period, in the illuminated manuscripts of the period on a gold ground, and surrounded by a silver border, in which is a ribbon rolled spirally round, done in points. There is the emperor in silver armour, a diadem of fleurs-de-lis on his head, and holding a globe and a sceptre; the pope with his triple crown, the Gospels and keys of St. Peter in his hands, and seated between two cardinals; the crescent moon rises above two astrologers in long furrowed robes, who are measuring the conjunctions of the planets with compasses; the fool wearing a cap with asses' ears, and a deep-pointed ruff round his neck, while four children are throwing stones at him; Death, mounted on a white horse, is portrayed down kings, popes, and bishops; the House of God seems half devoured by flames; and finally, the last Judgment shows us the dead rising from their tombs to the sound of trumpets.

As time passed on the figures on the cards changed with the costumes of the time, according to the caprices of the court or the imagination of the maker. The pointed beard, heavy collar, and plumed hat appeared as the dress of the kings; the hair turned back and crimped, the lace collar, and the farthingale as that of the queens.

As regards England, though it received the game from a very early period, through the trade it carried on with the Hanseatic and Dutch towns, yet it does not appear that any cards were manufactured there before the end of the sixteenth century, since, under the reign of Elizabeth, the government reserved to itself the monopoly of playing-cards imported from abroad. The oldest which are known, and which closely approach the early Italian packs, were discovered by Dr. Stukely in the binding of a book. They mark a very early period, when the arts of drawing, engraving, and printing were in their infancy. Spain received from the Arabs and the Moors the Eastern game of *malh* long before cards were made at Viterbo; but when the latter were introduced they excited the utmost enthusiasm in the country, and a passion for the play became general; so much so that when the companions of Christopher Columbus, after their discovery of America, formed the first establishment in the Island of San Domingo, they found nothing better to do than at once to manufacture cards from the leaves of trees.

It is wise for in gaining wisdom you also gain an emittance from which no shaft of malice can hurt you.

SCIENTIFIC ITEMS.

YFVSUVA is beginning again to exhibit signs of activity, and to show symptoms of an approaching eruption. Smoke in great volumes and ashes are emitted from the crater, and even in Naples flames can be seen during the night, so that visitors to that city may be treated to a grand spectacle before long.

A MONSTER of the deep, neither whale nor shark, has been discovered off the coast of Brazil. The report is that his body is over fifty feet long and seven ft. in diameter, and that he is so large enough to allow a person to stand upright between the jaws when they are open, or to sit comfortably in the cavity when they are closed. No mention is made, however, of the Jaws who has tested the creature's capacities.

An investigation made by two eminent French physicists into the sanitary effects produced by the use of iron stoves, shows that both wrought iron and cast-iron, when heated to a certain degree, become poisonous to the presence of gas, and that a hot cast-iron stove absorbs oxygen and gives out carbonic acid gas. This discovery shows how prejudicial to health is the use of such stoves. Wrought iron was found to be less poisonous than cast-iron.

A prize for the invention of a method to protect mill-owners' cutters from dust arising from their work, which produces serious affections of the lungs, was recently offered by a French industrial society. It has been awarded to the contriver of an exceedingly simple but effective arrangement, which consists merely of a large fire and a full chimney, whereby a current is created which sweeps through the establishment at a speed of ten feet per second, thus removing every particle of the injurious dust in its passage.

SNOW AT LOW TEMPERATURES.—The *Scientific American* mentions the fact, as recorded by the Arctic explorer, that at a low temperature snow loses its anti-friability quality, and slides are drawn upon it with difficulty. This fact is well known amongst mountain lumbermen and miners, and is shown by the fact that the snow runs down the slopes of Lake Superior, and in Northern Michigan and Wisconsin. It is quite common there for sleds to slide so much on the snow roads during intensely cold weather that they are liable to be thrown off by the friction may be heard through the still atmosphere for a mile or two.

UPWARDS of seventy-five thousand dollars will be required to defray the expense of the scientific expeditions which the British Government has determined to send to the north-west coast of the continent of Asia, which will be in 1874. The whole of this sum has already been granted, on the application of the Astronomer Royal, who has decided that the equipment of apparatus for the expedition should be valued at not less than five thousand dollars. The German astronomer has taken measures for dispatching observers to point in China and Persia.

ACCORDING to the editor of the *Journal of Geology*, at Paris, the Paris Museum received twelve three-shoots from Canada, the result of the course of the same, destroying many of the plant-houses. Two of these have exploded in the geological laboratory, in the case of Professor Delescluse, causing great injury to the specimens, and the *Sphæria* in the general collection were literally ground to powder. The large collection of shells of the lower shells of the Paris basin was entirely destroyed. This is a great loss to the museum, as it is a point of view, as a combined museum. A ball also passed through a glass case containing the same and another.

SEVERAL years ago a royal commission was appointed in Great Britain to inquire into the present duration of the supply of coal in the British Islands. In view of the depth to which the coal had extended, it was of course necessary to fix an estimated limit to which mining operations could be carried out, and, after the inquiry, this was fixed at 4000 feet, although in some cases it is expected to extend, and extending all seems less than one foot in thickness, it is estimated by the committee that there exist in the several coal fields of Great Britain upwards of 70,000,000,000 tons in addition to which there are vast tracts of coal lying beneath the perian, now red, and more recent strata. These are estimated at not less than 50,000,000,000,000 tons, making an aggregate of 120,000,000,000 tons as amount available in the British Islands. Assuming that the present rate of consumption—15,000,000 long-tons constant, this amount of coal will last 275 years. But should the rate of consumption increase as predicted by Professor Joules, the supply will be exhausted in 110 years. Applying, however, a reasonable correction to Professor Joules's estimate, it is thought that the quantity mentioned will last for 275 years.

YOU NOW CAN KNOW THE REASONS.—*Pulphophyllin* (May Apple or Monk's Hat) has long been known as an active purgative and has been much used in some parts of our country, (and is now very generally administered by physicians in the place of Cathartic Blue Pill for liver complaints, &c.) *Compound Extract of Colophony* is considered by Dr. Nozban, of Philadelphia, as one of the most generally employed and valuable cathartics in the world. The *Extract of Hippocampus* given in combination with active cathartics (such as above) corrects their griping qualities without diminishing their activity. *Luteo-Viscum Alectoris Extract*. All these are of a valuable remedial character and are with others largely used in the manufacture of the *Shoolenzey* (Indian) Vegetable Restorative Pills. No wonder they are ahead of all other Pills, as a family medicine. 3-31

ONCE IN TEN YEARS, the eagle loses his plumage, and during this period, much debilitated, he sits quietly on some rocky shelf until his feathers are sufficiently grown to enable him to cleave the air again. Mark Twain, in his *Autobiography*, says: "I have seen some eagles as he approaches the ages of twenty, forty, sixty, etc., while others place it earlier; but, owing to his artificial mode of living, he cannot, like the eagle, submit his case to nature, and receive successful treatment, and it generally requires great care to enable the subject to pass safely through the critical periods. Follows Compound Syrup of Hypocypnosides, by the great tonic, and health-renewing properties, will restore you more quickly than any other preparation known. It being the surest remedy for all debilitating maladies."

CHOLERA MORBUS, *Infantum and Dysentery* cured by *Johnson's Anodyne Liniment*, used internally.

THE THREE COACHMEN.

I heard the story a long time ago, and think it good enough to tell, and not only good, but pointing a lesson which the wise may heed. A certain gentleman advertised for a coachman, and among the numerous applicants who answered the call he found three who evinced a sufficient knowledge of their business to suit him, and from these three he would select his man. For a few days he took them to a point on his premises where a broad table of rock overlooked a deep chasm.

"How near," said he to Sawyer McLean, "could you drive your horse four to the edge of that precipice without the danger of going off?"

"Sawny measured the table with his eye, and looked down into the deep chasm undisturbed. "Three he would select his man. For a few days he took them to a point on his premises where a broad table of rock overlooked a deep chasm."

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NEVER quit your hopes. Hope is often better than enjoyment. Hope is often the cause as well as the effect of youth. It is certainly a very pleasant and healthy passion. A hopeless person is deserted by himself; and he who forsakes himself is soon forsaken by friends and fortune.

As no man can tell where a shoe pinches better than he that wears it, so no man can tell a woman's disposition better than he that has wedded her.

We must not speak all that we know (says Montaigne), that were it folly; but what a man says should be what he thinks, otherwise it is a mockery.

For the Hearstone. MISERERE MEI DEUS.

BY KATE SEYMOUR.

Be pitiful oh God!—the night is long. My soul is faint with watching for the light. And still the doubt and gloom of sevenfold night Hang heavy on my spirit—Thou art strong;— Pity me, oh my God!

I stretch my hands through darkness up to Thee; The stars are shrouded, and the night is dumb; There is no earthly help—no light to lead me out. In all my holiness, and misery,— Pity me, oh my God!

Be pitiful oh God!—for I am weak. And all my paths are rough, and heized about; Hold Thou my hand, O Lord, and lend me out. And bring me to the city which I seek;— Pity me, oh my God!

By the temptation which Thou didst endure And by Thy fasting, and Thy midnight prayer, Jesu! let me not utterly despair;— Oh! hide me in the flock, from ill secure;— Pity me, oh my God!

My eyes run down with tears, and do not cease; Oh! beyond the river, dark and cold, Shall I the white walls of my home behold.— The outer palace—the streets of gold. And shut through the gates the city of Ponce! Pity me, oh my God!

THE ROSE AND THE SHANROCK. A DOMESTIC STORY.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "THE FLOWERS OF GLENAYN."

CHAPTER XXV. AN UNSUCCESSFUL LOVER.

When led to an open window, Kathleen soon recovered herself, and declared, with an appearance of truth, that she could not account for the faintness with which she had been seized.

"We fancied it was caused by the approach of Lord Glanore," said Rosamond, jealously; and her brother leaned forward to catch the reply.

"I do not know Lord Glanore, except as the owner of an estate near my aunt Ursula's farm," Kathleen said, after a short pause. "For a moment, his face seemed familiar, or I mistook him for some one else, and was a little startled; but I am quite well again, and ready to return to the dancers."

Frank was satisfied with this explanation, for was not his pretty Kathleen shy, and her equanimity easily disturbed? Rosamond, however, persisted in inquiring for whom she had mistaken his lordship, and added, "Your acquaintances, like ours, are so few, that it surprises us to hear you speak in such a strain."

Kathleen coloured and hesitated; but Frank, to whom she glanced appealingly, as if longing to be helped out of a difficulty, smilingly said, "I think I can guess. This foolish little maiden sees in every stranger an emissary of her aunt; and so she fancied that the Viscount was Miss Delany's legal adviser, come to compel her return."

