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THE HEARTHSTONE
DEVOTED TO CHOICE LITERATURE ROMANCE &c.

VOLUME III. GEO. E. DESBARATS, No. 1, PLACE D'ARMES HILL. MONTREAL, SATURDAY, DECEMBER 28, 1872. TERMS, $2.00 PER ANNUM. SINGLE COPIES, 5 CENTS. No. 52.

ON A DEAD ROSE.

Nay, do not touch that faded flower,
Albeit both scent and hue have flown;
For it may still retain a power
Some gentle heart may joy to own.
Hidden beneath each withered leaf,
A chastening spell, to Memory dear,
May yield that burthened heart relief
When Hope itself is sere!

There let it lie, 'mid records sweet,
By feeling prompted, genius graced,
Type of their fate memorial meet
Of "young affections run to waste!"
Left on their stem—(how fugitive!)—
Those cherished leaves had soon been shed:
But thus embalmed, will seem to live
Till Memory's self be dead!

# DESMORO;

OR,

# THE RED HAND.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "TWENTY STRAWS," "VOICES FROM THE LUMBER-ROOM," "THE HUMMING-BIRD," ETC., ETC.

## CHAPTER XIV.

Braymount was full of consternation and horror; the sad and terrible tale had travelled from door to door; and groups of gossips were talking it over at the corners of almost every street, lane, and alley in the town.

The Braymount evening *Advertiser* contained a long account of the robbery and dreadful murder of Mrs. Polderbrant, late an actress at the theatre royal belonging to the aforesaid town, and stated that the man charged with having perpetrated the revolting deed was one Desmoro Desmoro, a young actor attached to Mr Jellico's company.

On the night following Mrs. Polderbrant's death, although Mr. Mackmillerman was announced to appear in one of his favourite characters, not a creature came near the theatre, the doors of which had to be reclosed and the lights extinguished.

Comfort Shavings was seated by her sick father's bedside, her eyelids swollen with weeping, and her bosom sore with heavy grief. At first she would not credit the frightful story of Desmoro's guilt; but when she recalled a certain conversation she had once held with him concerning Mrs. Polderbrant's probable worldly possessions, her belief in his integrity became somewhat shaken.

"Oh dear, oh dear!" she sobbed aloud. "And it was that he might be enabled to purchase books to read to me that he robbed poor Mrs. Polderbrant."

But the young girl did not understand that Desmoro's life was in actual danger, that he might be doomed to suffer the extreme penalty of the law for the fearful crime of which he stood accused. Comfort was in ignorance of this, else her anxiety and grief on his account would have known no bounds.

She had no one near her to whom she could talk of Desmoro, no one to sympathize with her feelings in this matter. Her father was lying in an almost imbecile state, scarcely comprehending what was passing around him, and it would be quite useless to trouble him with this terrible tale.

By-and-by Comfort repaired to the theatre, in order, if possible, to hear further particulars relative to Desmoro's position, but she found that there was no rehearsal in progress, and that all theatrical business affairs were at a standstill for the present.

First she questioned one member of the company, then another, respecting her young friend; but those she questioned only shook their heads and remained silent.

Jellico could see nothing but ruin staring him in the face did he remain at Braymount. Mr. Mackmillerman was again announced to appear in one of his favorite characters, yet not a soul troubled the box-office for places or tickets for the approaching night of performance.

There was nothing left but flight for the whole *troupe*, as the late tragical affair had cast a terrible stigma upon each and every one of the members of that *troupe*. Generally speaking, country people have mighty strong prejudices of their own, and in that respect the inhabitants of Braymount were not different from their neighbours. And the theatre had suddenly become a sort of plague-spot; a place of loathsome horror to those worthy but weak-minded townsfolk, who, one and all, shunned it, vowing never to yield to its attractions more.

"There's nothing for me to do but to break up the whole concern," said the manager, addressing the members of his company, now assembled in the green-room of the theatre. "I am not a man of means, and cannot pretend to stand up and struggle against this unexpected and terrible circumstance. Jellico's name is disgraced everlastingly; not from his own wrong-doing, but through this most unhappy and terrible tragedy, regarding which I believe Desmoro Desmoro to possess no more knowledge than my own innocent self. There is a mystery in the affair altogether, a mystery I cannot attempt to fathom. Poor Mrs. Polderbrant, I feel convinced, was the victim of a delusion; but she is gone, and heaven can only say how this case will end, how far this most unfortunate young man will be made to suffer for the crime laid to his charge?"

Comfort listened to the manager in breathless agitation and alarm.

What would they do to Desmoro, supposing he were really to be proved guilty?

Oh! she dreaded to ask that question, dreaded even to put it to herself.

She sat silent, a dizzy sensation in her brain, a deathly sickness gathering round her heart. None present surmised the state of her feelings at this aching moment; indeed, none had time to do so, for each and all had enough to do to think of themselves.

She understood that Jellico's company was disbanded; that she and her sick father were now without an engagement—without either money or friends, and that understanding had fairly stunned her.

Comfort had known nothing but pinching throughout all her young life-time, and for her afflicted father's sake, more than for her own, she was lamenting this change in their worldly condition, and the poverty and misery which now threatened them. From her earliest youth the clown's daughter had been accustomed to reflect on many matters—on matters which were far, far beyond her experience and her years—and to contend with a host of little trials (great ones to her) with scant, and not unfrequently with positive want itself. She was quite sensible then of what was in store for them, of the troubles which were staring them in the face; and it was no wonder that her young spirit quailed within her as she contemplated the dark present, and the still darker future.

There was a doctor's bill to be paid she remembered, and likewise many other debts; her father's illness had run her into several pecuniary straits, out of which she could not possibly see her way.

She was almost penniless—her parent still ill—what, what was she to do—what *could* she do?

She quitted the green-room with heavy, lagging steps, thinking of Desmoro—of the dead Mrs. Polderbrant, and of all the distress and disgrace that had been brought upon Manager Jellico and his company.

When she reached the stage entrance Pidgers accosted her.

His manner was cringing in the extreme. He marked her swollen eyelids, and he drew his own wise conclusions as to wherefore they were swollen.

"How's Maister Shavins, Miss Comfort?" he asked, in a whining tone.

"Not much better, I thank you," was the low-voiced reply.

"An' he'd be wuss if he on'y knowed about all this sight of moitheration, wouldn't he, miss?"

"Yes," was the vacant answer.

"Of course Maistor Desmoro 'll be hanged!" said the wretch.

"Hanged!" shuddered the girl, leaning against the wall for support; "who will be hanged?"

"Why, him—the prisoner, miss; Maister Desmoro Desmoro, to be sure!"

"No, no!" she half shrieked; "no, no! He is not guilty!"

"It would be a precious good job for him if ye could prove that he aren't," returned the man coarsely. "Who do you think killed Mrs. Polderbrant, if *he* didn't?"

"I—I don't know," she stammered in terror, her whole face ghastly to behold. "It is all too terrible to contemplate," she added, making her way to the outer door, her knees smiting each other as she walked, a death-like faintness creeping over her.

Suddenly she clutched at the wall, seeking its support; then her fragile limbs gave way, she tottered forward and sank into a chair.

At this instant a carriage rolled up to the stage entrance, and, after a pause, Mr. Mackmillerman was at Comfort's side.

Poor girl! She was too much prostrated by her sorrows and her terrors to refuse the sympathy of any one. No marvel, then, that she listened to his soothing words, now poured into her ears, and, listening to them, that they afforded her some consolation.

Mr. Mackmillerman was old enough to be her father, and, taking that fact into consideration, she, to a certain extent, suffered him to gain her confidence.

The gentleman who had driven the Cerberus into his chimney corner, talked to Comfort in subdued tones, none of which reached Pidgers's ears, although these ears were strained to their very utmost in vain endeavours to catch a stray word here and there.

"You are far too unwell to proceed hence alone," observed the actor, addressing his companion. "Here is my carriage at the door, and I beg that you will allow me to see you safely home."

"No, no, thank you," she returned. "I shall be better in a few moments. I must not trouble you."

"Nay, it would be a pleasure to do anything for *you!*" he rejoined in a gallant manner, yet with the utmost respect in all his tones.

"I think I'd better speak to Mr. Jellico first—he might be able to advise me what to do," faltered poor Comfort, at a loss how to act or what to say at the time.

"I will not only advise, but assist you," he answered quickly. "I have both the will and the means to do so, if you will not thrust aside the hand of friendship now extended towards you."

"I do not know how to act," was he bewildered reply.

"I will go home with you, see your father, and instruct you what will be the best for you to do," he responded persuasively. "Come! Why should you not trust me as you would Mr. Jellico? Am I a bear, that you are thus afraid of me?"

"I am not af aid of you."

"Then wherefore thus reject my courtesies?"

She did not answer him. Her bosom was overflowing with an accumulation of sorrow, and her tears were ready to break forth afresh.

At length she let him lead her to and place her by his side within the equipage, which was driven away at once in the direction of Comfort's lodgings.

## CHAPTER XV.

Col. Symure had well-nigh fretted himself to death on his son's account; but it was not until the second morning after the occurrence of the robbery and the death of Mrs. Polderbrant, that a paper, containing a full and particular account of the case, fell into his hands. The name of Desmoro first attracted his notice, then he read on and on, until he had become master of the whole matter.

He uttered no sound; but the paper was clutched fast in his hands, and his teeth penetrated his lip, and brought forth a gush of crimson fluid.

At this time Caroline was pouring out his cup of chocolate; and Percy, who was suffering from a slight attack of the gout, which had confined him to the house for the last few days, was eating his breakfast, paying particular attention to a certain dainty French dish, and too much engaged to notice his brother's excited ways.

Colonel Symure turned the sheet of intelligence round and round, and always returned to the same terror fraught article, which he read over and over again, until the printed letters seemed to scorch his eyes and brain, and nearly drove him mad.

"You do not eat your breakfast," remarked Mrs. Symure, fixing her suspicious eyes on her husband's face.

He started, dropped the paper, and looked at her for a few seconds, before he could find voice to make her any reply.

"My breakfast? Ah, true!" he said hollowly, regaining possession of the newspaper and staring at his plate like one whose wits were far away.

"What ails you?" she asked, with some asperity in her accents.

"Eh?" ejaculated Percy, for an instant looking up from his plate. "Take one of those *cotelettes de mouton*, they are cooked to perfection; I can recommend them."

"Thanks; I have finished breakfast," the Colonel answered, scarcely conscious of what he was saying.

"What! finished breakfast before you have even touched it?" cried Caroline. "More mystery, Colonel Symure!" she continued, in taunting syllables.

"Mystery!" repeated Percy, again glancing up from his plate, the contents of which had been rapidly disappearing piece after piece. "What's it all about, Des, eh?"

Colonel Symure's face was first white then red, and his heart was beating fast and painfully.

Oh, the torture of this hour, and the torture he was yet anticipating!

Once, twice, and thrice his secret was on his very lips, on the point of being revealed to his wife; but the fear he had of her thrust it back again into his breast, and kept it there.