Kathleen did not contradict the supposition, but confessed that she had not yet succeeded in overcoming her dread of being torn from her friends; and while Frank was endeavouring to soothe away the fear which had brought a cloud to her brow, the still dissatisfied Rosamond left them.

The mystery of the miniature had not been unriddled, and it now rose up to tempt her with vague doubts both of Kathleen and the Viscount's good faith. She could not bring herself to believe with Frank that the likeness was accidental; she could not implicitly accept the explanation Kathleen had offered, and while dancing with one and another of the partners she had already accepted, her eyes roved around the room in quest of his lordship, whose abrupt departure puzzled and displeased her.

Kathleen had recovered her usual gaiety by the time they drove home, and amused Frank and Mrs. Carroll with her excellent mimicry of some of the odd characters she had encountered; but Rosamond, who was to be the widow's guest that night, pined at a headache, and sat silently in a corner of the carriage, asking herself again and again whether Lord Glanore would seek the interview he had earnestly besought her to grant, and how he would account for being in possession of Kathleen's portrait.

Excusing herself from the customary morning drive, she carried her work into a pretty little room at the back of the house which communicated with the conservatory. Mrs. Carroll had fancifully fitted it up as a rustic temple; and the waters of a small fountain in the centre moistened the rare and always beautiful ferns growing round it. A few quaintly-made chairs and tables constituted all the furniture of this summer retreat, except that large pile of cushions, covered with muslin, green velvet, adorned an excellent lounge for the indolent or the weary.

The day was intensely hot; but Rosamond, in her white dress, looked charmingly fresh and cool, when a visitor was announced, and Lord Glanore was ushered into the room. He drew a good omen from finding her here, where they were not likely to be disturbed, instead of in the more formal drawing-room; and, refusing the chair offered to him, he seated himself on the cushions at the young lady's feet.

"I had rather be here, dear Rosamond," he murmured, "where I can look into the sweet eyes which so seldom vouchsafe me a kindly glance. My position is not more lowly than mine; my hopes must be, till you consent to smile upon me."

But Rosamond was too unweary to be won by soft words, which might, after all, mean nothing; and she gravely answered, "I wish your lordship would lay aside the language of flattery, and speak to me with the frankness which alone I value."

He looked annoyed. "What have I said that need provoke your displeasure? I love you! To me, you are the fairest and dearest of women; and I neither compliment nor exaggerate when I say so. But I will be silent if you will only put your hand in mine, and whisper, 'Charles, I believe you; I will love you for ever.'"

Rosamond was too busy with a knot in her cotton to answer him directly. "Has my brother given you permission to come and say these things to me?"

The Viscount started. "I beg Mr. Dalton's pardon for forgetting him. Authorize me to ask his consent to our engagement, and I will go in search of him immediately; but I have been so engrossed in my efforts to win your favourable opinion, that the proper preliminaries have escaped my memory. Do you bid me go to him now—at once?"

And he half raised himself, as if in haste to obey her wishes; but Rosamond, in great confusion, bade him resume his seat. "Frank is driving with Kathleen and Mrs. Carroll, and your lordship, willfully, I think, misinterprets me. I fear myself to blame in receiving you, even as a friend, without Frank

consents to sanction our intercourse. As a lover, I cannot regard you, until I have learned to put some faith in the stability of your affection. "You are hard; you are cruel," he warmly retorted. "Yet no; I am unjust to blame you. I deserve to be suspected; I am reaping the bitter fruit of the follies that sullied my first youth. To prove the sincerity of my repentance, I put myself into your hands. You shall be my gentle Egeria—my pure-minded counselor; and even though you send me from you, I will not complain, so that you give me leave to love you, and to hope that at some happy moment you will be mine."

Rosamond smiled, a little scornfully. "With all your show of repentance for the past, your lordship keeps in view what you are pleased to consider the reward of your present professions. Such promises sound well to the ear; but ah, they cost so little, my lord!"

"To a man of honour?" he queried, with some heat. "Can you really imagine that I am not in earnest? Good heavens, Rosamond, what an opinion you have formed of me!"

"Better than your lordship deserves?" she asked, archly. "I feared so! My work will be utterly spoiled if you tangle the cotton in this manner. While I re-wind it, let me make you a confession. I have heard so many rhapsodies on my beauty and my virtues since I have been in Dublin, that the subject palls. If you would but choose never to pique, I should listen more patiently."

"I speak of my affection, and you answer me with a taunt and a jest!" he bitterly commented. "Rosamond, will nothing move you—nothing induce you to place any confidence in me?"

"I must go," he retorted, with an earnest glance at Rosamond. "But," Norah exclaimed, "you forget that it has been proverbial, ever since Shakspeare wrote, that 'Men are deceivers ever—constant to one love never!'"

"Have you enrolled yourself in the ranks of my enemies?" asked the Viscount, struggling with his annoyance. "By no means. On the contrary, I very much wish to enlist your lordship under my banners for the short time my aunt has consented to let me stay here," she said, coaxingly. "If there is anything I can do to oblige Miss Dalton's friend, pray command me!" was the polite reply.

Norah dropped him a low courtesy. "Thanks, my lord! I wish to be very gay—to see all the sights of this fair city—to go to balls, pic-nics, concerts, soirees—in fact, to crowd all the enjoyment I can into four weeks of freedom. Will you help me, Miss Dalton? Will you, my lord?"

Rosamond could scarcely conceal her surprise, so great was the contrast between this animated girl and the listless, apathetic Norah of the farm. But the transformed demoiselle did not wait for reply. Mrs. Carroll had returned, and she hastened to meet the warm embrace of her cousin Kathleen.

CHAPTER XXVI. A PASSAGE AT ARMS.

Lord Glanore found in Norah's request an excuse for remaining till the amazement her presence evoked had subsided. Mrs. Carroll laughed

at an inward struggle before she answered. "I am here solely on my own business, Mrs. Brown, and will be accountable to no one for what I do."

She swept on with a laughing air, and was soon immersed in all the bewildering details of fashionable millinery.

Kathleen was pleased to find that she rejected the light materials and bright colours which would have made her well-developed figure look large and coarse, preferring imperial purple, rich-hued violet, and even sober black. With the folds of a soft, lustrous silk falling gracefully about her, strings of pearls encircling her throat and wrists, and her dark hair coiled in thick plaits, she looked like a "Proserpine, or the dusky Ethiopian queen of still earlier ages."

"Are those your friends, Glanore?" asked Major Colby, as the heavy of beautiful girls entered the ball-room with Mrs. Carroll. The Major's regiment was quartered at the Curragh, and he often found it necessary to sojourn himself for the fatigues of military duties by a short sojourn in Dublin.

"It is fortunate for you," he added, on receiving an assenting nod, "that I came, and refused to be driven away by sulky or snappish speeches. You'd better introduce me."

"Indeed, I shall not risk forfeiting their good will by so unwise a step!" the Viscount retorted. "Then I must go and find some one more obliging, your foolish youth, isn't it for your own sake I am offering to make a martyr of myself? How can you devote your attentions to one demure creature, when there are three or four all standing upon you at once?"

He sauntered away, and Lord Glanore, who

eyes deepen, and darken as they whirled round together.

"I wish you would honour me with your hand," he said, with an evident sincerity, that Norah smiled slightly, as if his perseverance amused her, and then suffered him to lead her into the circle.

Slowly, at first, the couples glided along to the steady measure of the air; then more rapidly; and Norah, who, thanks to Rosamond's tuition, moved with easy grace, drew back, and disengaged herself from her disappointed partner.

"Are you tired already, or only giddy?" "Neither the one nor the other; but you do not value your Major Colby. You are thinking of yourself, of your steps, of your partner, instead of giving yourself up to the inspiration of the dance."

"I am sorry I did it so readily to please you," he said, with a profound sigh, and a look which he had never found irresistible.

But Norah only shrugged her shoulders, and turned her back upon him to talk to Lord Glanore, who had just brought Rosamond back to her chamber.

"Have you been dancing?" the Viscount inquired, presently.

"Yes, a little, with this Major—a fine Colby. A good sort of man, but somewhat fatiguing to talk to!" she added, carelessly. "He has been trying hard to amuse me."

Every word of this stinging speech was ample to the exquisite, who was accustomed to see women struck from provoking his caustic remarks. He resolved to punish the same speaker—to make her lower the dark orbs that so boldly met his own—to compel her to quiver with shame and vexation. But the opportunity was not easily found. Norah's was a new face, as it was a handsome one; and though she danced a solo, and even retreated to a small balcony beyond the principal saloon, she was surrounded with gentlemen eager to hear her sparkling repartees. He contrived to catch her eye, and to smile at her with a look which she could not mistake.

"From what Mrs. Delany has just said, it is evident that this is her first visit to Dublin. What a noble district claims the honour of her debut?"

"Sure, then," she answered, assuming the tone of a peasant girl, "while I live I come from my aunt's little farm, beyond the bog." "Does, Major, if you should ever have strength enough to travel so far, it's good 'P' to give you further of my own sharning, and to see some of my own making, and see ye?"

"Kathleen has probably heard the whole of this speech, and you are not to be trifled with for the oddity she has named, that Norah complied, and archly tried it forth. It was unanimously enjoyed; and now she burst into the 'Casta Diva,' from 'Norma,' and even Rosamond was astonished at the precision and energy with which her pupil went through the difficult air."

She refused to sing again, and Major Colby, loudly declaring that he was forced to death, withdrew; but when Mrs. Carroll, at an early hour, drew her party to the grand ballroom, the grand room, he contrived to be near enough to catch Norah's eye.

"Miss Delany," he said, "I'm afraid we've been trying to be rude to each other this evening."

"I think we have," was the equally frank reply. "And, for my part, I cannot divine the reason why," he went on. "Can you?"

Norah gave a little impatient movement. "Who takes the trouble now-a-days to discover the motive of their caprices? I shall not, for one; for to me, on the whole, this has been a most enjoyable evening."

"I am exceedingly glad you are able to say so; but—"

She bowed, and passed on before he had time to finish his speech, and he was left standing with Lord Glanore, who had contrived to make some little progress with his wooing, and was in the best humour in consequence.

"This is dreadful slow work," gazed the Major, slipping his arm through the Viscount's. "Let's go to—"

"Not I, thank you. I have abjured the dice for ever."

"I forgot you are on good behaviour; just now," was the sneering retort. "Poor boy, how the fellows must feel you sometimes. However your little Rosa is pretty enough to be some excuse for your madness. What is the fragment—the Catherine for whom a Pouchard is so sorely wanted—who came with the Daltons?"

"A distant relation of Mrs. Carroll's," Lord Glanore replied.