After the meal was over, Caroline, who had subsided into a fit of the sullens, left the room, and the brothers were alone together.

Scarcely had the door closed upon his wife, when the Colonel sprang up and began to pace the floor backwards and forwards in the utmost perturbation.

Percy had taken up a sporting chronicle, and was lazily inspecting its columns, carelessly humming to himself all the while.

Presently he looked at his brother, put down the sheet, and moved uneasily in his chair.

"What the deuce ails you, Des?" he inquired, somewhat impatiently, his visage assuming a still redder hue. "Can't you sit down and let your breakfast digest itself in peace; but I forgot, you eat none; while, on the contrary, I enjoyed mine amazingly. Do sit down, Des, you give me the fidgets to see you marching to and fro in that stupid fashion. Ah, you never felt a tinge of the gout or you would understand what I suffer with that villainous complaint, and would avoid worrying me as you are doing now."

"Great heaven!" exclaimed the Colonel, suddenly stopping in front of his brother's chair. "Don't be so utterly selfish, Percy, don't imagine that this world was made expressly for you!"

"Selfish! I declare, Des——"

"Remember that others suffer as well as yourself; and learn that at this moment I am enduring an anguish most intolerable, an anguish such as you dream not of."

"Bless me, Des! Where do you feel ill?"

"Here, and here!" the Colonel answered, touching first his breast and then his brow.

"Heart and brain together!" cried Percy. "A bad case, I should say. It is strange that I never heard you complain until now. You'd better consult your medical man at once; I should do so."

"Percy," said the Colonel, taking a chair opposite to his brother, and speaking severely, "Percy, do you think that you entertain a single atom of feeling for me?"

"Jove, what an odd question, to be sure!" returned the other. "'Pon honour, I shall begin to doubt your sanity if you go on at this rate. I recollect now once being told that our father's great grandsire was a most eccentric person, who did all sorts of queer things; I hope that you have not inherited this malady, that——"

"Pshaw! Percy, Percy, if I go mad it will be with sorrow for what I have done—for the great wrong I once committed."

"Oh, dear, dear! Is it the old subject brought up again? Why not let it rest—*I* should?"

"I know you would," said the Colonel, in a marked tone. "Read that," he added, giving him the paper containing the account of Desmoro's apprehension and the fearful charge preferred against him, and placing his finger on a particular paragraph, "Read that, and then wonder that you see me in as calm a state as I am."

"As sure as I live, there's a fit of gout in store for *me*," sighed Percy Symure, as he reluctantly prepared himself to obey his brother's wishes.

Then there ensued a pause. Presently Percy gave utterance to a prolonged whistle, and laid down the sheet, his countenance absolutely purple with amazement and horror at what he had just perused.

The Colonel now started up and renewed his marching to and fro—he could not sit still; the tempest in his brain and heart would not let him have any rest.

"The young ruffian!" exclaimed Percy, in great disgust. "Here again have I preserved you from acting foolishly; here again have you cause to bless your stars that you have had such a cool-headed adviser as myself. But for me you would have had this villainous, sanguinary miscreant on your hands; you would have owned him before all the world as your son—as a legitimate Symure. But I felt that he was a scoundrel from the very beginning; and I believe I told you as much—didn't I? At all events, if I didn't express my opinion of him in words, I——"

"Cease, Percy, to congratulate yourself on your boasted foresight!" broke forth the Colonel, abruptly stopping in his walk. "Cease; for I frankly tell you that I blame you, and you alone, for all I am suffering—for all I shall yet have to suffer. You were my elder brother, my monitor and guardian, and you should have counselled me to act justly and mercifully; you should have led my wayward steps out of the crooked path into the straight one, you should——"

"Zounds!" interrupted the listener; but the Colonel heeded him not, and still continued in the same excited strain as before.

"The lad is falsely accused. I could stake my life upon his honesty in word and deed: and I will move both heaven and earth in order to prove his innocence."

Here Percy Symure groaned audibly.

"Say, will you give me your assistance in this painful affair? Will you undertake the breaking of this matter to Caroline, so that I may be enabled to stir freely in the service of my son—will you—"

"Will I lay myself up with a confounded fit of the gout—will I bring upon myself the rage of two vixenish women? Not I, i'faith! Though my locks be grey, I value their possession too well to suffer them to be combed by Caroline's fingers. Ye powers! What a mistake I committed in coming down here for peace! Why, there have been nothing but wars ever since my arrival; I shall run away instanter; I shall, indeed, since I have discovered that I have a madman for a brother."

"Oh, Percy, Percy!"

"Better to be in hot water with Lucy, than to be scalded by the whole family. In other words, Des, if you have resolved upon rushing headlong into disgrace and ruin—of claiming a thief and murderer for your truly begotten son, —I'll tell my man to pack up directly, and I'll be off. I couldn't remain here to go through such scenes as Caroline will create when she hears of the existence of—I shudder to name the wicked monster—but you understand."

"I know well what I shall receive at the hands of my wife, should I ever feel myself compelled to avow to her my secret," said the Colonel. "But did I apprehend from her twice as much, I must do my duty in this unhappy business. But be assured on this point, I will not do anything rashly; I will endeavour to spare the members of my family all useless trouble, disgrace, and pain. Will that assurance content you, Percy?"

"I do not quite comprehend the meaning of your words," the brother returned, very fretfully.

"Unless I am absolutely necessitated to reveal to my wife and others the secret of my

DESMORO'S DESPAIR.

first marriage, and the birth of my son, I promise, most solemnly, not to do so."

"Yes, I comprehend," said Percy, shaking his head, doubtfully. "But that won't do; no, my advice is, that you apply for leave of absence from your regiment, and leave Braymount for Paris—dear, delightful Paris!—whither I will most joyfully accompany you. Depend upon it, Des, I am counselling you for your good, both now and to come. Leave this young vagrant of a stroller to fight through his own dark doings, and cease to concern yourself at all about him."

Colonel Symure was silent. His brother's specious tongue had but little influence over him now. His better feelings had been aroused within his breast—feelings which could not be overcome by the sophistry of mere words.

Just at this moment there came a sturdy ringing at the house-door, and presently a servant appeared with an official despatch in his hands, and the sergeant of the Colonel's regiment at his heels

"Eh! what news is afloat, sergeant?" asked Colonel Symure, in surprise, breaking open the sealed missive as he spoke.

"There's a riot at Cleghorn, I believe, Colonel," replied the soldier.

The officer changed colour, as he perused the despatch, while his brother blandly smiled, and played with his whiskers.

Not an instant was to be lost. Colonel Symure had to don his regimentals at once, and march forth to check the riotous affairs at Cleghorn.

"By Jove! a most fortunate event!" cried Percy within himself. "There is surely some watchful spirit over Des, that has called him away at this critical time, just as he was about to play the fool, and bring destruction on us all!"

Colonel Symure left Braymount with an aching heart. But he was a soldier, and the stern call of duty he was bound to obey.

Percy now wholly recovered himself. His brother was removed far from Braymount, to a place where he might probably be detained some weeks, during which time this Desmoro Desmoro's fate would be irrevocably sealed.

Percy rubbed his hands, and inwardly blessed all malecontents. Nothing more fortunate than this sudden outbreak at Cleghorn could possibly have happened to Des, he thought.

Mrs. Symure became even more sullen than before. Her husband was removed out of her sight now, and her suspicious temper worked itself up into a state of perfect ferment. She felt that the Colonel was keeping some secret from her; and having that feeling, her ungenerous mind imagined all sort of evil things about him; and she was mentally accusing him of committing almost every wicked deed in creation; and had she not had a guest in the person of her brother-in-law, she would have followed the Colonel into the thickest of the fray, regardless of every danger, so long as she but succeeded in tormenting him, and could make him as miserable as herself.

## CHAPTER XVI.

From a *post-mortem* examination of Mrs. Polderbrant's body, it had been satisfactorily proved that she had not died from the effects of the robber's blow. The immediate cause of her death had been fright—the shock her nervous system had received on that fatal night.

Jellico felt some relief on hearing the above intelligence. Desmoro's life was not in jeopardy, and his conscience was not stained with a fellow-creature's blood.

Desmoro, the supposed criminal, was brought up before the county magistrate, and formally examined by him.

Unfortunate Desmoro! his cup of misery was now brimming over. All the previous night the poor prisoner had been picturing to himself the scene of trial he was now an actor in.

Jellico was present at this time; so, likewise, was Pidgers.

The confused evidence of the latter in nowise assisted our hero; but, on the contrary, flung a doubt and mystery aroung all his late doings.

The magistrate, who was not a man of even mediocre intelligence, did not trouble himself much to investigate the affair. He soon arrived at a conclusion; and that, too, without any particular consideration on his part.

"Young man," he said, in a hard voice, "the evidence is against you!"

Desmoro started, and gazed around him with dazed faculties.

"What have you to say for yourself?" added the justice, in accents the same as before.

"I am innocent, sir—I am innocent of all knowledge of the deed of which I stand accused!" Desmoro answered, his head erect—tones full of honesty and pride.

The magistrate looked full of doubt, and shook his head; and the prisoner went on endeavouring to defend himself, but all without the slightest avail.

"I am very sorry, young man," said the justice; "but your assertions—earnest as they are—will not overbalance plain facts. The testimony implicates you so directly, that I must order you back to prison, to answer to a charge of house-breaking and robbery, with serious violence as well."

Desmoro bowed his head submissively. He felt that his voice would be unavailing: that nothing he could say would alter the doom of his destiny.

He cast an appealing look at Jellico (whose eyes were filled with sympathy), and another at the villain Pidgers, but disdained to utter a word further.

To say that Desmoro was agonized, wretched, were to poorly express the dismay which had seized upon his soul. Heavily ironed, he was conveyed back to prison, there to await his coming trial.

His heart sank within his breast as he was conducted along the dark, echoing, stone corridor, and the iron door of his cell swung back to receive him. But he uttered no sound, and walked steadily onward into the grim place assigned him.

Desmoro had no stars of hope in his firmament: clouds of despair—black, lowering clouds only hung over him.

The door of his cell was closed upon him, and the gaoler's steps were fading on his ear. A faint light penetrated through the thickly-barred window (which was far above his reach); and now a solemn stillness pervaded the place—a stillness that was only disturbed at intervals, when the neighbouring church bells tolled forth the successive hours.

He stretched himself on his hard, narrow couch, and reviewed his unhappy position—reviewed it thoroughly.

All before and around him was utter darkness. The person whose word, had such been honestly spoken, might have established his entire innocence, had refused to speak the truth, and had given a confused and contradictory evidence; which, being managed cleverly, had had the effect of convincing the magistrate that Desmoro was guilty of the crime imputed to him.

Pidgers was supremely ignorant, 'tis true; and he was most subtle and plausible, as well. He had pretended to scruple at swearing to this circumstance, or to that; and he had done so with such apparent good faith, that all present were impressed with an idea that he was aware of the prisoner's criminality, and was doing his uttermost to conceal it. Not a single person saw through the man's wickedness—none even suspected him of evil.

Desmoro had forgotten the late scene of altercation which had taken place between Pidgers and himself, and that it was likely the man might owe him a grudge for the unmannerly shaking he had received at his hands. Desmoro's nature was far too generous to harbour vengeful feelings against any one; and he ever charitably judged the dispositions of others by his own.

Poor, parentless fellow! Lying here in his dreary cell, can you wonder if he began to murmur over his lamentable fate, and wish that he had never been born!

Mrs. Polderbrant was in her grave: she whom he had deemed his staunch friend was no more. She had died, leaving behind her a fearful accusation against him; an accusation through which the liberty of all his future days stood imperilled.

Yet he did not reproach her memory; he thought gently of the dead— gently of every one.

While he was thus lying, the gaoler unlocked his cell-door, and Samuel Jellico stood before the young prisoner, who started up on the instant.

The worthy manager looked much disturbed, and deadly pale.

The gaoler now withdrew to the door, and Desmoro and Jellico were alone together.

"You are surprised at my visit?" said the latter, in a tone of interrogation.

"Not very much, sir. You are so good, that no kindly act of yours could surprise me."

"I am come to ask you to make a clean breast to me, Desmoro; in other words, to beg you to confess to me the whole truth of this dreadful business."

"I have nothing to confess to you or any one, sir. I can only repeat my former protestations—only declare that I am wholly innocent of the charge made against me."

"Are you aware that this terrible affair has completely ruined me? The theatre is closed, the company broken up, and its members suddenly sent adrift, to find engagements wheresoever they can."

"Is it so, indeed, sir?" stammered Desmoro, with white, quivering lips, his thoughts at once reverting to Comfort and her sick father. "Heaven help me! Misfortune and I are twain! How I grieve at being the cause of such trouble to you and others! But of how innocent I am of all wrong, He above can judge! I can say no more, sir; I am fairly weary of making protestations, which gain credence from no one!"

"Shall I write to Mr. Thetford?" pursued the kind-hearted manager. "He has means, and may possibly assist you in some way or other. You cannot, at the present moment, rally around you too many friends; you will require all that you can muster."

Desmoro shuddered as he listened.

"No," said he, proudly; "I am innocent; and being so, my own simple tongue alone shall defend me. Do not write to Mr. Thetford, I beg, sir."

"Desmoro, reflect; you are standing in a terrible position."

"I am fully aware of that fact, sir; but I am trusting in the One on high. He will not forsake me."

Jellico turned aside his head; the young man's accents touched him deeply; and he felt ready to weep over him as he would have wept over his own son.

"Would you like to communicate with your grandfather?" he inquired, eager to befriend him in some way.

"No, sir; the old man has learned to forget me by this time, and I should not like to disturb his feelings."

"I can do nothing for you then?"

"Nothing, thank you, sir, except——" And Desmoro here halted in his speech, and looked confusedly on the floor.

"Except what, my lad? Speak out!"

"I should like Comfort Shavings and her father to know that I am guiltless of the crime laid to my charge," he replied. "It is agony to be confined within these four walls, with these galling fetters on my limbs; and feel that those who once loved me are now despising and hating my very name. Mr. Jellico, will you tell them that I am the same in word and deed as when they first knew me; that I am still worthy of their kind remembrance and affection! Will you—will you tell them this?"

"I will, Desmoro—I will!"

"I may never see them again, for I may be condemned!" he added, his voice husky and tremulous.

Jellico did not answer, but stretched out his hand to the poor prisoner, who caught at, and held it, clasped between his palms. "Heaven bless you, sir!" he said, chokingly.

"And heaven bless *you*, Desmoro!" returned the good man. "I will call upon the Shavings to-day. I am very anxious about them, for—— But there, I will not further distress you, as you have already full plenty, and too much, to occupy your mind. I will see you again tomorrow. Good-bye, Desmoro!"

"Good-bye, sir!"

And the manager left the cell, and soon made his way out of the dreary prison walls.

He went along with a saddened heart. He was thinking of the trouble that had so recently befallen him; of his disbanded troupe, and of Desmoro's painful and terror-fraught position.

There was such strong testimony against the prisoner! There was the condemnatory evidence of the dead Mrs. Polderbrant, which evidence would appear upon his trial to condemn and crush him.

"Lost! lost!" exclaimed Jellico, as he reflected on all this, and hastened his onward footsteps.

After proceeding along for some considerable length of time, he turned into an obscure locality, and sought the entrance of the Shavings' abode.

An old woman answered Jellico's appeal at the door.

"Eh, they are both gone, sir!" she replied, as soon as she saw his face.

"Both gone! What on earth do you mean?" he asked, in great surprise.

"That Mr. Shavings and Miss Comfort be both on 'em gone away, sir; and I don't know where."

"You don't know where?" repeated the amazed manager. "I do not understand you. Mr. Shavings was ill, very ill; how could he possibly go away in such a state?"

"He *did* go away, that's certain, sir," answered the woman.

"Explain—explain!" cried Jellico, impatiently.

"Well, sir, they went off in a private carriage—Miss Comfort crying all she while."

"A private carriage!" exclaimed Jellico; "you must be romancing, I think, my good woman."

"What is that, sir?"

"Well, you have made some mistake."

"Not a bit of it, sir; I've made no mistake at all."

The manager stared at the speaker in utter bewilderment.

"When did they go?" he demanded.

"A couple of hours agone, no more, sir."

"In a private carriage?"

"Yes, sir."

"Whose?"

"Mr. Mackmillerman's, sir."

"What!" returned Jellico, in increased perplexity. "Will you permit me to walk indoors, if you please? You will be able to explain matters better there," he added, feeling all at once full of vague alarm.

"Now let me hear everything," said he, on reaching one of the rooms which had once belonged to the Shavings. "Miss Comfort's father was better, I suppose?"

"Better, sir, but far from being himself. It cost Miss Comfort many bitter tears to depart, but her father would have it so, and she did not oppose his will."

"Still, I cannot comprehend matters."

"Nor can I, sir. All I can say is, that my lodgers have left me—left me quite grandly, and in the company of Mr. Mackmillerman."

"They have quitted you for good?"

"For good, sir."

"Without stating whither they were going?"

"Exactly so, sir."

"This is all very strange."

"I am thinking as much within myself, sir."

"You say that Miss Comfort went hence reluctantly?"

"She did, sir," rejoined the woman. "But I must say that they treated me in a most honourable and handsome manner. They amply repaid me for everything I had done."

"I am glad to hear as much," returned Jellico, now full of and fuller of wonderment. "Mr. Mackmillerman has been their friend, it seems?"

"That's precisely my idea, sir."

"Who paid you?"

"Miss Comfort, herself, sir, looking white as a ghost all the while, and with such a pair of red rims round her eyes, caused by crying, I suppose!"

The manager meditated for some few seconds, his brain in a perfect maze.

"You have nothing more to tell me?"

"Not a single word, sir."

Still Jellico paused, as if he fain would question the woman farther.

"They took their luggage with them?"

"They did, sir."

"Thank you! I am much obliged."

And so saying, the manager departed.

He felt quite stupified. Whither were the Shavings gone, and wherefore was it that Mr. Mackmillerman was their companion? There was a mystery in this sudden disappearance of the sick man and his young daughter—a mystery that Jellico could not solve. The clown, he reflected, was not in a fit state to travel far—then whither, whither had they gone.

Never in all his life had the manager felt so completely lost in hopeless conjecture. Turn his thoughts this way or that, they helped him nothing—he was just as much informed now as before.

On and on he went, buried in thought, when, suddenly, lifting his eyes, he found that he was at the door of the hotel where Mr. Mackmillerman was or had been staying.

In another instant Jellico had entered the house, and was questioning one of its waiters.

"Mr. Mackmillerman has left the, sir"

"He does not intend to return?"

"No, sir."

"Do you know where he is gone?"

"No, Sir."

"Thanks," said the disappointed manager, turning on his heel, and regaining the street once more.

Towards the theatre, hoping that he should there find letters from Mr. Mackmillerman and Comfort, he next bent his steps.

No; there was no letters for him there. Tomorrow, probably, there would be some, he thought, as he left the stage door.

But the morrow brought no intelligence whatever to Jellico; and, mystified entirely, he proceeded towards the prison, to seek an interview with Desmoro, whom he found in a most dejected state, with pallid cheeks and swollen eyelids, as if he had passed a night of sleepless anguish.

The manager felt that he was the bearer of painful tidings, and that it would be a blow to Desmoro to hear that the Shavings had quitted Braymount without sending him a single token of their sympathy or remembrance. Recollecting how many hours Desmoro had bestowed in instructing Comfort's mind, Jellico considered that she had not acted most gratefully towards him, and he condemned her accordingly.

The young prisoner looked up inquiringly as he greeted his welcome visitor, who had silently seated himself on a wooden stool.

"I think people are no what they used to be, Desmoro," he remarked after a pause; "the world is being turned upside-down." And Jellico leaned his head on his hand, and looked abstractedly on the floor.

Desmoro saw that something had occurred to distress his friend, but he refrained from making any inquiries. He waited until Jellico himself chose to explain matters.

Presently the manager spoke.

"I couldn't deliver your message to your friend, the Shavings, Desmoro," he said, awkwardly.

"I am sorry for that, sir."

"She has quitted Braymount."

"Comfort?"

"And her father likewise."

"Mr. Jellico," spoke Desmoro, "I—I do not comprehend."

"Neither do I; the thing is beyond my comprehension altogether. But they are gone—gone without leaving one word, good or bad!"

"Gone whither?"

"No one can tell me that," returned the manager. "They're gone off with Mr. Mackmillerman, so I'm given to say."

"With Mr. Mackmillerman?" gasped Desmoro, his face suddenly flushing scarlet, and then as suddenly becoming pale again.

"Yes; to me it's all a mystery."

Desmoro did not reply; he felt stunned and wordless.

While he was in this condition Jellico narrated to him the few scanty and unsatisfactory particulars he had gleaned from the woman relative to the departure of the Shavings.

Desmoro listened like one only half awake; he heard all the words, but did not fully understand their meaning.

Comfort gone! Then farewell hope, farewell everything! Desmoro was reckless now, and cared not what became of him. For *she* had fallen from him—she who had been his solace, his guiding star, his only joy on earth! He had no heart to cling unto now; he stood alone in the world—alone in that world which appeared to him an empty place, a huge desolation.

"It's downright ingratitude on her part to run away thus," said Jellico, remembering his condition. "I don't blame poor Shavings a jot, but she might have recollected her old friends, especially yourself, Desmoro——"

"No, no," he burst forth; "she believes me to be a guilty wretch, a midnight robber; and, in that case, it is only natural that she should disdain all knowledge of me now. Don't think unkindly of her, sir; *I* shall not do so, I am sure."

The young prisoner's eyes were blinded with tears, and his eyes were quivering with emotion.

When the manager quitted the cell its occupant threw himself upon his couch and sobbed loudly, bitterly, and long.