"What a very interesting piece of information. Thanks; I feel wiser for it already. But what is she? where does she come from? There is something in her face that strikes me as familiar."

He missed for a moment, and when he looked round, Lord Glanore—who did not feel at all inclined to gratify his curiosity—had noiselessly slipped away.

Norah, apparently in the highest spirits, flirted, chatted with Frank Dalton during the homeward ride; but after Mrs. Carroll had set down the brother and sister at their own residence, she grew very silent; and finally, on reaching the chamber, she was to share with her cousin, terrified by falling into a fit of such violent hysterics, that Kathleen was obliged to call for assistance.

At last, Rosamond, though engrossed in her own affairs, discovered that there was something amiss, and questioned her brother, who was smiling under an amazing consciousness that Kathleen's waywardness increased.

"No, Rosa," he said; "we have not been quarrelling. Kathleen is too sweet-tempered to wrangle about trifles. I fear that she has some anxiety pressing upon her, which she foolishly conceals from me."



"Ask me this question when we have known each other intimately for two or three years, and I will answer it," she said, firmly. "Your lordship left us with some haste last night; may I presume on our friendship to inquire the reason?"

"Your companion was ill; I felt myself in the way," he answered, with some embarrassment, which did not escape her notice.

"Miss Sidney quickly recovered herself, and danced as blithely as before. I was not aware that you are acquainted with her?"

"His colour rose a little," she hastily demanded. "Who says that I know her? Does she?"

"Was it necessary to put the question to her, after such a scene?" queried Rosamond, evasively. "What false impression one often labours under! I have always believed that your lordship never visited Galway till this summer."

"Neither have I," he replied. "And yet you and Miss Sidney were not strangers to each other! How odd!"

"Not at all so, my dear Rosamond; for you are in error. I do not know this Miss Sidney; and her swoon must have been entirely owing to the heat of the room."

Rosamond declined to pursue the subject. He was speaking falsely—of that she was certain. Had he said that Kathleen's resemblance to a picture in his possession was so great as to overwhelm him with astonishment, she would have believed his assurance that he had no knowledge of this young girl; but now what could she think, except that he was wilfully deceiving her?

As if anxious to avoid any further discussion of an awkward matter, Lord Glanore now began to talk of an approaching review of the opera company, of a projected visit from royalty, Rosamond affecting to ply her needle dilligently, and answering with as much composure as her secret vexation would permit. But when a carriage stopped at the door, and the Viscount, dreading interruption, seized her hands, and resumed his pleadings, she started to her feet, exclaiming, with dignity, "You pray in vain, my lord! I will not listen to you till a true and perfect trust can accompany my love! This is the only answer I can give to you; therefore, I must entreat you to speak of these things no more!"

Such continued refusals were very galling to the hitherto courted and successful Viscount. He had despised good matches, turned deaf ears to the advice of his friends, and shown himself indifferent to the signs of pretty heiresses, in order to lay his fortune at the feet of a simple English Rose, who rejected it. He was about to re-mostrate; to repeat all the old arguments which had already proved so ineffectual; but footsteps approached the door, a lady in travelling costume brushed past, the servant who came to announce her, and ran into Rosamond's arms. It was Miss Delany.

She seemed to be in high spirits, and gaily saluted the Viscount. "I thought I had left your lordship playing the hermit in Galway. It surprises me to find you here."

Lord Glanore, who was vexed at the interruption, replied, with some significance, "I came to Dublin yesterday; but Miss Norah Delany is mistaken if she thinks that I have ever shared her penitence for a misanthropical life."

She laughed. "I understand you; but our sex claims as much right to be capricious as yours to be fickle."

"I beg to deny the fickleness you so kindly

when she heard how quickly the new comer had been planning all kinds of gay doings, and predicted that a few days of such excessive dissipation would suffice to disgust her with it.

"You had better resolve to quaff the spring of pleasure with more moderation," she remarked.

"Nay," said Norah, decisively; "I will drink deep, or not at all. It is not in my nature to do things by halves; and as for moderation, that is the virtue of the timid and weak-minded."

"As you will, my dear," the widow rather coldly replied. "But recollect that I shall not consent to let Kathleen or Miss Dalton lose their roses because you are wilful. When they grow tired, I shall find you another *chaperone* and more robust companions."

Norah saw that Mrs. Carroll was not pleased, but she made no reply. How she had persuaded her stern aunt to let her pay this visit, no one knew. Kathleen would have made some inquiries respecting Miss Delany, but was checked with an impatient, "Do not speak of her! For one brief moment let me forget everything that pertains to the farm and its inmates. What dressmaker do you employ?"

"Madame Lamole," Mrs. Carroll replied, ringing to order back the carriage. "If you are to accompany us to-morrow to the ball, for which we have received tickets, there is no time to lose in ordering a dress for you."

"I must have everything of the best and most fashionable," said Norah. "What colours become me?" "Who will go with me to select my dresses?"

"I will not have you put to any expense," Mrs. Carroll kindly observed. "Choose what you like, and Madam shall send the bill to me."

But Norah drew herself up. "I am obliged, but it is not necessary. I came of age last week, and the little property that was my father's has been made over to me. It will suffice for my short campaign, I dare say."

The widow secretly thought that Miss Delany would be furious if she knew that the few hundreds she had been so careful not to trench upon were in danger of being diminished, and for such a purpose; and she whispered to Kathleen to try and control Norah's expenditure, and not to let her purchase anything that was not absolutely necessary.

As the cousins were crossing the hall on their way to the carriage, they met Allie Breen, who had come to walk home with Rosamond. Norah coloured a little as she met the old woman's penetrating gaze; but, holding out her hand, she asked lightly, "Aren't you glad to see me, Mrs. Breen?"

"Sure, Miss Norah, no more so, if 'tis a wise errand that's brought ye."

"I'm afraid I cannot say yes to that, for I have come to do nothing better than dance, sing, wear the prettiest dresses I can procure, and tease Miss Dalton and Kitty by winning all their best partners away from them."

Allie nodded sagaciously. "I'm thinking they can afford to forgive ye if ye do, for they've had their fair share of praise and flattery; and if ye've no worse errand here than this, Miss Norah, I'll wish ye luck in all your ventures."

hastened to attach himself to Mrs. Carroll's party, hoping that he would find more potent attraction in the card-room; but in the course of a few minutes he came towards them, arm-in-arm with an old friend of the widow, and the ceremony of a formal introduction followed.

Kathleen, over whose chair Frank was leaning, had scarcely a word or look for any one else. She had met Lord Glanore with such perfect composure and freedom from embarrassment, that her lover's gathering doubts had fled, and all was well again. Rosamond, who recognized in the bowing Major the presuming personage who had annoyed her in the railway carriage, made but a frigid acknowledgment of his courtesies, and he turned perforce to Norah, on whose stately beauty he had already been gazing admiringly.

"This is a brilliant scene," he said, dropping into the seat beside her.

"Is it?" she asked, indifferently. "Is it possible that you do not think with me?" he exclaimed. "Ireland is noted for the loveliness of its ladies, and certainly the force we see here to-night go far towards justifying the assertion. Take, for instance, the group of which you form the centre."

Norah flirted her fan, with profound indifference to the compliment.

"Ah, yes; my cousin and Miss Dalton are pretty women, and I am what you would call a handsome one. Well?"

Major Colby drew his delicate fingers along his mustache, to give himself time to frame a reply to this unexpected speech.

"I can but endorse what the world has already told you," he said, in his softest tones. "Norah curved her full, red lips disdainfully. "Am I expected to thank you for that? In your endorsement really valuable?"

"I wish I could teach you to think so," he answered, with an earnestness partly simulated, partly real. The languid, insolent Major found it hard to hold his own against this scornful beauty.

"Why?" queried Norah, turning her bright deep eyes full upon him.

"Can you not guess? Who would not be delighted to see their opinion deferred to, by one as lovely as yourself?"

"Every one would, of course; that is, all the blockheads on this quarter of the globe," was the contemptuous reply. "I do not want to be told that there are plenty of men, as they call themselves, who may be led into any folly by a woman's smiles. But how fatiguing and insipid is this small talk! Is there any one here worth listening to, Major Colby?"

"I'm afraid not. The people here are all of our own class," he answered; aroused out of his usual slumber, into a spiteful retort.

"Then I think I'll listen to the music; that's always worth hearing."

How beautiful she looked, this scornful girl, who was folling him with his own weapons! Instead of taking her very significant hint to leave her, he continued to watch her half-amused face, as, putting one pretty foot to the music, she sat absorbed in the melody of a favourite waltz.

"Do you not dance, Miss Delany?" "Rarely. The prospect of a good partner sometimes inspires me," was the careless reply.

Major Colby had not danced for years; it was an exertion of which he was fond of declaring himself incapable; but now he was seized with a desire to hold this magnificent creature in his arm—to see the crimson of her glowing cheeks grow richer—the light in her

CHAPTER XXVII. MUTUAL CONFIDENCES.

Neither Frank nor Rosamond cared to launch into such a round of party-going as Norah Delany stipulated for. They joined the cousins and Mrs. Carroll in their rides and rambles, and occasionally consented to accept some of the invitations showered upon them; but Frank impatiently counted the days that must intervene before Norah went back to the farm, and he could enjoy a little more of his pretty betrothed's society.

But now Kathleen herself began to appear capricious and fitful. Sometimes her lover was greeted with tenderness, and listened to with evident, though shy, satisfaction; at others, she would be so cold and absent in her manners, that he would press her to give him a reason for the change, and be put off with evasive answers, more tormenting and perplexing than her previous coldness.

At last, Rosamond, though engrossed in her own affairs, discovered that there was something amiss, and questioned her brother, who was smiling under an amazing consciousness that Kathleen's waywardness increased.

"No, Rosa," he said; "we have not been quarrelling. Kathleen is too sweet-tempered to wrangle about trifles. I fear that she has some anxiety pressing upon her, which she foolishly conceals from me."

"Perhaps Norah has been the bearer of some menacing message from her grim aunt, which preys upon our Kathleen's nerves," suggested his sister. "How long is it since you noted the change?"

Frank told her, and she was visibly startled, her face flushing, and mouth trembling with some deep feeling; but she was leaving him on some slight pretext, without offering any explanation, when he drew her back to her seat.

"No, Rosamond; I will not let you go till I know what has moved you so. Can it be that you are able to conjecture the cause of Kathleen's unkindness?"

"No—indeed, I cannot!" she hurriedly answered.

"Then what was it that stirred you so visibly? Do candid with me; I am perplexed enough, without having to fear that you keep something from me that I ought to know."