The last blow was struck, all was over now, he thought

Oh heavens! could he but have read the book of fate, how he would have shuddered over its fearful revelations.

At length his tears dried themselves up, and he became more calm. But his calmness was that of settled despair. The blessed sunlight of his existence had vanished, and he was standing in pitchy, stumbling darkness. How changed he felt, how cold and sore his bosom seemed to be! He fancied that he could never weep again, that the wild tempest of his soul had passed, to return no more. Henceforth there would be iron in his breast—hard, inflexible iron, upon which neither man nor woman should ever be allowed to make any impression. And, since his truth could find no hearing, he would be false in all his words and deeds, and set society at defiance.

Was it not true that he had been robbed of his only treasure, his honest name?

Well, wherefore should he repine about the matter? Could he not live to avenge the cruel wrongs which had been heaped upon his young and unoffending head?

And as he thus reflected, Desmoro's eyes gleamed savagely upon his prison walls; and he breathed a solemn oath—at which the registering angel dropped a silent tear—an oath of undying vengeance against all mankind.

Would that oath be ever carried out in full? Desmoro thought it would.

## CHAPTER XVII.

The town of Cleghorn was in a state of fearful tumult. Armed with heavy sticks, with pickaxes, and spades, with sledge-hammers, and many other dangerous weapons, the infuriated rioters were dealing destruction on all around them; breaking into dwelling-houses, and tradesmen's shops, and seizing on almost every article of value they could find there.

The soldiers, as they marched forward into the town, were received with yells and showers of stones. But with their bayonets pointed, the men rushed on, driving the dense mob before them.

Presently, a huge stone, flung by one of the retreating crowd, struck an officer, and Colonel Symure, who was just about to command his men, his temple wounded and bleeding, dropped to the ground.

Then there ensued a scene of confusion, and of terrible slaughter, during which time the Colonel's insensible form was lifted up, and carried into a neighbouring hotel, where surgical assistance was immediately procured.

The Colonel was found to be seriously injured, and a messenger was at once despatched to inform his wife of his condition.

For several hours, Colonel Symure was wholly insensible; but when Caroline and Percy arrived on the following morning, the injured man was violently delirious, and surgeons from around the whole neighbourhood were gathered about his bed.

For days and days the Colonel remained in the same disturbed and painful state; and now the doctors were beginning to shake their heads, and Percy and Caroline were filled with apprehensions, thinking that the dark messenger was approaching one belonging to them.

Coldly and mechanically enough, did Caroline perform her wifely duties. She had but little affection for the suffering man, and she would not grieve very much to lose him. As for Percy, he was blaming his unlucky stars, and wishing himself miles and miles away from Cleghorn and his sick brother's bedside, back with Lucy again, or, in fact, anywhere at all, so long as he were far removed from this scene of trouble and pain.

Percy was both idle and selfish, and could not endure the confinement of a sick room; his brother would get on just as well without as with him; so, pretending that he was wanted in town, he suddenly departed, and left Caroline alone with her husband.

She knew her own selfish nature, therefore she little wondered at her brother-in-law's heartless conduct.

The Colonel was somewhat better; but it would be many weeks before he would be well enough to be removed home.

All this while, Colonel Symure was excessively restless and impatient, and none could tell the reason why, since the doctors had assured him that he was progressing most favourably, and strictly enjoined him to keep himself perfectly quiet and still.

But the Colonel was altogether heedless of their injunctions, and was constantly demanding newspapers, and working himself into a state of fever because his demands were not attended to.

He was weaker than a little child, else he would have evaded the vigilance of his watchers, and flown back to Braymount, to the assistance of his son—to the assistance of the hapless Desmoro.

Bitterly the Colonel reflected upon the unfeeling behaviour of his brother at this time. Percy had deserted him in his hour of sore distress — in the darkest hour he had ever known.

Percy might have aided him much, instead of which he had left him in all his helplessness and affliction, at a moment when he would have given worlds for the presence of a sincere friend.

At length, wearied by her husband's importunities respecting the newspapers he required, Caroline procured several Braymount *Advertisers*, and placed them in his hands, which were eagerly stretched out to receive them.

Propped up by pillows, the invalid's eyes impatiently scanned column after column of the first sheet, then he took up a second and searched that in the same anxious manner, his hands and lips trembling, and his heart beating wildly all the while.

All at once he uttered a cry, a loud, piercing cry, and fell back, amongst his pillows in strong convulsions.

He had read that Desmoro Desmoro had been tried and found guilty of the fearful charge preferred against him, and that he was sentenced to be transported for the term of his natural life, which piece of appalling intelligence, like a flash of heaven's lightning, had struck the Colonel down, and stolen away his senses for a time.

Mrs. Symure was perfectly astounded at this strange incident.

"Wherefore had her husband fainted?" she mentally asked herself, as she rang the bell to summon assistance.

Colonel Symure did not recover his consciousness for some hours. And now he fell into a sickness of mind and body both against which he appeared to make no effort whatever. He seemed resigned, nay, wishful, to die; but the Almighty had yet to scourge him further, the Colonel had still more suffering to endure.

They carried him from place to place, but he failed to find rest anywhere, and his old strength refused to come back to him.

And he was very miserable, also, with no one near him in whom he could confide. He wrote, asking Percy to come to him; but that gentleman replied that he had had some twinges of the gout lately, and was anticipating a serious attack of it.

Percy's answer did not surprise the Colonel; indeed, it was only such as he had expected to receive at his brother's selfish hands.

How Colonel Symure moaned over and regretted the past, now — now, when it was too late for him to repair the terrible wrongs that he had done in the past!

If Caroline's suspicious, shrewish temper embittered her husband's life when in health, how little he was able to endure that temper now that he was bowed down by secret sorrow and illness! But he let her say her say, and tried to close his ears to all her sharp words and cruel speeches. He thought that her tongue was one of the punishments to which he had been condemned, and he strove to bear it patiently, feeling that he richly deserved all its stings, and much more besides.

At this time, Caroline repeated to her husband the old, old tale. She was aweary of a military life, and ordered him to sell out or retire from it. But the Colonel would not do either one for the other, and so he plainly told his wife.

Then she would leave him, she said.

He made no rejoinder. She could do just as she pleased, he would not put any obstacle in the way of her wishes. Perhaps, it would be better or both of them to be separated; they were not happy together; parted, they might be so.

So Caroline left her husband. She had plenty of money; and having, besides, a taste for worldly pleasures, she at once plunged into them.

Colonel Symure felt his freedom, and rejoiced at it; and, thus left to himself, his former strength, by degrees, returned to him. Yes, he was far, far happier alone; he was rejoiced at his present condition, and earnestly hoped that Caroline would never disturb it again.

And time progressed; and at length the Colonel had regained his former state of health, and rejoined his regiment.

And now we will leave him, and return to our hapless hero.

With his white face buried in his clasped hands, Desmoro sat in his cell. He was condemned, disgraced eternally, and banished from his native land for aye—and all this for no fault of his own.

The kind-hearted Jellico had done everything he could in order to prove the innocence of his unfortunate *protégé*; but all the worthy manager's endeavours in that respect had proved unavailing.

Desmoro was pronounced guilty, and sentenced accordingly

Jellico, himself, had but little interest to exert in favour of our hero, so he wrote to Ralph Thetford, asking him if he could aid the young convict in any way. But, alas, for disappointments! Ralph was gone to France, and was not expected to return home for some time.

In the course of a few days, Desmoro was to sail—to sail for his home of exile—and his pent-up feelings had given way, on reflecting how soon he should have to quit his native land—the land in which sweet Comfort dwelt.

He was aroused by the entrance of Jellico, who had come in order to take leave of him.

"Come, my lad, bear up," said the manager, seeing Desmoro's tears.

"Oh, sir, you still believe me to be innocent of this hideous crime for which I am thus being made to suffer?"

"Let my presence here answer that question," replied Jellico. "Did I think you guilty, I should show you by my acts that I thought you so."

"Thank you, sir, thank you," sobbed Desmoro, the full tide of his grief gushing forth. "And now, sir, yet another question. Have you heard anything of the Shavings?"

"No, not a single word."

Desmoro clasped his hands, and wrung them despairingly.

"They will never learn my dreadful fate, I trust," said he, with a shudder. "It would"

break my heart entirely, did I imagine that Comfort Shavings would ever scorn my name," he added, his eyes brimming over, his voice choked with emotion.

Jellico was almost unmanned. Desmoro's tears and despair touched the manager's sensitive heart, and made it ache for the young convict's friendless and degraded position.

But Jellico had no power to alleviate Desmoro's troubles. Jellico was a ruined man.

"I wish I were dead, sir!" wailed the young prisoner,—"dead, dead—and at rest for ever! I don't see that such a desire on my part is at all wicked; for what have I to live for now but ignominy and sorrow? I feel that my breast is growing hard, and that many sinful thoughts have crept into it. But I am better in your presence—more like my old self, sir. Yet, when I am once more alone, those bitter feelings, I fear, will return to me with redoubled strength. I never yet did ill; but I have begun to think that a day will arrive when Desmoro Desmoro will shudder to hear his own name pronounced—when his hands will not be pure as now."

"Desmoro, for heaven's sake, do not let me hear you talk thus!" cried Jellico.

"Sir, I shall be driven to do wrong — I am sure I shall!" was the passionate answer. "I cannot stand in the open face of day now; for men will point at me derisively, and shun me like a loathsome thing. Since such is the case, will you wonder when you shall learn that I have become a desperate fellow, and have taught men to fear me? You don't know, sir, how this cruel injustice has changed my whole nature! I feel full of hatred, and as pitiless as a hungry tiger. Let the world, then, henceforth beware of me; I am only what it has made me!"

"Desmoro, I tremble to listen to your words! Pray—pray to our Father in heaven, and ask Him to grant you patience and forbearance, under this your heavy trial!"

"I *have* prayed, Mr Jellico—prayed with my whole heart and soul; and behold my state — behold the reward I have reaped, the———"

"Desmoro, this is impious!" interrupted the manager, in a shocked tone. "I would rather see you in tears, full of wailing lamentations, than hear you give utterance to such sentiments as these!"

The young convict gnawed his white lips, and tightly wrung his hands.

"Let them send me across the sea," he muttered, between his set teeth,—"let them heap upon my head wrong upon wrong; I will pay them back some day — I will not die their debtor."

Jellico stared at the speaker, unwilling to credit the evidence of his ears. He was beginning to think that Desmoro was taking leave of his senses, for he had never before seen him so fearfully excited—never before heard him utter such despairing and vengeful words.

At length, Desmoro grew calmer, and Jellico bade him a kind and affectionate farewell, and left him.

The convict then threw himself upon his mattress, and there lay, without sound or motion, in a sort of stupor, out of which he was not aroused until the gaoler came to tell him that the prison-car was waiting to convey him to Liverpool, whence he was to sail for Sydney, New South Wales.

## CHAPTER XVIII.

My readers must now leap with me over six long years, and suffer me to conduct them into the presence of our hero, who is now a tall man of herculean build, with a face full of masculine beauty and softness.