"Nay, dear Frank; the circumstances of which for the moment I had an unpleasant reminiscence, were almost too trifling to repeat; I think no more of them," she pleaded. But as he persisted in his demand, she reluctantly went on to say, "It flashed into my mind, when you were speaking of Kathleen's altered demeanour, that you dated it from the day I saw her grow confused, turn very pale on the receipt of a note a servant handed to her, and—"

But here Rosamond paused a moment ere she added, "And glanced at Lord Glanore, as if he were in some way connected with her unkindness."

Frank walked to a window, and stood there for some moments, without replying. There was a contest warring within him, between his trust in Kathleen's sincerity, and a dread that Lord Glanore—so long known as an intriguing reckless man—was in some way supplying the young girl's truth. At last he went back to his sister, who was anxiously watching him, and put his arm around her.

"My dear Rosie, for your sake as well as mine, I shall do my utmost to fathom the little mystery which is now puzzling us. In the meantime let me entreat you not to enter into any engagement with the Viscount."

Rosamond's colour rose, and with some warmth, she answered, "It is scarcely fair to suspect Lord Glanore, and yet believe Kathleen false."

"My dear sister, I am trying hard not to doubt either of them. Only yesterday, in the handsomest manner, Glanore begged me to introduce with you in his behalf, and wished to be permitted to visit here as your acknowledged suitor; but I cannot give him my bonny Rosie till I am sure that he does not love her."

Rosamond leaned her head against her brother's arm, and burst into tears. "Dear with me," she sobbed; "I am miserable! I love him, and yet—yet—oh, Frank! it may be that Kathleen is false in his eyes that I am; or he may have loved her once already, and be returning to his allegiance."

"I'll not credit either supposition to do so, would be to convict both my friend and my betrothed of the grossest deception! Take courage, dearest Rosie; I will extort from Kathleen the cause of her hidden troubles, and then we shall all be happy."

He did not fulfil his intention till his cheerful persuasions had tranquillized her, and then he went away, determined to seek Kathleen, and not leave her till she had fully satisfied him that the suspicions he could not help entertaining were wholly without foundation.

When he reached Mrs. Carroll's, the widow and Norah were examining some boxes of artificial flowers, and Kathleen, they said, had complained of headache, and gone to her room to lie down.

"I'll go and whisper that you are here," cried her cousin; "for we really cannot decide upon these wreaths without her. Here are some lovely shamrocks, which will be just to her taste."

She left the room, but returned directly, saying Kathleen must be showing for her time at the door had remained untroubled. Frank waited for some time in the hope that she would appear, but was obliged to go at last, and content himself with Mrs. Carroll's permission to join her party at a concert that evening.

He was wending his way homeward, with his hat pulled over his brows, and a moody look on his handsome face, when he was brought to a standstill at the corner of a by-street by a string of vehicles. As he stood, waiting for them to pass, he chanced to glance down this narrow turning, and beheld Kathleen herself.

It was but a glimpse, for the street was a busy one, and the passers to and fro so many, that she was no sooner seen than lost to view. Besides she was walking from, instead of towards, him; but he could scarcely be mistaken in the little airy figure, nor the parasol she carried; for when the cousins were choosing some a few days previously, Kathleen had refused a plain white silk, like Rosamond's, or the buff that harmonized with Norah's glowing face, and had, laughing, preferred one on which the pure ground was striped with the national colour, green.

Frank gave instant chase, and soon convinced himself that she was not alone. Her hand was resting on the arm of a tall, gentlemanly man. Oh, for a glance at his features! But was it necessary? Was it possible to doubt that it was Lord Glanore? The peculiar turn of the head, the somewhat haughty bearing, the height, the colour of the hair, these were sufficiently convincing, and his jealous heart swelled to bursting.

Regardless of the angry observations levelled at him, he strode on. The couple he pursued crossed the street, and, for a moment, a slowly-moving van concealed them. Then he dashed onwards again, but now they had disappeared.

They must have entered some house together. He gashed his teeth as he surveyed the unpromising locality, and thought of his fair Kathleen making assignments with a roof, and meeting him here! He paced to and fro, examining the windows, and striving to discover what had become of her, till he was obliged to conclude that she had altogether evaded him.

When he reached home, Rosamond flew to meet him, and heard what tidings he brought; but he put her aside, curtly saying that he had not been able to get an interview with Kathleen, and went to his own room, to dress with feverish haste for the concert.

He arrived at the widow's nearly an hour earlier than the stipulated time, and paced up and down the room into which he was shown, with his watch in his hand, and his eyes fixed upon the door. Did she know he was there? Yes, one of Mrs. Carroll's good-looking hand-maids had tripped away with a smile to warn Miss Kathleen that she was waited for. Would she never come?

At last, a footstep approached, and he hurried to meet her, but only to endure fresh disappointments. It was the Viscount, whose countenance grew as dark as Frank's, when he learned that Rosamond had not accompanied her brother.

Frank would not imply a doubt of Kathleen by questioning his lordship, whose manner, like his own, was constrained. He could even have fancied that the Viscount furtively watched him, as though he comprehended that an indubitable something had risen up between them.

Scarcely a word was spoken, till Mrs. Carroll, crimson with heat and the exertion of dressing, came into the room.

"And where is our Rose of Roses?" she asked. "A afraid to brave the fatigue? I cannot blame her. This weather is terribly exhausting. If I were really very stout, it would kill me quite! And how does your lordship manage to endure it?"

"I have been too idle to be inconvenienced by the heat," was the careless reply. "With the exception of transacting a little business in Verrall Street, I have done nothing all day but smoke and read."

Frank found it hard to repress his wrath when he heard this cool allusion to a meeting which blasted his own hopes; unless, indeed, Kathleen could give a very satisfactory reason for meeting this unworthy man.

But now the cousins came in; Norah quietly in black lace, looped up with crimson passion-flowers, with their long trails of green leaves and tendrils; Kathleen in a shimmering robe of blue, and forget-me-nots in her brown hair. There was a look about her eyes as if she had been weeping, and her cheek was pale, but her face lighted up when she saw Frank, and she glided to his side with an *embrace* with which at any other time he would have been delighted.

It was not till the bustle of finding seats at the concert-room was over, and Frank had contrived to secure one between Kathleen and her *chaperone*, that he was able to put the question, "Whither went you this morning?"

Her cheek blushed, and her eyelids drooped.

"Did not Norah tell you that I kept my room with a headache?" she whispered evasively.

"Yes, your cousin repeated what she was hidden to say; but I must know more than this, Kathleen. I demand the truth!"

"Demand!" she repeated, with an offended gesture. "Mr. Dalton, you are speaking very strangely."

"I cannot stop to consider my words at such a moment; and I repeat that I demand, by our mutual love, that you tell me the whole truth. Kathleen, I know that you were not in this house this morning when I called."

"Who has been playing the spy upon me?" she asked, a little terror audible in her accents.

"No one. By a strange chance, I saw you myself in Verrall Street."

Kathleen's trembling fingers played with her fan; and she darted a furtive, troubled glance at the young man, which pained him excessively, for there was none of the fearless confidence in it with which he had been hoping against hope that she would have heard and answered him.

"I had an errand in the street you name," she said, presently. "Was it honourable to watch me?"

"Yes, when I saw you in danger!" he retorted.

"Kathleen, you must have been mad when you consented to meet that worthless man—and he darted in furious glance at Lord Glanore—upon any pretext."

Kathleen's head had sunk lower and lower while he was speaking, but now she looked up and said, "Hush, Mr. Dalton; your loud tones will attract attention. Besides, you are mistaken. I did not go to Verrall Street to meet Lord Glanore."

"Thank heaven, you are able to say so!" the relieved Frank exclaimed. "Then the rencontre was an accidental one?"

Almost unintelligibly, she murmured that she had not seen his lordship at all; and her lover was too much shocked by the deliberate falsehood to make any immediate reply.

"Had I been inclined to doubt my own sight, and believe your assertion," he calmly observed, "Lord Glanore's confession that he visited Verrall Street this afternoon would put it out of my power."

"Lord Glanore visited Verrall Street?" she repeated, with an expression of countenance difficult to analyze. "But he did not say he had seen—that is, spoken with me? He could not! On my honour, Mr. Dalton, I held no communication with his lordship, nor was I conscious of his presence there."

"And yet I saw you walking side by side, your hand on his arm!"

"Indeed, you are wrong. It may have been the same pavement with me—that I cannot contradict, for I was too much afraid of the crowd to look either to the right or the left; but see Lord Glanore, or speak with him, I did not."

Frank sat silent. How was he to reconcile these earnest assurances with what he had seen?

"Your hand rested on his arm, Kathleen?" he reminded her.

"On Lord Glanore's? Never—never!" But now she spoke with a confusion that marred the impression her words might have made.

"Will you tell me what errand it was that led you to visit Verrall Street secretly?"

After some hesitation came the response, "I went to relieve a person who is in distressed circumstances;" and Frank was only too glad to believe her.

"For the future, you must delegate your charitable intentions to me, my dearest, and I will carry them out. Visiting the cottagers round about the farm was a very different thing to relieving the poor in a great city like this. You must not attempt it—at least, not alone. Promise me this."

But she would not give him the pledge he demanded.

"You have no right to attempt to rule my actions, Mr. Dalton," she said, agitatedly. "You will always forget that I have never given my consent to the betrothal you persist in regarding as a decided affair."

He was now really angry.

"Kathleen, this is unworthy of you. If your lips have never uttered a positive consent to my wishes, you have tacitly permitted me to believe that you will be mine at the time Mrs. Carroll has fixed for our union. Can it be that you have ceased to love me—that another holds the place in your heart that I fondly hoped was mine?"

The little hands lying in her lap were restlessly clasped and unclasped, and her eyes were heavy with unshed tears.

"Mr. Dalton, do me the justice to remember that I have always keenly felt the difference in our position, and have begged you to be contented with my friendship."

"Why should I, if the richer prize of your love is to be won? Kathleen, dearest Kathleen, how can you coquet with me now?"

"I am no coquette," she faltered. "I thoroughly comprehend how much you offer me. Is it nothing, think you, to a desolate, ill-treated girl, to find herself suddenly exalted to a place in the affections of one of the best of men? But I have never been in my power to act for myself. I fear it never will. I dare not grasp happiness, even when it is within my reach."

"It is impossible—impossible! I am not worthy to be your wife!" was the murmured reply, and Frank's heart sank. Her concluding words had been spoken with a sorrowful earnestness which compelled him to dread that some obstacle to their union lay in that past of which he knew so little.

While the young man was thus whispering in Kathleen's ear and Mrs. Carroll good-naturally striving to reconcile Lord Glanore to Rosamond's absence, Norah's bright eyes had lured Major Colby to her side.