He wears his hair rather long, has a fine beard, and a well-trimmed, silken moustache. He is dressed in somewhat rough habiliments; has on huge riding-boots, with jingling spurs; a velveteen shooting-coat; and a cabbage-tree hat, which is low in the crown, and wide in the brim. You might take him for a stockman, or for any other honest fellow, did you not see a pair of revolvers in his broad leather belt, and a certain air of watchfulness in his large, violet-tinted eyes.

He is sitting on a hillock, leaning on his gun, the knotty arms of the white gum-trees twisted in graceful and fantastic arches over his head—a thick brushwood to his right and to his left — the highway before him. He is in the attitude of a listener, and is evidently in expectation of some one; for his quick orbs are peering through a network of interlacing vines of various kinds, behind which he is screened from the road and observation.

While he is thus employed, I will, as briefly as possible, recount to you all that has happened to Desmoro since you last parted with him, and wherefore you behold him as now.

When he arrived in that colony, he was placed in the prisoners' barrack, Hyde Park, herded with hundreds of other degraded and unhappy men, many of whom had resolved to seize on the first chance of reformation afforded them, while others were only awaiting opportunities of committing further wrong—of increasing the already long list of their wicked deeds.

During a five month's voyage, in the close society of three hundred convicts, Desmoro had learned many sad lessons, and had become familiarized with many revolting scenes as well. But, notwithstanding all he had heard and witnessed, his mind received no evil impressions; his lofty spirit kept him aloof, and preserved him from all taint—from all ill.

He spoke to none, unless he was compelled so to do, and he was always quiet and well-conducted; and, although he carried himself proudly, and with the air of a prince, he was ever ready to lend assistance in cases of sickness, or where his aid would be appreciated.

The captain and the other officers of the ship remarked the gentle bearing of the young convict, and felt much interested in him.

It was strange, but, despite his repelling ways towards all, nearly every prisoner on board sought Desmoro, and made friendly advances towards him. But Desmoro was like a man of stone—cold, and hard, and inaccessible to all.

His brother prisoners wondered at him, but they did not blame him for thus keeping himself apart from them. Indeed, Desmoro had become a source of considerable speculation amongst his follow-captives, whom he had inspired with a great deal of curiosity, and with some respect and admiration as well.

"It's strange," one would say, when talking of our hero, "but I can't make out how he's come to be a lifer. He's so young, and so much of the gentleman, too!"

"Have you seen his red hand?" asked another. "They say that was evidence against him, and caused his condemnation."

Desmoro's number was two hundred and sixty; but amongst his brother prisoners, from one end of the vessel to the other, he was known only as "Red Hand."

Desmoro no longer quailed or showed displeasure, as heretofore, at the mention of that *soubriquet*; no, he seemed rather to like it now. But whether he liked it or not was a matter of no consequence whatever, since the could not have controlled the speech of three hundred men.

"What can you do?" inquired one of the prison officials, soon after our hero had arrived in Sydney.

"Nothing," was the brief rejoinder, spoken in calm, indifferent tones.

"Nothing!"

"Well, I can read and write; I understand Latin, and know something of Greek; can speak French and read it; am well versed in——"

"That will do!" returned the official, brusquely. "We've had quite enough of that sort of rubbish, which will be of no earthly service to you here, where you'll maybe be employed on the roads or in breaking stones."

Desmoro shivered slightly, and smiled a grim smile, and the man went on, in taunting accents.

"And if you should chance not to like such work, and should turn rebellious, you'll very likely get a cool fifty!"

"Fifty—what?" uttered Desmoro.

"Why, fifty lashes!"

"Lashes!" flashed the convict, his cheeks flushing, his eyes seeming to dart living fire.

"Ay, a good flogging now and then oft ones does many of your sort a great benefit; it helps to cool their impudence and keep down their pluck! Take my advice, youngster, and subdue yours, else you may live to rue it!"

Desmoro was silent. The iron in his bosom was becoming hard r and hard r.

"It strikes me that you are one of the obstinate ones," pursued the official, fixing his keen eyes on the convict.

"I'm just what I've been made," was the muttered and dogged rejoinder, made in a voice too low to reach the officer's ear.

"Now, look here, youngster, here's a carpenter in want of an assistant. Do you think you could manage to use the saw and the plane? Such will be easier labour than breaking stones on the highway."

"Very likely," replied our hero, haughtily.

"Well?"

"My hands have had no acquaintance with such articles as saws and planes."

"In-deed!" sneered the official, making a mocking bow to Desmoro. "Well, here's a tailor and a shoemaker wanted; what says your high mightiness to one of these trades?"

The convict's lips curled scornfully, but never a word did he reply.

"It occurs to me, young man, that you'll be getting yourself into a worse position than your present one. Take care! This is not a place where men can presume to give themselves any airs! You are government property now, you must remember! You belong to your country, which same country won't stand any nonsense, I can tell you!"

The prisoner made no answer to the official's vulgar and unfeeling speech.

"Now, here's a gardiner required," pursued the man, reading from a written list in his hands. "Well?"

"I'll dig the earth cheerfully, sir," answered Desmoro, "for none can feel disgraced by such an occupation."

The man looked into the speaker's face with amazement written on his own.

"Oh, you'll undertake the situation of gardiner, eh?"

"Yes, although I know nothing at all about the business. I can scarcely distinguish the difference betwixt a plant and a weed, and I know not one seed from another."

"But you'll try to learn, I suppose?"

"Perhaps!"

"You'll be compelled; else, as I told you before, you'll be sent to break stones!"

"Perhaps!"

"What do you mean by that?" fumed the man, reddened with anger. "I'm not going to stand here to be browbeaten and insulted by you, I can tell you, you red-handed thief, you——"

But there the official's speech stopped short; a heavy blow from Desmoro's hand had checked his cruel words, and stretched him prostrate on the ground.

The convict did not stir. He knew well what he had done, and how he would be punished for this act of violence.

He was already surrounded and seized by some men, who had been near at the time when he dealt the blow. Desmoro could not escape from their hold, nor did he attempt to do so. He stood apparently quite collected and defiant, heedless of everything.

He was soon put in irons and thrust into a dark, loathsome cell, where for a time he was left to his own sorrowful and harrassing reflections.

What had he done? This time, at least, his manacles were deserving. What would they do to him? Perhaps the blow he had just dealt might prove fatal; if so, what would be Desmoro's fate?

The unhappy young man sat on his litter of straw, and beat the stone walls of his narrow prison until his hands were bruised and wounded all over, his eyes burning, his bosom brimful of apprehension all the while.

Oh, how his proud soul had been stung and goaded almost into madness! Well, perchance he might live to avenge all his manifold injuries. He was longing that he might do so—longing with all his strength.

Well, hour after hour passed away—a whole night, during which by turns he dreamed of his old grandfather, the village-schoolmaster; of the clown and his fair daughter; of Jellico; of the wretch Pidgers; and of the dead Mrs. Polderbrant. Comfort was weeping, he thought, and avoided the touch of his proffered hand; and Jellico and Mrs. Polderbrant looked angrily upon him, and then turned aside their heads as if they wished to shun him; while Pidgers was grinning in fiendish glee, and rubbing his knotted fingers according to his wont.

In the eyes of the law here Desmoro's late offence was regarded as one most grave, and a heavy punishment was adjudged him for it. He was sentenced to receive fifty lashes and to be shut up ten days in solitary confinement.

Desmoro heard his doom with white quivering features and a shrinking heart. He was not fearing the bodily pain that was about to be inflicted on him; he was thinking only of the humiliation and disgrace which would soon be his. But he would be firm through it all; he would not give utterance to a single cry.

And the young convict maintained his resolution; and blow after blow descended on his shoulders, drawing from them the warm purple stream of life. Yet he did not once shrink, or wince, or even sigh. He was mute and motionless in his anguish.

After this cruel abasement Desmoro was once more thrown into his cell, and there left, with smarting flesh and aching heart, a prey to a score of rebellious and frenzied thoughts.

Oh, the weariness of those long, long days of darkness and lonely bondage! Would they never end? Was he never to see the blessed daylight more—never to breathe the fresh, pure air again?

"Patience—patience!" a voice seemed to cry in his ear. "A time will come when thou mayst avenge all these sufferings and wrongs of thine!"

Was it not this an evil choice—the voice of Satan himself? Assuredly it was. But whosesoever voice it was, Desmoro listened to and heeded it.

The time of his solitary imprisonment having expired, our hero was now assigned as an under-gardener to a certain Dutch naval captain, now retired and living at his ease, who had a wife many years younger than himself, and whose name was Volderbond—Carl Volderbond.

Desmoro managed to dig and delve, and to follow the instructions given him by the head gardiner, and matters went on pretty smoothly with our hero now. But his bosom was full of gloomy thoughts and unhappiness.

Captain Volderbond was a rich man, and his government servants were not condemned to retain their hideous prison garments, but were allowed comfortable and becoming wearing-apparel. He was a rough, sailor-like, honest-hearted, generous-souled being, who had a wish to see contented faces all around him. His wife was an East Indian, with a dash of negro blood in her veins, and a countenance and figure truly beautiful, but owning a temper and disposition full of grave faults and ugly deformities. But unable to see those faults and deformities the old captain petted and indulged her to the utmost of his power — humoring her caprices and gratifying all her extravagant and fantastical whims, never grudging his gold or his pains, so long as he could but succeed in ministering to her desires, and in satisfying her.

Olympia was just twenty summers old, and she had been Madame Volderbond for upwards of four years. For four years too long, she thought, for she hated her husband, and treated him with great ingratitude and unkindness.

Now the garden belonging to Volderbond House was full of choice plants and flowers, and a favourite retreat of Olympia's. There was an orange-walk there, and also an avenue made shaded and cool by a rich, luxuriant vine, whose purple grapes, covered with beautiful bloom, hung most temptingly around you, wooing you to pluck them, and to taste their sweetness.

The head gardener, having instructed our hero what to do, he was one day sent to work in the avenue, which he entered at the same time with Madame Volderbond, whom Desmoro had never seen until this moment.

But he took no heed of the presence of the lady, but pursued his business; and, occupied by his own thoughts, soon forgot that she was near him.

He was mounted on a ladder, his head half buried in the leafy vine, when a female voice accosted him.

"I want some flowers, gardener; come down, and gather me a bouquet, will you?" said the voice, in very languid tones.

Desmoro glanced down at the speaker, who was none other than his mistress, the beautiful young wife of Captain Volderbond.

Desmoro descended the ladder at once.

"What's your name?" queried madame, curiously surveying our hero. "I haven't seen you before, have I? You are one newly come here, are you not?"

"Yes, ma'am."

"I am Madame Volderbond," she said.

"I guessed as much, madame."

"You surely are not a prisoner?" she added, glancing at the young man's closely-shorn head.

Desmoro flushed scarlet, and bowed affirmatively.

"What is your name?"

He repeated it.

"Would you like to be employed in-doors, at tasks less laborious than garden work?" she asked, looking at him somewhat admiringly, her accents less languid than before.

"No, thank you, madame?" he answered, very quietly and firmly, his eyes seeking the ground.

"You are not a common man," proceeded she —"I know you are not! You are gently born, gently bred likewise. Come and gather me some flowers. I like you, and will be your friend, if you will let me," she added, abruptly leading the way out of the avenue, her companion following her quite bewildered, and as if in a dream.

Olympia was so lovely and graceful, and her tones had in them such melting sweetness that he was fascinated by her, and he felt ready to attend her steps, no matter whither such might lead him.

He gathered her flowers, as he did so tastefully arranging them in his hand until the bouquet was completed.

"Oh, charming!" she exclaimed, clapping her dusky hands, the fingers of which were glistening with sparkling gems. "Henceforth, I shall always get you to arrange my bouquets. You class the colours so artistically, and all is done with such neatness and despatch. Thank you very much, Desmoro," she continued, with a nod of her head. And she was gone, her ebon locks fluttering in the warm breeze, her soft muslin robe floating around her exquisitely-moulded figure.

Like one entranced, Desmoro stood watching her receding form. She had addressed him by name as familiarly as if she had been acquainted with him for years and years, and there had been no haughtiness in her syllables or looks, she had been all kindness and gentleness to him.

Desmoro went back to his task with his thoughts full of Madame Volderbond, whose silver and liquid accents were still resounding in his ears.

Before his mental vision he recalled her dazzling face, which he meditated over until he seemed to forget everything else. He could well have fancied that he had been visited by some spirit of another world, for she had seemed far too bright to be an inhabitant of this.

On the following day, Olympia again appeared before him; and again Desmoro plucked flowers and arranged them for her as before; while she talked to him freely, and looked into his eyes with a melting expression in her own, an expression such as he had never seen in any woman's eyes till now.

Desmoro was becoming more and more entranced by the charms of his lovely mistress, and he used to deem the day dark until it was brightened by her all-resplendent presence.

Olympia always sought Desmoro alone; never on any occasion was she accompanied by her husband, whom she rarely mentioned in her conversation, save as her "Dutch boor."

Desmoro was gradually approaching the brink of a fearful precipice; but he was unconscious of that fact, wholly unconscious of the danger of the intercourse he was so enjoying.

Madame Volderbond had most fascinating manners; and although she could not talk either cleverly or well, she had a way of chattering prettily about mere nothings, and a way of making you listen to her likewise.

With such uncongenial and coarse associations, as now were Desmoro's he was truly grateful to have a chance of listening to a refined tongue, even though that tongue had little wisdom or information in it. He could *not* talk to the government men and women who were immediately around him—he could not so far humiliate himself as to do that; hence it was that he experienced a double pleasure in these his meetings with the glittering Madame Volderbond, whose wondrous charms of person for a time completely blinded Desmoro's senses, and prevented him from seeing her natural self, and detecting her heartless, wicked character. To him she appeared a creature all perfection, one far fitter for heaven than earth; and what she seemed he believed her to be.

But what experience could one so young as Desmoro be expected to have in the ways of woman-kind? His chief knowledge of the female sex he had acquired in the society of one of heaven's purest daughters, in that of Comfort Shavings, whom he appeared to be fast losing the memory of.

In this intoxicating dream in which Desmoro was now wrapped, he partly forgot his state, so odious and degrading, and for awhile his bitter and vindictive feelings slumbered—lulled to rest by a false woman's smile.

Now, notwithstanding all her personal allurements, there were times when Madame Volderbond's levity of manner rather shocked Desmoro's naturally delicate mind. But the shock only lasted one brief moment, for Olympia's fascinating looks could wipe from his remembrance every other thing.

Months went by, and daily, as of old, came Madame Volderbond to Desmoro for her bouquet of fresh flowers. To be sure, she might have sent her maid for it, but Olympia preferred to seek the young gardener herself, for she admired his manly beauty—now in its first bloom — and, heedless, quite, of his position, she was anxious to see how deeply she could enthrall him. She had marked over and over again how his eyes danced at her approach, how the crimson would mantle his cheeks at the mere sound of her voice, and how he would stammer and falter in his speech when such was directed to herself. Olympia was an adept in all the signs that love puts forth, and she fully understood all Desmoro's feelings, and wickedly rejoiced at them.

As yet, Desmoro's soul was entirely unstained by any act of actual dishonor; but by degrees his thoughts were beginning to wander from the straight path, and the gloss of his bright character was becoming somewhat dimmed and tarnished.

Desmoro felt the change that was taking place within him; he felt that he was about to fall into Satan's clutches, and yet he quailed not. His good name had been most cruelly despoiled and ruined; he was now fast losing his self-respect and esteem.

Well, what matter did it thought he, the world had crushed him, and, therefore, why should he care for its forms or its rules? As he had been abused, so he would abuse others; of what worth were your moral laws and moral codes? A life of free thought and free action for him!

Thus argued Desmoro within himself as he endeavoured to stifle, one by one, the noblest and loveliest traits in his character.

But neither man nor woman, naturally gifted with high principles, can thoroughly uproot truth. There is no earthly wrong that can utterly pervert a truly honest nature; injury may warp it, but it can do no more.

Desmoro had not forgotten that vow of his, made long ago: he was in the full recollection of it, and was mentally renewing it; renewing it over and over again.

Olympia had fascinated and bewildered Desmoro's senses: but that was all; no real love for her had been awakened in his breast. Yet the passionate sentiments with which she had inspired him were of a powerful nature, and such as might lead him to positive destruction. Of course, he did not close his eyes to the fact of his wrong-doing; he could not but remember that she was a married woman, and that he was encouraging sinful thoughts and feelings regarding her.

Desmoro had no suspicion of the worthlessness of Madame Volderbond: he saw that she was beautiful, and he sought to know no more about her.

Now Olympia was in the habit of getting our hero to perform little commissions for her; of getting him to perform little journeys to Sydney in order to purchase this or that article for her; saying that none understood how to fulfil her wishes so well as Desmoro, who was only too pleased to be of service to her in any way.

One, day, the old Captain fell seriously ill, and took to his bed. But that fact did not deter Olympia from fetching her bouquet as usual not did it cast a single shadow on her smooth brow.

"Desmoro," said she, as she bent her face over the bunch of perfumed blossoms in hand. And then she paused, hesitating how to further proceed.

He was standing opposite to her, eagerly awaiting her words.

"You have heard that the Captain is ill?" she went on, in an awkward manner.

"Yes, madame, I am sorry to say."

"You are sorry because a stupid old man is ill? *I* am not sorry, nor do I believe that you are so," she replied, fixing her eyes on him, as if she would read him through and through.

He stared at her in mute amazement, at which she laughed, a strange, discordant laugh, such as we might expect to hear in the realms of the forgotten and accursed.

"Pshaw! why do you thus regard me, astonishment in all your looks?" proceeded Olympia, in flippant and mocking accents. "Listen to me, Desmoro, you must not tell me any fibs: tell as many, such as you please, to others, but none to *me*. Do your hear *me*?"

"Yes, madame," he answered.

"You are *not* sorry to hear of the Captain's illness, you know you're not!"

"I do not understand you, madame!" stammered he, his face of a scarlet hue.

"No?"

"No, indeed, madame."

Again she fixed her large dark orbs upon his face.

"Do I not understand *you*?" she asked, with emphasis, now dropping her gaze, and burying her cheeks in the scented leaves in her hands.

He shivered all over, and an icy hand seemed suddenly to clutch his heart.

"Now, confess!" she cried. "You must confess—I'll force you to do so!"

They were in a leafy retreat, at the extremity of the grounds, and safe from all observation.

"What shall I confess?" he returned, confusely,—"what have I to confess?"

"What nonsense!" she exclaimed, *with an* impatient burst. "You are downright stupid, and won't comprehend! *You know you love me!*" she added, her soft voice softer than ever on his ear—her bold gaze fixed on his changing features.

He did not make any reply. His brain had suddenly grown dizzy, and his senses were all confounded.

His wily, wicked companion was narrowly watching him. Ah, little did Desmoro suspect her treachery and guilt—little did he imagine the foul spirit that was hidden 'neath her mask of beauty!

"Well?" said she, in a questioning tone.

"Madame Volderbond surely forgets that she is addressing only a poor bondsman, branded and disgraced, and that her husband is still alive?"

"Were he *dead*—what then?" she abruptly inquired. "Captain Volderbond is not well," she proceeded in marked syllables. "He is an old man, and may not live through this attack of illness."

The lips which spoke these heartless words were beautifully chiseled, and the accents of the speaker low and musical.

Desmoro trembled. He was standing on the verge of a terrible abyss. One step forward, and he would be plunged into everlasting perdition and horror. In his eyes, his temptress was appearing lovelier than ever, and, consequently, his position was becoming a still more dangerous one.

Desmoro listened to his companion — he could not help doing so — and, at length, she won from him a declaration of his love — a feverish gush of empty words, dictated on the impulse of an unguarded moment, in answer to a lovely woman's vows of never-ending adoration.

Can you wonder at Desmoro's weakness on this occasion? Can you wonder that he was won to hearken to this most evil temptress?

"And, should the Captain die, Desmoro, we will wed," said she, her treacherous eyes looking into his. "I shall be rich, and our happiness will be certain."

He heard her accents, and listened to them as in a dream — bewildered, intoxicated, and troubled by turns.

Once or twice he mentally asked himself whether he were acting rightly or not. But he soon thrust the question aside, determined not to distress himself with any more queries about the matter.

Yet Desmoro was far from feeling easy in his mind. He had a vague presentiment of some approaching misfortune—of some huge calamity to himself — and his bosom was besieged with sad alarm.

On the following day, Captain Volderbond was much worse, and a doctor was sent for.

Desmoro, whose brain was now cooller, was praying that the Captain might recover. Had Desmoro been the master of his own actions, it is probable that he would have flown far, far away from Olympia—that he would have avoided altogether the sinful snares she had laid for him. As it was he could do nothing but suffer affairs to take their own course.

Olympia had so frequently commissioned Desmoro to go to the chemist's for sundry drugs, that he felt no surprise at her sending him on that errand now. In the days of which I write, poisonous drugs were easier obtained than now. You had only to go to a chemist's shop, to state what you wanted, and put down the money for it, and all was right.

Desmoro's hair had now grown to a respectable length, his linen garments were of good material and make: he bore about him no outward marks of his degraded position, and therefore he had no difficulty in obtaining any article he wanted, having the money to pay for such.

He was in the habit of going to one particular shop—a shop in Hunter Street, kept by a Doctor Nielson. Hitherto, the apprentice boy had served him; now, it was the doctor himself who attended to his wants.

"What is your name?" demanded the doctor, as he took down a jar.

"Why do you ask?" returned Desmoro, somewhat haughtily,

"Because the drug you ask for is poisonous, and it is my duty to inquire what you are going to do with it," explained the doctor.

"It is for Madame Volderbond, of Volderbond House, South Head Road," said Desmoro, very frankly.