"Are we friends or enemies?" he demanded, lazily fanning himself with her fan.

"Neither the one nor the other," she readily answered. "I call those persons with whom I have merely exchanged a few civilities, *casual acquaintances*. Don't you?"

"Bah! I detest neutrality. Open war for me, or else a strong and lasting peace!"

"You are a soldier," said Norah, "and think it incumbent upon you to be technical; but I have always understood that skirmishing is harassing to the bravest."

"Not when ones adversary is an honourable one." And he bowed significantly to the lady.

"In that case, I don't mind owning myself worsted occasionally."

"But I do!" cried Norah, defiantly; "so take care, Major. If war should be declared between us, you will find me a dangerous antagonist."

It is consoling to learn that you think me of so much consequence," said the Major, sentimentally. "If I cannot be loved, I prefer to be hated."

With a curious smile flickering about her lips, she replied, "You shall be gratified; but be warned! It is not a safe game to play!"

"For you, or for me?" he asked, insolently.

"Let Time answer that question; but I should be but a bad general if I did not arrange the plan of my campaign before engaging upon it."

She smiled, with a gay carelessness that baffled him. Again he put the question to Lord Glanore, "Who is this strange girl?" But when he had learned all there was to tell about her, he found himself none the wiser.

And still the days sped on; and, in another week, Norah would quit Dublin. Her zest for gaiety continued unflagging, even though she came home from the theatre or a *soiree* overwrought and under the powerful spell of some emotion, the source of which she carefully concealed. Rosamond and Kathleen were but hollow friends now-a-days; the former was suspicious, the latter reserved, and eager to avoid being left alone either with Frank or his sister.

Perhaps they were all looking forward to Norah's departure as a relief; after that, affairs might, say, and be brought to a climax.

This came sooner than was anticipated. Mrs. Carroll had promised to patronise a ball given on behalf of some charity; and, at her request, the Daltons were other party. Kathleen linked her arm through Rosamond's as they were entering the noble apartment appropriated to the dancers, and many an eye followed admiringly these fairest types of English and Irishian loveliness.

They were detained by the crush at the door of the ball-room, and Frank, who was following his sister, stooped, to pick up a tiny note which had fluttered to his feet. Unperceived by Kathleen, who was exchanging courtesies with an acquaintance, he touched Rosamond's shoulder with it.

"You have dropped something, Rosie; thank me for reclaiming it."

"Let me first be sure that it is mine," she smilingly replied.

"It fell from the folds of your dress," he persisted; for Frank believed that it had done so.

"Perhaps it is an excuse from Madame for the mistake in the trimmings of my cloak. Open it, and see."

Unthinkingly, he obeyed, and read as follows:—

"My Lord,—

"I entreat you to see me at the old place at Verrall Street. If you retain any affection for one who ought still to be very dear to you, do not refuse the prayer of—

"KATHLEEN SIDNEY."

(To be continued.)

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TO THE BITTER END.

By Miss M. E. Braddon.

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

CHAPTER VIII.

"RECALL HER TEARS, TO THOSE AT PARTING GIVEN."

It was some time, however before Mr. Walgrave forgot what he had heard in the wood about Grace's mother—that dark hint of heart-disease. He took occasion to question Mrs. James next day upon the subject, and made himself fully acquainted with the details of Mrs. Richard Redmayne's death, and what the doctor had said about Grace. He had made no examination, it appeared; no stethoscope had ever sounded the innocent young heart; but he had remarked to Mrs. James one confidentially, that there was something about her niece's appearance he hardly liked, and that it would not surprise him if her constitution should develop the same tendency that had been fatal to her mother. This had been said while Richard Redmayne was in England; and his sister-in-law had not cared to alarm either him or her niece by any hint of what the doctor had said.

"If it was heart-disease, you see," said Mrs. James, "there'd be no cure for it; and if it wasn't, it would have been cruel to upset poor Rick in the midst of his troubles, which was coming pretty fast upon him just then; so I thought the wisest thing I could do was to hold my tongue."

"Quite right, Mrs. Redmayne. No doubt the doctor wanted a job. Your medical men can have very little to do in this pure atmosphere. A chronic case, rich farmer's only child, and so on. Heart-disease! No; I don't for a moment believe that your niece Grace has anything amiss with her heart. At her age the very idea seems preposterous."

"Well, it do, Mr. Walgrave—don't it? But her mother was only seven-and-twenty when she died. They're not a long-lived family, any of the Norbitts; and Grace's mother was a Norbitt."

contrived to get rid of any uneasiness which the subject might have caused him.

An event occurred to divert his attention in some manner a few days after the picnic. He had more than half made up his mind to leave Brierwood, and go abroad somewhere for the rest of the long vacation. He could not quite shut his eyes to the peril of remaining where he was. He had recovered his strength—was almost as well as ever he had been, in fact. In every way it would be best and wisest for him to go.

He began to pack his portmanteau one night, took out his *Bradshaw*, and made a profound study of the continental routes. Why should he not spend his autumn abroad? There was Spain, for instance. He had an intense desire to see Spain, from the Escorial to the Alhambra. Yet to-night, somehow, the vision of dark-eyed damsels and bull-fights had scarcely any charm for his imagination. He flung the railway-guide into a distant corner with an impatient sigh.

"Why should I run away from her when I love her so dearly?" he said to himself. "Cannot a man live two lives—give his outward seeming and all the labour of his brain to the world, and keep his heart in some safe shelter, hidden away from the crowd? Other men have done it, why should not I? Is there a man upon earth who would throw such a treasure as that girl?"

And then Mr. Walgrave fell into a profound meditation, and went to bed at last in the gray morning to spend three mortal hours tossing and fro, tormented by the most perplexing thoughts that had ever wearied his brain. He was trying to reconcile things that were irreconcilable. His future life had been planned long ago—judiciously, he believed. He did not mean that anything should alter those plans. Whatever new element might arise must be made subservient to those. He was not a man to turn aside from the path which he had cut for himself—a high-road to fame and fortune—for any consideration whatever. He meant to renounce nothing.

But—but if he could hold fast by all he valued so highly, and yet win that other prize—that sweeter, nearer delight? Fame and fortune must come in the future—he would do nothing to forfeit the certainty of those. But why should he not snatch this other joy in the present, and let the future, so far as it concerned Grace Redmayne, take care of itself? If that croaking country surgeon's opinion were indeed correct, and the poor child were not destined to live long, so much the easier would it be to provide for the happiness and security of her future. There was no sacrifice, short of the entire sacrifice of his own prospects, which he would not make for her. And so his thoughts rambled on, shaping first one scheme and then another, only to abandon them. And when he got up in the morning, he said to himself resolutely:

"I will make it the business of my life to forget her. A man who takes such a step as that always wrecks himself. Sooner or later his folly comes home to him. I have gone through life without a single error of that kind. It would be madness to begin now."

He went downstairs, and sauntered out into the garden. It was still early. All the pleasant bustle of farmhouse life was at its height in dairy and outhouses and kitchen. Grace, with a basket on her arm and a pair of scissors in her hand, was clipping and trimming the roses near the house, fair as Tennyson's famous gardener's daughter when first her lover saw her in the porch.

The vivid blush, lighting up the fair pale face, the sudden look of pleased surprise—how sweet they were!

"And I am going to surrender all this," Mr. Walgrave thought with a sharp pang. He had quite made up his mind to go away, by this time; but he could not make up his mind to tell her his intention. Better to put off that until the very last moment, and then with one desperate wrench tear himself away.

They strolled round the garden, Grace clipping the roses as she went, not quite so neatly as she would have clipped them without that companionship. The hands fluttered a little among the leaves as they did their work. He was talking to her; those unfathomable gray eyes were watching her. He had never spoken of his love since the day at Clevedon; had said scarcely a word which her uncle and aunt might not have heard; but he had lost no opportunity of being with her; and she had been almost completely happy. She did not forget what he had told her. She was engaged to marry another woman. He would go away by and by, and her life would be desolate; but she only looked forward to this desolation with a vague terror. She could not be unhappy while he was near her.

They waited about an hour in the garden. Grace had breakfasted half an hour ago as it was. Mr. Walgrave's breakfast was waiting for him in the cool airy parlour. He went slowly back to the house at last, still with Grace by his side. Aunt Hannah was up to her eyes in dairy-work at this time of the day. There was no one to observe them. They were talking of the books Grace had been reading lately—books which opened a new world to her—and her brightness and intelligence delighted her lover.

"If all Miss Toulmin's pupils are anything like you, Grace I shall certainly make a point of sending my daughters to her some day," he said lightly.

She looked at him for a moment, and then grew very pale. His daughters! He was talking of a time when he should be married to that other woman—when she would have passed out of his life altogether. That careless speech of his had brought the fact sharply home to her. He was nothing, never could be anything, to her.

"You will have forgotten my existence by the time your daughters are old enough to go to school," she said.

"Forgotten you, Grace? Never! Fate rules our lives, but not our hearts. I shall never forget you, Grace. I behaved very badly the other day, when I told you the impression you had made upon me. It was an offence against you—and some one else. But I think that you, at least, have forgiven me."

He spoke as lightly as he could, like a man of the world, but was very far from feeling lightly. Grace was silent. That common-sense tone of apology cut her to the quick. She scarcely knew what she had hoped or dreamed within the last few days! But they had been so happy together, that the image of her unknown rival, the woman he was destined to marry had seemed very vague and unreal.

"I have nothing to forgive," she said coldly.

"It is for—the—the other person to be angry."

"The other person would be very angry, no doubt, if I were to make a full confession of my sins; but I don't mean to do so, believe me. The other person will go down to her grave in ignorance of the truth. But I want to be assured of your forgiveness, Grace. Just raise those sweet eyes of yours, and say, 'I forgive you for having loved me too well.'"

Grace smiled—a bitter smile.

"So well, that you—that you will go away and marry some one else," she said, the practical phlegm of the situation coming home to her with that first pang of jealousy.

"My dearest girl," cried Mr. Walgrave, who had by no means desired the conversation to take this turn, "there are very few men in this world who can choose their own road in life. Mine was chosen for me long ago. I am not my own master; if I were—"

"If you were," repeated Grace, with a sudden desperate courage, that was as much a surprise to herself as it was to him—"if you were, would you marry a bankrupt farmer's daughter?"

"If I wore the master of Clevedon, Grace—if I had five thousand a year—yes. But I have my own way to make in the world, and I am weak enough to value success. I am engaged to marry a woman whose fortune will help me to win a position, and to maintain it. That is as much as to say, I am going to sell myself, isn't it?"

"It sounds rather like that."

"Mendo it every day, Grace—quite as often as I can—and the thing answers fairly enough in ten cases out of twenty. I daresay I shall make a very tolerable average kind of husband. I shall not spend all my wife's money, and I shall go to dinner-parties with her. I think I can give her almost as much heart as she will give me; and yet, Grace, I never loved but one woman upon this earth, and her name is Grace Redmayne."

"The girl was silent. He was cruel, he was base; and yet it was still sweet to her to be told that he loved her. With all her heart and soul she believed him.

"I never meant that our talk should take this turn," Hubert Walgrave went on, after a rather lengthened pause. "I meant only to bid you good-bye, and to go away without one dangerous word."

She looked up at him with sudden terror in her face.

"You are going away!" she exclaimed. "Soon?"

"Very soon; to-day, in fact, if possible. What should I do here? The wretch must come, Grace. The sooner the better."

She tried to answer him, but her lips only trembled, and then began to cry. All the eloquence that ever poured from the lips of woman exalted by passion would not have touched him so keenly as that mute look—those childish tears. It was little more than a child's unreasoning love that she gave him perhaps, but it was so pure and perfect of its kind!

They had turned away from the house, instinctively avoiding it as their conversation grew more tender, and were walking slowly towards the orchard, quite out of human ken. Mr. Walgrave drew his arm round the girl's waist, comforting her—drew her close to him, until the graceful head sank on his shoulder. Never had so fair a head rested there before. He bent down and kissed the pure young brow.

This was the manner in which he began to forget her.

"My dearest, my sweetest!" he said pleadingly, "your tears go to my heart of hearts. I am so anxious to do what is wise, what is right. Upon my soul, Grace, I believe that I could bring myself to forego all question of worldly advantage—he did fancy for the moment that this was so—if—my honour were not involved in this marriage which I speak of. But it is, darling, it is quite too late for me to recede from my engagement. I should be the vilest of defectors if I did. Let us be reasonable, then, my sweet one. I wish to do what is best for you, for both of us. Don't you think that it would be wisest for me to go away?"

"I don't know whether it would be wise or foolish," she sobbed, with her head still upon his shoulder; "but I think my heart will break if you go."

He drew her a little closer to him. Great heavens, why had he not five thousand a year, and the right to marry this village maiden? It seemed to him a very hard thing that he was not able to win this wayside flower, and yet keep all the other advantages he valued so highly.

"But remember, dearest," he said, trying his utmost to be worldly and practical, "it is at best only a question of a week or so, more or less. It is very sweet to me to be with you. I doubt if I ever felt what real happiness was before I knew you; but I cannot linger in this happy valley for ever. The time of parting must come at last, and will seem the harder for every hour we spend together. Would it not be wiser to part at once? Say yes, Grace, for both our sakes."

"I can't. I can't be glad for you to go away. If you are really happy here, why should you be so anxious to go? I know that I can never be any more to you than I am now—that you must go away at last—to that—other person—"

"And yet you would rather have me stay?"

"Yes, yes!"

"Very well, then I stay; but it is at your request, remember, Grace; and when the time does come for our parting, you will be reasonable. We will bury our love in a deep, deep grave, and you will forget that you ever knew me."

"We will bury our love," the girl answered softly.

After this, Mr. Walgrave went slowly in to breakfast, with very little appetite, and with a vague sense of having made a fool of himself, after all. All those tossing and nodding schemes made and unmade—that final resolve on the side of prudence—had come to nothing. He was going to remain.

"Heaven help any man of five-and-thirty who has the ill-luck to win the heart of a girl of nineteen!" he said to himself. "Sweet Grace Redmayne, what a child she is!"

Grace went into the parlour with her basket only a quarter full of withered roses—there were plenty of faded flowers left to perish on the trees. The door of the passage that led to the kitchen was open, and she could hear a confusion of tongues, and her aunt's voice protesting about the awkwardness of something.

"It couldn't have fall out awkward," cried Mrs. James; "a good two months before we'd any right to expect it; and all my arrange-

ments made, even down to the weekly washing. I'm sure I'd thought of everything, and planned everything, and nothing could have been straighter than it all would have been, if the baby had come to its time."

Grace listened wonderingly, but had no occasion to wonder long. Mrs. James bounced into the parlour. "What do you think, Grace? Priscilla Sprouter's baby was born last night."

"Priscilla was the married daughter, united to a prosperous young grocer in the small town of Chickfield, Sussex, about forty miles from Brierwood. The unarithmetic infant, which had arrived before it was due, was Mrs. James Redmayne's second grandchild and Mrs. James had solemnly pledged herself to pay a fortnight's visit to Chickfield whenever the event should take place, in order to attend to the general welfare of her daughter's person and household. The usual nurse would be engaged, of course; but Mrs. James was a power paramount over that hiring."

"The interesting event, however, was to have occurred in October, and all Mrs. James's arrangements were made accordingly: a reliable matron engaged to take the helm at Brierwood during her absence; a fortnight's suspension of those more solemn duties of brewing and preserving, which could not be performed without being duly provided for; and behold, here was a special messenger, mounted on a sturdy unknapp pony in the butcher's interest, come with a letter announcing the untimely advent of a fine boy."

"Fine, indeed!" cried aunt Hannah contemptuously. "And please will I come at once; for father—that's William Sprouter—is so uneasy?"

"I suppose you must go, aunt," said Grace dubiously.

"You suppose I must do you? And a sieve and a half of Orleans plums in the back kitchen. Who do you suppose is to look after them?"

"Couldn't Mrs. Bush make the jam, aunt, if you must go?"

"Of course Mrs. Bush could. Every one that can put a saucepan on the fire will tell you they can make jam; and nice stop it will be—a couple of inches deep in blue mould before it's been a month. No, Grace, I am not the woman to trust your father's property like that. I shall make the jam, if I drop; and I suppose I must start off to Chickfield as soon as it's made. And I should like to know who is to see after Mr. Walgrave's dinners when I'm gone?"

"Couldn't I manage that, aunt Hannah? I don't think Mr. Walgrave is very particular about his dinners."

"Not particular; no, of course not; as long as everything is done to a turn, a man seems easy to please; but just try him with a shoulder of lamb half raw, or a slice of salmon boiled to a mush, and then see what he'll say. However, I must go to Priscilla for a few days, at any rate, and things must take their chance here. I've sent Jack across to tell Mrs. Bush she must come directly; and I do hope you'll show a little steadiness for once in a way, and see that your father's goods aren't wasted. If Mr. Walgrave wasn't a very quiet kind of gentleman, I shouldn't care about leaving you; but he isn't like the common run of single men—there's no nonsense about him."

Grace blushed fiery red, and had to turn suddenly to the window to hide her face. Mrs. James was too busy to perceive her confusion, skimming about the room, peering into a great rosy store-cupboard in a corner by the fireplace, filling the tea-caddy and the sugar-canister, calculating how much colonial produce ought to be consumed during her absence.

"You'll give Mrs. Bush a quarter of a pound of tea and half a pound of sugar for the week, remember, Grace—not a grain more. And don't let her let them have butter's meat in the kitchen more than twice a week. If they can't eat good wholesome bacon, they must go without. Sarah knows the kind of dimmers I get for Mr. Walgrave; and Mrs. Bush is to cook for him. But be sure you see to everything with your own eyes, and give your orders to the butcher with your own lips. The bread-beans are to be eaten, mind, without any fuss about likes or dislikes; your uncle didn't sow them for the crows. And don't be giving all the dainties to Jack and Charley in puddings. I shall want to make damson cheese when I come back; and if they want to make themselves ill in their insides, there's plenty of windfalls that's good enough for that. And I should like to see those linen pillow-cases darned neatly when I come home. Miss Tomlin had a deal better have learnt you to mend house-linen than to *parlez vous Francais*. I'm sure anything I give you to darn hangs about till I'm sick of the sight of it."

"I'll do the best I can, aunt," said Grace meekly. "Shall you be away long, do you think?"

"How can I tell, child? If Priscilla and the baby go on well, I shan't stop more than a week at the outside. But she's a delicate young woman, and there's no knowing what turn things may take. I shan't stop longer than I can help, you may take my word for that. And now I'm going into the best parlour to tell Mr. Walgrave."

Grace sat down by the open window, fluttered strangely by this small domestic business. Her sharp eyes moved from her; a week of almost perfect freedom before her—she could not help thinking that in her aunt's absence she would see more of the man she loved. She knew that he had been obliged to diplomatise a good deal in order to spend half an hour with her, now and then, without creating suspicion. It would be different now. For one happy week they might meet without restraint. And then the end of all days would come, and they must part. The bitter parting must come sooner or later; he had told her so in sober seriousness. She tried very hard to realise the fact, but could not. She was too much a child; and a week seemed almost an eternity of happiness.

"Will he be glad?" she said to herself. "O! I wonder if he will be glad? If she could have looked into her lover's heart after he heard Mrs. Redmayne's announcement, she would have discovered that he was not glad."

"I wish I had gone away this morning, without any leave-taking," he said to himself; "to go now, when she has asked me to stay, would seem sheer brutality. And to stay, now that the dragon is going away, and we can be together all day long, is only heaping up misery for the future. I did not believe myself capable of being made unhappy by any woman; but it will be a hard struggle to forget this father's daughter. I wish I had never seen her, I wish I had never taken it into my head to

come here. Pahaw! I am I the kind of men to make a trouble out of any such sentimental absurdity as this? Why shouldn't I enjoy a week's innocent flirtation with a pretty girl, and then go back to my own world and forget her?"

And with this laudable intention Mr. Walgrave strolled out into the garden again, in the hope of meeting Grace.

He was disappointed, however, this time. Mrs. James was up to her eyes in preserving, and kept Grace in the kitchen with her, listening to solemn counsel upon all the details of domestic management. It was rather a hard thing to have to stop in the hot kitchen all through that lovely summer day, wiping out jam-pots, cutting and writing labels, and making herself useful in such small ways; but Grace bore the infliction very meekly. Tomorrow there would be perfect liberty.

Mr. Walgrave prowled round the garden two or three times, then stretched himself at full length in the orchard, and slumbered for a little in the drowsy August noontide—a slumber in which his dreams were not pleasant—awoke unfreshed, went back to the house and reconnoitred, caught a glimpse of Grace in the kitchen through a latched window half buried in ivy, lost his temper, and took up his fishing-rod and wandered out in search of an elderly and experienced pike he had been waging war with for the last six weeks; a wary brute, who thought no more of swallowing a hook than if it had been a sugar-plum, and had acquired, by long usage, a depraved appetite for fishing-tackle.

(To be continued.)

THE WATER-BABIES:

A FAIRY TALE FOR A LAND-BABY.