"That will do. I know the lady well," rejoined the doctor, weighing the required article, and giving it to his customer.

"Stay; for fear of accident, I will write poison on the outside of the packet."

Desmoro handed back his purchase, and the doctor labelled it *poison*.

Then Desmoro quitted the shop, and wended his way back home, reaching which, he immediately sought the presence of Madame Volderbond, into whose hands he at once placed the dangerous drug. As he did so, he silently pointed to the written word.

She paled suddenly, then laughed lightly, but with a certain uneasiness of manner, which did not escape the observation of Desmoro.

"Doctor Nielson is an old dolt," she uttered, as she tore the label off the package. "You

*See page 7.*

# The Hearthstone.

GEORGE E. DESBARATS,
Publisher and Proprietor.

MONTREAL, SATURDAY, DEC. 28, 1872.


## TO OUR SUBSCRIBERS.

With the present number the issue of the HEARTHSTONE will cease. We have tried honestly and conscientiously for eighteen months to publish a paper which should invite the confidence of the Canadian public, and gain their support; we have partially succeeded, but that success has not been sufficient to warrant our continuing the publication another year, therefore we have decided to discontinue the paper. In doing so some explanation is, in our opinion, due to our readers, and we will give a brief *résumé* of the history of the HEARTHSTONE. The paper was started on May 7th, 1870, by Messrs. Northrup & Co., in its present form, as a weekly, the subscription price being $2.50 per annum. Seven numbers were issued, and it was then changed to a monthly, and continued to be so published until September 3rd, when it was purchased by Mr. T. H. Churchill, who reduced the subscription to $1 per annum, resumed the weekly issue, and offered *half a dozen nickel silver teaspoons* to each subscriber. The momentary success of the paper was very great, the number of subscribers exceeding 15,000 in less than three months. Unfortunately, however, the proprietor was unable to fulfil his promise, and the mass of the subscribers did not receive their spoons. Still more unfortunately, Mr. Churchill absconded in the early part of May, 1871, taking with him all the subscriptions he had received, and leaving the subscribers and his other creditors completely in the lurch. It was at this time that we assumed control of the paper. We knew nothing of Mr. Churchill, and comparatively little of the paper, except that it had a large circulation; and feeling that a first-class Canadian weekly, well conducted, ought to be a success, we purchased the paper, just as we would embark in any literary enterprise which promised success. For seven months we furnished papers to the 15,000 subscribers who would otherwise have received nothing whatever for their money; this we had agreed to do, but we never intended to carry out Mr. Churchill's promise to perform impossibilities in the way of spoons. Our promises were made to be kept, and we have kept all we have made. Last year very few of Mr. Churchill's subscribers renewed, but they were kind enough to canvass actively against us, overlooking the fact that we were in no way responsible for Mr. Churchill's misdeeds, and that we had furnished them the paper *for seven months at our own expense*. We met with fair encouragement last year, and obtained quite a large number of new subscribers, but we found the bad odium attached to the name of the paper by Mr. Churchill's breach of faith operated very heavily against us, and we, therefore, somewhat reluctantly determined to discontinue the paper. We have by no means abandoned the field, however, and beg to introduce to your favorable notice our new paper "THE FAVORITE," a copy of which you will receive herewith. THE FAVORITE will be one-fourth larger than the HEARTHSTONE, consisting of sixty-four columns of reading matter weekly, and will contain the productions of the very best Canadian, English, and American writers. We shall spare neither pains nor expense to make it a thoroughly good family paper, second to none on this continent, and we invite your assistance in carrying out our design. If you have been pleased with the HEARTHSTONE, we ask a continuance of your favor to its successor, assuring you that it will be in all respects equal, and in many superior, to its predecessor. For full particulars we refer you to advertisement and to our prospectus and sample number enclosed. And now it only remains for us to wish you a happy and prosperous New Year, and to bid you farewell. We have passed many pleasant hours in silent communication with you, and we feel a tinge of sadness at the thought that our connection should be severed; but we trust this may not be the case, and that in the pages of THE FAVORITE we may continue the intercourse which has always proved pleasurable to us, and so we will not say "Farewell!" but "*Au revoir!*"

## MURDER NO CRIME.

It would really appear as if murder is getting to be regarded in the United States as rather a meritorious action, and one which entitles the perpetrator to extra care and consideration rather than to public censure and death on the scaffold. From the large number of acquittals, and the numerous cases in which the jury fail to agree on a verdict, it would appear that the juries are disinclined to convict a murderer, no matter how plain and direct the evidence: it would be difficult to get more plain and direct evidence in a murder case than was adduced at the trial of Stokes for the murder of Jim Fisk and in the case of Mrs. Fair for the murder of Crittenden, yet the jury in one case disagreed on the verdict, and in the other brought in a verdict of "Not guilty." It appears to us that there are three fundamental reasons why it is so difficult to get a conviction for murder:

First.—Under existing law a man has to swear that he is a fool, or next door to it, for if he admits that he has read an account of the murder in a newspaper he is liable to be challenged; the result is that juries to try murder cases are usually far below the average in understanding, and consists, to a great extent, of those who either can't read, or who don't take interest enough in the world to see what is happening in it, and of parties interested in the acquittal of the accused, and who don't mind swallowing an oath in order to get their friend off.

Second.—The taste for capital punishment is dying out; people are beginning to believe with Bulwer that "the worst use you can put a man to is to hang him;" and they eagerly seize on the most trifling excuse to avoid bringing in a verdict which will deprive a fellow-creature of his life. If the penalty for murder was a good flogging and imprisonment for life, or for a term of years, we believe there would be far more convictions than under a law inflicting capital punishment. Somehow there is *a spreading* belief that no power can justify man in taking the life he cannot give, and that the action of twelve men, sitting calmly down, and, in cold blood, ordering the death of a human being is just as much murder as the shooting down of his victim by the ruffian lying in wait for him. Men begin to feel that the fact of a prisoner having killed a man does not give them the right to kill him; there is getting to be less and less belief in the old Levitical law, "whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed," and men shirk the responsibility of depriving a fellow-creature of life.

Third.—In the existing state of society in the United States, and with the almost universal custom of carrying fire-arms, it is but reasonable to suppose that not a few of the jurymen take into account in their judgment the possibility of their standing in the prisoners' dock at some future time, and as they hope that others may be lenient to them so they are lenient to the prisoner, and thus "the quality of mercy" *does* get strained, Shakespeare to the contrary notwithstanding.

This reluctance to inflict the death penalty is not confined to the United States, we see it in Canada, in England, on the Continent; there appears to be a steady growth of public opinion against capital punishment, and we believe that in less than half a century we shall see capital punishment wiped out of the statute books of every civilized nation. It is surely time, for murder is fast getting to be no crime, at least not a punishable crime, and if the law for capital punishment is getting to be ineffective, the sooner it is repealed the better, and something substituted in its place which can be carried into effect.

## TO OUR CONTRIBUTORS.

By the announcement in to-day's paper the competitors for our prizes for Canadian stories will see one reason why there has been some delay in announcing the awards; the labor of planning and getting up a new paper, added to our editor's illness, made it impossible to complete the labor of reading over *twelve thousand pages* of manuscript as quickly as it would otherwise have been done. The reading is now very nearly completed, and the announcement of prizes will be made in an early number of THE FAVORITE, in which paper the stories will appear.

## UNEXPIRED SUBSCRIPTIONS.

As the publication of the HEARTHSTONE will cease with the present number, we would say to those of our subscribers whose subscriptions do not expire with the closing year that they will be supplied for the balance of the unexpired term with our new paper, THE FAVORITE, a sample copy of which we enclose, and which they will find in every way equal, and in many ways superior to the HEARTHSTONE. Try it for the remainder of your unexpired term, and if you like it subscribe for it.

## GOOD NURSING.

With all due respect to the medical fraternity, we believe that more dangerous cases are saved by good nursing than by good doctoring. Indeed, no matter how clever the doctor might be, he is to a great extent dependent on the nurse; the doctor prescribes, but the nurse administers; the doctor orders, but the nurse executes. Then the doctor sees his patient but seldom, and only for a short time; the nurse is always with her patient, watching his every change, and attending to his every want. Oh! the comfort and luxury of a gentle, tender nurse, whose cool, soft hand is ever ready to press the fevered brow at the right moment; whose soft voice falls like sweet music on the air; whose easy, noiseless motions give no distraction to the nerves, and whose self-possessed and confident action reassures the patient, and imbues him with a spirit of confidence in her skill and experience. It is woman's peculiar province to make a good nurse; man may try and partially succeed, but it remains with woman to be the perfect ministrator to those racked with pain and illness. What a blessed feeling of calm does the soft rustle of a woman's dress bring to the sick room, where only men have been in attendance before; how much cooler the pillows feel when her deft hands have shaken them up a bit; how much more pleasant does the lemonade she makes taste than that made by his male attendants! Possibly the feeling of superior pleasure and confidence which we feel at being nursed by a woman, is as much a matter of sentiment as anything else; possibly men are capable of being just as tender, just as gentle, just as skilful as women; but, still the sentiment, if you so please to call it, remains in favor of women for nurses. But all women are not good nurses; far from it, good nurses are scarce, and dearly to be prized when found. Age has a great deal to do with it; the gentle loving wife who hangs over her husband's sick bed lavishing on him all the care and attention which affection can suggest, seems to him like a ministering angel, and he thanks Heaven for the blessing it has bestowed on him; but the loving wife does not inspire that confidence in her skill which his grey-haired mother, watching him with anxious eye, engenders in his breast. He knows her skill, he has tested her experience, and altho' he thanks and blesses the young creature who clings to him so fondly, his confidence is rested in the older woman whose years give her a greater claim to experience. Half, at least, of the brilliant victories over death, which are gained by renowned physicians, are really won by the quiet, patient nurse who sits with unwearying patience by the sufferer's bedside, and by constant care, ceaseless attention, unremitting watching, slowly but surely beats back the grim destroyer, and snatches the sufferer from his icy grasp. But, the doctor gets the credit, just as in warfare the commanding general gets all the praise for the victory which indomitable pluck, and steady heroism of the rank and file has gained. We speak warmly about good nursing, for we feel warmly; we have ourselves been ill, dangerously ill, and, altho' we had as clever a doctor as we think is in the city of Montreal, yet we believe that, under Providence, we owe our recovery to the constant, tender, skilful nursing from one who will ever be held in grateful remembrance by us, and to whom we can never sufficiently express our thanks for the unremitting care with which we were tended. We are strong in our belief in good nursing, and if we were forced to choose we should say: "Give us a bad doctor and a good nurse, in preference to a good doctor and a bad nurse."