BY REV. CHARLES KINGSLEY, M. A.

CHAPTER V.—Continued.

"Now," said the baby, "come and help me, or I shall not have finished before my brothers and sisters come, and it is time to go home."

"What shall I do for you?" said Grace. "At this poor dear little rock; a great clumsy boulder came rolling by in the last storm, and knocked all its head off, and rubbed off all its flowers. And now I must plant it again with sea-weeds, and coral-lice, and anemones, and I will make it the prettiest little rock-garden on all the shore."

So they worked away at the rock, and planted it, and smoothed the sand down round it, and repaved the way they had till the tide began to turn. And then Tom heard all the other babies coming, laughing and singing and shouting and romping; and the noise they made was just like the noise of the ripple. So he knew that he had been hearing and seeing the water-babies all along; only he did not know them, because his eyes and ears were not opened.

And in they came, dozens and dozens of them, some bigger than Tom and some smaller, all in the neatest little white bathing-dresses; and when they found that he was a new baby they hugged him and kissed him, and then put him in the middle and danced round him on the sand, and there was no one so happy as poor little Tom.

"Now, then," they cried all at once, "we must come away home, we must come away home, or the tide will leave us dry. We've mended all the broken sea-weed, and put all the rock pools in order, and planted all the shells again in the sand, and nobody will see where the ugly storm swept in last week."

And this is the reason why the rock pools are always so neat and clean; because the water-babies come in shore after every storm, to sweep them out, and comb them down, and put them all to rights again.

Only when men are wasteful and dirty, and let sewers run into the sea, instead of putting the stuff upon the fields like theiry respectable souls; or throw herrings' heads, and dead dead-fish, or any other refuse, into the water; or in any way make a mess upon the shore, there the water-babies will not come, sometimes not for hundreds of years (for they cannot abide anything smelly or foul); but leave the sea-anemones and the crabs to clear away everything, till the good tidy sea has covered up all the dirt in soft mud and clean sand, where the water-babies can plant live cockles and whelks and mussel-shells and sea-cucumbers and golden-combs, and make a pretty live garden again, after man's dirt is cleared away. And that, I suppose, is the reason why there are no water-babies at any watering-place which I have ever seen.

And where is the home of the water-babies? In St. Brendan's fairy isle.

Did you never hear of the blessed St. Brendan, how he preached to the wild Irish, on the wild wild Kerry coast; and he and five other hermits, all they were weary and longed to rest? For the wild Irish would not listen to them, or come to confession and to mass, but liked better to dance and sing and drink the father of *yeen*, and knock each other over the head with stilted logs, and shoot each other from behind tar-dykes, and steal each other's cattle, and burn each other's houses; till St. Brendan and his friends were weary of them, for they would not learn to be peaceable Christians at all.

So St. Brendan went out to the point of old Dunmore, and looked over the old tide-way reeling round the Blaskets, at the end of all the world, and away into the ocean, and sighed—"Ah! that I had wings as a dove!" And far away, before the setting sun, he saw a blue fairy sea, and golden fairy islands, and he said, "These are the islands of the blessed." Then he and his friends got into a hawker, and sailed away and away to the westward, and were never heard of more. But the people who would not hear him were changed into gorrilas, and gorrilas they are until this day.

And when St. Brendan and the hermits came to that fairy isle, they found it overgrown with cedars, and full of beautiful birds; and he sat down under the cedars, and preached to all the birds in the air. And they liked his sermons so well that they told the fishes in the sea; and they came, and St. Brendan preached to them; and the fishes told the water-babies, who live in the caves every Sunday; and St. Brendan got quite a neat little Sunday school. And the water-babies taught the water-babies for a great many hundred years, till his eyes grew too dim to see, and his beard grew so long that he dared not to walk for fear of treading on it, and then he might have tumbled down. And at last he and the five hermits fell asleep under the cedar shades, and there they sleep until this day. But the fishes took to the water-babies, and taught them their lessons themselves.

And some say that St. Brendan will awake, and begin to teach the babies once more; but some think that he will sleep on, for better for worse, till the coming of the Conquerors. But on still clear summer evenings, when the sun sinks down into the sea, among golden clouds, capes and cloud-islands, and locks and friths of

azure sky, the sailors fancy that they see, away to westward, St. Brendan's fairy isle.

But whether men can see it or not, St. Brendan's isle once actually stood there; a great land out in the ocean, which has sunk and sunk beneath the sea. Old Plato called it Atlantis, and told strange tales of the wise men who lived there, and of the wars they fought in the old times. And from off that island came strange flowers, which huger still about this land:—the Cornish heath, and Cornish moneywort, and the delicate Venus's hair, and the London-pride which covers the Kerry mountains, and the little pink butterwort of Devon, and the great blue butterwort of Ireland, and the Commemara heath, and the bristle-fern of the Turk water-fall, and many a strange plant more; and fairy tokens left for wise men and good children from off St. Brendan's isle.

And there were the water-babies in thousands, more than Tom, or you either, could count. All the little children whom the good fairies take to be good and true, and whose fathers will not let all who are untalented and brought up heathens, and all who come to grief by ill-usage or ignorance or neglect; all the little children who are overland, or are given gin when they are young, or are let to drink out of hot kettles, or fall into the fire; all the little children in alleys and courts, and tumble-down cottages, who die by fever, and cholera, and measles, and scarlatina, and many complaints which no one has any business to have, and which no one will have some day, when folks have common sense; and all the little children who have been haled by cruel masters, and beaten and sold; they were all there, and called the babies of Bethlehem who were killed by wicked King Herod; for they were taken straight to Heaven long ago, as everybody knows, and we call them the Holy Innocents.

But I wish Tom had given up all his naughty tricks, and left off tormenting dumb animals, now that he had plenty of playfellows to amuse him. Instead of that, I am sorry to say, he would meddle with the creatures, all but the water-snakes, but they would stand no nonsense. So he tickled the madrepores, to make them shut up; and frightened the crabs, to make them hide in the sand and peep out at him with the tips of their eyes; and put stones into the anemones' mouths to make them fancy that their dinner was coming.

The other children warned him, and said, "Take care what you are at, Mrs. Bedonkoy-and-a-half is coming." But Tom never heeded them, being quite riotous with high spirits and good luck, till one Friday morning early, Mrs. Bedonkoy-and-a-half came indeed.

A very tremendous lady she was; and when the children saw her, they all stood in a row, very upright indeed, and smoothed down their bathing-dresses, and put their hands behind their backs, as if they were going to be examined by a schoolmistress.

And she had on a black bonnet, and a black shawl, and no ermine at all; and a pair of large green spectacles, and a great hooked nose, looked so much that the bridge of it stood quite up above her eyebrows, and under her arm she carried a great birch-rod. Indeed, she was so ugly that Tom was tempted to make faces at her; but did not; for he did not admire the look of the birch-rod under her arm.

And she looked at the children one by one, and seemed very much pleased with them, though she never asked them one question about how they were behaving; and then began giving them all sorts of nice sea-things—sea-cakes, sea-apples, sea-cucumbers, sea-lukeyes, sea-toffee; and to the very best of all she gave sea-lees, made out of sea-cows' cream, which never melt under water.

And, if you don't quite believe me, then just think—What is more cheap and plentiful than sea-rocks? Then why should there not be sea-toffee as well? And every one can find sea-lemons (ready quartered too) they will look for them at low-tide; and sea-grapes too sometimes, hanging in bunches; and, if you will go to Nice, you will find the fish-market full of sea-fruit, which they call *fruits de mer*; though I suppose they call them "fruits de mer" now, out of compliment to that most successful, and therefore most immaculate, potentate who is seemingly desirous of hearing the blessing pronounced on those who remove their neighbour's landmark. And, perhaps, that is the very reason why the place is called Nice, because there are so many nice things in the sea there; at least, if it is not, it ought to be.

Now little Tom watched all these sweet things given away, till his mouth watered, and his eyes grew as round as an owl's. For he hoped that his turn would come at last; and so it did. For the lady called him up, and held out her fingers with something in them, and popped it into his mouth; and, to his behold, it was a nasty cold hard pebble.

"You are a very cruel woman," said he, and began to whimper.

"And you are a very cruel boy; who puts pebbles into the sea-anemones' mouths, to take them in, and make them fancy that they had caught a good dinner! As you did to them, so I must do to you."

"Who told you that?" said Tom.

"You did yourself, this very minute."

Tom had never opened his lips; so he was very much taken aback indeed.

"Yes; every one tells me exactly what they have done wrong; and that without knowing it themselves. So there is no trying to hide anything from me. Now go, and be a good boy, and I will put no more pebbles in your mouth, if you put none in other creatures'."

"I did not know there was any harm in it," said Tom.

"Then you know now. People continually say that to me; but I tell them, if you don't know that fire burns, that is no reason that it should not burn you; and if you don't know that dirt breeds fever, that is no reason why the fever should not kill you. The lobster did not know that there was any harm in getting into the lobster-pot; but it caught him all the same."

"Dear me," thought Tom, "she knows everything!" And so she did indeed.

"And so, if you do not know that things are wrong, that is no reason why you should not be punished for them; though not so much, not so much, my little man" (and the lady looked kindly, after all, "as if you did know.")

"Well, you are a little hard on a poor lad," said Tom.

"Not at all; I am the best friend you ever had in all your life. But I will tell you; I cannot help punishing people when they do wrong. I like it no more than they do; I am often very, very sorry for them; but they do it; and I cannot help it. If I tried not to do it, I should do it all the same. For I work by machinery, just like an engine; and am full of wheels and springs inside; and am wound up very carefully, so that I cannot help doing it."

"Was it long ago since they wound you up?" asked Tom. For he thought, the cunning little fellow, "she will run down some day; or they may forget to wind her up, as old Grimes used to forget to wind up his watch when he came in from the public-house; and then I shall be safe."

"I was wound up once and for all, so long ago that I forget all about it."

"Dear me," said Tom, "you must have been made a long time!"

"I never was made, my child; and I shall go

for ever and over; for I am as old as Eternity, and yet as young as Time."

And there came over the lady's face a very curious expression—very solemn, and very sad; and yet very, very sweet. And she looked up and away, as if she were gazing through the sea, and through the sky, at something far, far off; and as she did so, there came such a quiet, tender, patient, helpful smile over her face, that Tom thought for the moment that she did not look ugly at all. And no more she did; for she was like a great many people who have not a pretty feature in their faces, and yet are lovely to behold, and draw little children's hearts to them at once; because, though the house is plain enough, yet from the windows a beautiful and good spirit is looking forth.

And Tom smiled in her face, she looked so pleasant for the moment. And the strange fairy smiled too, and said:

"Yes. You thought me very ugly just now, did you not?"

Tom hung down his head, and grew very red about the ears.

"And I am very ugly. I am the ugliest fairy in the world; and I shall be, till people behave themselves as they ought to do. And then I shall grow as handsome as my sister, who is the loveliest fairy in the world; and her name is Mrs. Dossywouldhedonely. So she begins where I end, and I begin where she ends; and those who will not listen to her must listen to me, as you will see. Now, all of you run away, except Tom; and he may stay and see what I can do for him. It will be a very good warning for him to begin with, and before he goes to school."

"Now, Tom, every Friday I come down here, and call up all who have ill-used little children, and serve them as they served the children."

And at that Tom was frightened, and crept under a stone; which made the two crabs who lived there very angry, and frightened their friend the butter-fish into flapping hysterics; but he would not move for them.

And first she called up all the doctors who give little children so much physic (they were most of them old ones; for the young ones have learnt better, all but a few army surgeons, who still fancy that a baby's inside is much like a Scotch grandier's), and she set them all in a row; and very much they looked; for they knew what was coming.

And first she pulled all their teeth out; and then she bled them all round; and then she dosed them with calomel, and jalap, and salts and senna, and brimstone, and treacle; and horrible faces they made; and then she gave them a great emetic of mustard and water, and no fashions; and began all over again; and that was the way she spent the morning.

And then she called up a whole troop of foolish babies, who pinch up their children's waists and loaves; and she laid them all up in tight stays, so that their waists were as thin as their noses grew red, and their hands and feet swelled; and then she examined their poor feet into the most dreadfully tight boots, and made them all dance, which they did most clumsily indeed; and then she asked them how they liked it; and when they said not at all, she let them go; because they had only done it out of foolish fashion, fancying it was for their children's good, as if wasps' waists and pigs' toes could be pretty, or wholesome, or of any use to anybody.

Then she called up all the careless nursery-mothers, and stuck pins into them all over, and wheeled them about in perambulators with their heads and arms hanging over the sides, till they were quite sick and stupid, and would have had sun-strokes; but, being under the water, they could only have water-strokes; which, I assure you, are nearly as bad, as you will find if you will try to sit under a mill wheel. And what—when you hear a rumbling at the bottom of the sea, sailors will tell you that it is a ground-swell; but now you know better. It is the old lady wheeling the matts about in perambulators.

And by that time she was so tired, she had to go to luncheon. And of the mischief she set to work again, and called upon the cruel schoolmasters—whole regiments and brigades of them; and, when she saw them, she frowned most terribly, and set to work in earnest, as if the best part of the day's work was to come. More than half of them were nasty, dirty, frowzy, grubby, smelly old monks, who, because they dare not hit a man of their own size, amused themselves with beating little children instead; as you may see in the picture of old Pope Gregory (good man and true though he was, when he meddled with things which he did not understand), teaching children to sing their *fi-ri-fi-ri-fi* with an *en-fer* at the end of it; and that they were never had any children of their own; they took into their heads (as some folks do still) that they were the only people in the world who knew how to manage children; and they first brought into England, in the old Anglo-Saxon times, the fashion of treating free boys, and girls too, worse than you would treat a dog or a horse; but Mrs. Bedonkoy-and-a-half has caught them all long ago; and given them many a taste of their own rods; and much good may it do them.

And she boxed their ears, and thumped them over the head with rulers, and pumpled their hands with canes, and told them that they told stories, and were false, and that sort of bad people; and the more they were very indignant, and stood upon their honour, and declared that they were told the truth, the more she declared that they were not, and that they were telling lies; and at last she bled them all round soundly with her great birch rod, and set them each an imposition of three hundred thousand lines of Hebrew to learn by heart before she came back next Friday. And at that they cried and howled so, that their breaths came all up through the sea like bubbles out of soda-water; and that is one reason of the bubbles in the sea. There are others; but that is the one which principally concerns little boys. And by that time she was so tired that she was glad to stop; and, indeed, she had done a very good day's work.

Tom did not quite dislike the old lady; but he could not help thinking her a little spiteful; and no wonder if she was, poor old soul; for, if she has to wait to grow handsome till people do as they would be done by, she will have to wait a very long time.

Poor old Mrs. Bedonkoy-and-a-half! she has a great deal of hard work before her, and had better have been born a washerwoman, and stood over a tub all day; but you see, people cannot always choose their own profession.

But Tom longed to ask her one question; and after all, whenever she looked at him, she did not look cross at all; and now and then there was a funny smile in her face, and she chuckled to herself in a way which gave Tom courage, and at last he said:

"Pray, ma'am, may I ask you a question?"

"Certainly, my little dear."

"Why don't you bring all the bad masters here, and serve them out too? The butlers that knock about the poor coffee-boys; and the millers that file off their lads' noses and hammer their fingers; and all the master sweeps, like my master Grimes? I saw him fall into the water long ago; so I surely expected he would have been here. I'm sure he was bad enough to me."

Then the old lady looked so very stern that Tom was quite frightened, and sorry that he had been so bold. But she was not angry with him. She only answered, "I look after them all the

week round; and they are in a very different place from this, because they knew that they were doing wrong."

"She spoke very quietly; but there was something in her voice which made Tom tingle from head to foot, as if he had got into a shoal of sea-nettle."

"But these people," she went on, "did not know that they were doing wrong; they were only stupid and impatient; and therefore I only punish them till they become patient, and learn to use their common sense like reasonable beings. But as for chimney-sweeps, and collier-boys, and mill-lads, my sister has set good people to stop all that sort of thing; and very much obliged to her I am; for if she could only stop the cruel masters from ill-using poor children, I should grow handsome at least a thousand years sooner. And now do you be a good boy, and do as you would be done by, which they did not; and then, when my sister, Mrs. Dossywouldhedonely comes on Sunday, perhaps she will take notice of you, and teach you how to behave. She understands that better than I do." And so she went.

Tom was very glad to hear that there was no chance of meeting Grimes again, though he was a little sorry for him, considering that he used sometimes to give him the leavings of the beer; but he determined to be a very good boy all Saturday; and he was, for he never frightened one crab, nor tickled any five corals, nor put stones into the sea-anemones' mouths, to make them fancy they had got a dinner; and, when Sunday morning came, sure enough, Mrs. Dossywouldhedonely came to see him. And the little children began dancing and clapping their hands, and Tom danced too with all his might.

And as for the pretty lady, I cannot tell you what the colour of her hair was, or of her eyes; no more could Tom; for, when any one looks at her, all they can think of is, that she has the sweetest, kindest, tenderest, funniest, merriest face they ever saw, or want to see. But Tom saw that she was a very tall woman, as tall as her sister; but instead of being grumpy, and ill-humoured, and sealy, and prickly, like her, she was the most nice, soft, fat, smooth, pussy, cuddly, delicious creature who ever nursed a baby; and she understood babies thoroughly. For she had plenty of her own, whole rows and regiments of them, and has to this day. And all her delight was, whenever she had a spare moment, to play with babies, in which she showed herself a woman of sense; for babies are the best company, and the pleasantest playfellows, in the world; at least, so all the wise people in the world think. And therefore when the children saw her, they naturally all caught hold of her, and pulled her till she sat down on a stone, and climbed into her lap, and clung round her neck, and caught hold of her hands; and then they all put their thumbs into their mouths, and began sucking and nursing like so many kittens, as they ought to have done. While those who could get nowhere else sat down on the sand, and cuddled her feet; so no one, you know, wears shoes in the water, except boards of bathing-women, who are afraid of the water-babies pinching their bony toes. And Tom stood staring at them; for he could not understand what it was all about.

"And who are you, your little darlings?" she said.

"Oh, that is the new baby!" they all cried, pulling their thumbs out of their mouths; "and he never had any mother;" and they all put their thumbs back again, for they did not wish to lose any time.

"Then I will be his mother, and he shall have the very best place; so get out all of you, this moment!"

And she took up two great armfuls of babies—two hundred under one arm, and thirteen hundred under the other—and threw them away, right and left, into the water. But they minded it no more than the naughty boys in Straw-peter minded when St. Nicholas dipped them in his inkstand; and did not even take their thumbs out of their mouths; but came paddling and wriggling back to her like so many tadpoles, and you could see nothing of her from head to foot for the swarm of little babies.

But she took Tom in her arms, and laid him in the softest place of all, and kissed him, and patted him, and talked to him, tenderly and low, such things as he had never heard before in his life; and Tom looked up into her eyes, and loved her, and looked, till he felt fast asleep from pure love.

And when he woke, she was telling the children a story. And what story did she tell them? One story she told them, which begins every Christmas Eve, and yet never ends at all for ever and ever; and, as she went on, the children put their thumbs out of their mouths, and looked quite seriously, but not sooty at all, for she never told them anything sad; and Tom listened too, and never grew tired of listening. And he listened so long that he fell asleep again, and when he woke, the lady was nursing him still.

"Now," said the Fairy to Tom, "will you be a good boy for my sake, and torment no more sea-beasts, till I come back?"

"And you will come back again?" said poor little Tom.

"Of course I will, your little duck. I should like to take you with me, and cuddle you all the way, only I must not;" and away she went.

So Tom really tried to be a good boy, and for-monted no sea-beasts after that, as long as he lived; and he is quite alive, I assure you, still.

Oh, how good little boys ought to be, who have kind pussy mamma's to cuddle them and tell them stories, and how afraid they ought to be of growing naughty, and bringing tears into their mamma's pretty eyes!

(To be continued.)

GEMS OF THOUGHT.

All great men are in some degree inspired. It matters not how the heart lives if the heart is right.

All true friendship soothes the heart, clarifies the mind, and heightens the soul.

There is no whitening of his turban who bought the soap-suds.—*Turkish Proverb.*

Times, days are lost in which we do no good; those worse than lost in which we do evil.

In general those parents have most reverence who most despise it, for he that lives well cannot be despised.

The modest talents rest in indolence; and the more moderate, by industry, may be actually improved.

We may silently observe things we need not speak of; in this we learn many a profitable lesson without the cost of imprudence.

A Man who is not able to make a bow to his own conscience every morning, is hardly in a condition to respectably salute the world at any other time of the day.

The man who can vary his pursuits, and has time for everything—for himself, for his wife, for his children, for his friends—alone understands what it is to live.

Time is pointed with a look before, and held behind, sitting, and thereby that we must take time (as we say) by the forelock, for when it is once passed there is no recalling it.

How simple it would be if a man's word were as good as his bond; if we never had to weigh it, and still had to see one man and another, and inquire about it, and find out whether it was true or not; if man's statements could be relied upon, and men could trust each other, what an impetus would be given to the world's progress.