## BREAKAGES.

It is said that three moves are as bad as one fire; but has anyone tried to fix exactly the cat's equivalent of harm in every quiet household? Those useful animals seem to be encouraged for the special benefit of domestics. Their mission is less the capture of small game than to act as the servants' scapegoat. That "the cat did it" is an excuse as old in the kitchen as the time-honoured principles of perquisites and followers. Indeed, it is open to argument whether the proverbial bull in the china shop did more mischief than puss down stairs among the crockery. Of course it was the cat. What else takes jugs of hot water up to the bed-rooms? or washes the tea things? or carries out the tray laden with tumblers and fragile glasses? The cat, unable to plead, is condemned unheard; and doubtless there are damning facts and antecedents in the cat's career to make her at least the object of suspicion. Thus, with all the kitchen floor to choose from, she prefers to travel from one end to the other *via* the dresser; a feat fraught with fearful consequences when the plates stand nicely balanced, and jugs hang by a single hair. Cats, too, are given to late hours, and, scorning latch keys, will jump through a window sooner than stay out all night; they are notorious gluttons, and would risk a dozen smashes to get at the cream ewer. But in course of time the sagacious housewife will come to allot the blame as it deserves; though the lesson may take long to learn. She gains her experience slowly and sadly. To watch the progress she makes is no uninteresting study.

*Ménages* vary of course with the means of their possessors. In one, regardless of expense, the glass comes from Phillips, the china is all Minton's or Mortlock's; in another the service consists of bare necessaries—the tumblers are of thick and turbid glass, the plates of willow pattern. But I will take as my example the household midway between these two extremes; the home of a couple in comfortable circumstances, who during their engagement "shopped" for themselves, bought their furniture with certain restrictions in price just as it pleased them, and started in life surrounded by a host of "nice things," half purchased, half due to those enthusiastic friends who deluged them with wedding presents. At their first dinner in their new home, they sit down to a well appointed table. The glass is of the last design, the centre piece and flower vases are charming, the dinner service a gem—just a plain dead white, with an exquisite border of one bright colour, and a neat monogram below it; in the rest of their snug house the eye is equally well pleased. The crockery in the best bed-room has been chosen in perfect harmony with the hangings; even the kitchen fittings have a certain æsthetic charm. How long will this last? The first crash comes when that costly saucer of majolica, which was handed down from her mother's ancestors, is ground to pieces under the iron heel of a flat-footed maid; by-and-by the boy in buttons plays football with the water caraffe—a choice specimen of the modern antique, tall and slender and exquisitely shaped. Soon great chips appear in the dinner plates—the cook says the colour will not stand the fire; the soup tureen leaks, and a close inspection shows a gap like a yawning chasm underneath. Such accidents as these stand first upon the roll. They are of a nature not easily to be overlooked, and Madame may shed tears over their very fragments at the time of the catastrophe. It is otherwise with the rank and file of the china closet—the cups and saucers and the delicate glass. The slaughter here may be great before it is apparent, and the adroit servants, to hide their mishaps, will shift and change them about with desperate sleight of hand, making the same set do duty twice over, as we see a clever stage manager, with a limited company, manœuvre his supers. By this time, too, there is probably a nursery to increase the chances of loss. In the royal domain, where "baby" reigns, there is a supreme indifference to breakable property, and infant paws at one fell sweep will destroy in half a second as much as half-a-dozen cats. And so the game proceeds. The mistress of the house passes through every stage of passion. At first she is loud with invective and reproach, then sullen and morose, rousing into life only at each fresh crash; by-and-by she settles down like Job in passive resignation, which should be infinitely reproachful to those who do her so much wrong. In the end the supreme hour arrives. It becomes evident all at once, in one year, or two or three at the most, that everything fragile has been destroyed, and that the house must be entirely replenished from top to bottom.

And now it is that the woman who is wise bows her head, with something of Hindoo fatalism, before the inevitable. She recognises for the first time that while glass and human nature remain as they are there will be breakages; and she seeks not to escape a natural law, as certain in its processes as the rising of dough or the burning of fire, but to suffer as little as is possible from its action. She bends before the cruel blast, and tries to screen herself from its severity. There are many anodynes to prescribe—anodynes and lenitives, not cures; for all that the most sanguine can expect is to reduce the evil to its lowest terms. Constant preaching, rising at length to the sublimity of "nagging," has probably been tried in the very earliest stages of smash. The results thus obtained have of course been unappreciable. Brave words; you might as well talk to the winds. Reproaches run off a servant's back like water from a duck's; their sensitiveness is impenetrable to such attacks, unless accompanied by what our friends the cheap tailors call the *argumentum ad crumenam*. The "pocket" argument comes in here with especial force. Nothing else will foster carefulness. Make it a rule with your servants when you engage them that they pay for all they break. It is wonderful what delicacy of touch will then be developed in the most callous finger tips. When Maria knows she must give up her Dolly Varden because her mistress insists on the damaged sauce bowl being replaced, she will think less of A 22 and more of her footsteps in coming down stairs. So Thomas, the careless boy, who only dreams of top and marbles, will wake to the fact that he is wiping glass when he has to give his master a couple of new decanters. But, in order to carry out this principle in its integrity, repeated stock-takings at irregular seasons are indispensable. In no other way is it possible to fix accurately the saddle to the right horse. Without such frequent inspections we come at once to the vague and mysterious agency of the "cat," to which I have already referred. Last of all, it behoves all prudent housekeepers to adopt the least fragile forms of ware. In the matter of glass this is no doubt nowadays especially difficult. Fashion is all on the side of the shopkeepers. The wine glasses that are most in vogue seem made only to be broken; their thread-like stems and delicate thin chalices quite implore us to squeeze them tight. If you must have thin glasses, use them as little as possible. Relegate them to the closet, or at least keep them for your own dinner table, and at luncheon, when the children feed, bring out something more substantial. Again, the man who invented "stone china" should have a statue in his own enduring materials. Nothing short of *malice prepense* will break a stone china plate. I have seen the stewards of a great Company's ocean steamers throwing them about in a gale of wind as coolly as a landsman plays with quoits. They may chip and turn colour, but they will not break. They are the Old Guard; they may be hacked in pieces, but they will not surrender. All that is needed with stone china is an exterior more inviting. With stout glass, stone china, and a stern discipline, housewives may do much to alleviate the ills of breakage. But, as I have already said, they cannot escape the evil altogether unless indeed they return to primitive habits. After all, a bill at a glass shop is better than a plantain leaf for a plate, or a tin pannikin to receive your champagne.—*Queen.*

Max Adeler says they tell a story about a man who put the saddle hind part foremost upon his horse while in a condition of dizziness, superinduced by fire-water. Just as he was about to mount, a German friend came up and told him to hold on a minute, because the saddle was on wrong and wanted refixing. The horseman gazed for a moment at the intruder, as if in deep thought, and then said: "You let that saddle alone. How in thunder do you know which way I am going?" And the gentleman from Germany passed on.

Physicians have their eccentricities, and not unfrequently they appear in the odd manner in which they collect their fees. A well-known medical man once sent in his annual bill for services rendered in the family of a particular friend, when, in point of fact, he had not been in the house professionally during the entire year. The bill was paid as usual, but when the head of the family met the doctor he remarked, "Doctor, I got your bill the other day, but I don't remember that any of us have been sick this year."

"Very likely not," answered the bluff man of science; "but I stopped several times at the area gate, and inquired of the servants how you all were."

Another physician, who was for many years one of the prominent medical men in New York, is said to have once sent in a bill for three hundred and forty-two dollars and ninety-two cents, or some similarly odd sum. This curious bill was also paid, but when the patient met his physician he inquired, "How, doctor, did you ever get that odd ninety-two cents in my bill?"

"Oh," said the doctor, "that is easily explained. My grocer's bill was just for that amount, and I knew of no one who would so cheerfully pay it as yourself, and so I made one pay the other."

## EPITOME OF LATEST NEWS.

CANADA.—Mr. Lee, the venerable ex-clerk of the Privy Council, will shortly be presented with a valuable testimonial from the members of the Cabinet, as some recognition of his long services. He is now over seventy years of age, and still hale.——The farmers of the county of Quebec held a meeting the 20th inst. for the purpose of forming an Agricultural Society.——Hon Mr. Cauchon has been re-elected for the County of Montmorency.——It is stated that Mr. Edgar Dewdney, M. P. for Yale, B. C., is about to resign his seat, having accepted the office of Surveyor-General of British Columbia.——Prof. Goldwin Smith has joined the Methodist church.——It is not probable that the Government will grant the bonus of a month's salary for which the public officials have recently made application. There is no doubt that the whole question of salaries must come up before the new Parliament.——Mr. J. Dyke, immigration agent for Alsace and Lorraine, has left for the scene of his labor. The department is receiving very encouraging reports from their numerous agents of the prospects of immigration next season.——Mr. David Laird, editor of the Charlottetown *Patriot*, and member of the House of Assembly for Queen's County, has been appointed member of the Council of Prince Edward's Island.——A Nova Scotian, Arthur Haliburton, Esq., son of the late Sam Slick, has received a Government appointment in India, with $10,000 per annum.——The Windsor, N. S., *Mail* contains a harrowing account of an attempt by William Wately, colored steward of the brigantine Union Star, of Parrsboro', to suffocate the captain and crew, and then to burn her. Captain Lockhart, after many struggles succeeded in crawling out of his cabin, gasping for breath, found the vessel on fire forward of the foremast, and the mate and crew *missing*. After search, he discovered them suffocated in the same way as he had been himself, and with great difficulty succeeded in restoring them to consciousness. While getting the fire under, they found the steward lying on his back, near the fire he had kindled, quite dead. On arriving at Parrsboro' an inquest was held, and a verdict returned—"That deceased came to his death from suffocation induced by a fire kindled by himself." The cause of Wately's atrocious attempt was that the Captain refused to delay the vessel for a pair of boots which the steward wished to have made. The steward who was a very vindictive man, swore revenge against the vessel and crew, and it is supposed sprinkled muriatic acid in the cabin of the vessel.

UNITED STATES.—Washington despatches state that it is thought that the polygamy problem will soon be settled by the Administration. The delegation in the interest of Brigham Young in that city, who recently came from Utah, are working with less hope to avert the coming storm. President Grant has recently expressed his determination to put an end to Mormon Institutions. After the holidays the necessary laws will be presented in Congress. Rumors of impending changes *amongst high officials* at Utah are current.——At nine o'clock on Sunday morning a smart shock of earthquake was felt at Portland, Zeattle, Washington Territory, Victoria, Vancouver's Island and at other points on the northern coast. There were three series of shocks: no damage resulted.——Patrick Welsh, fireman in the Gas Works, at Washington, was killed on 22nd inst., by John Lyndon, a fellow workman. Lyndon escaped.——A fearful storm has swept over all the western part of Michigan, the worst in depth of snow, high winds and intense cold known for years. Five engines with four trains are between Stevensville and Hagar. The passengers are all safely housed. Edmond Yates, the novelist and lecturer, is one of the weather-bound passengers.——It is reported that the town of Helena, Arkansas, was destroyed by fire on night of 22nd inst.——The Central Presbyterian Tabernacle, Brooklyn, Rev. T. Dewitt Talmadge, pastor, was destroyed by fire on 22nd inst.——It is reported that extensive coal fields have been discovered in Tame Cula mountains, in San Diego County.——The United States and Spanish Governments have concluded an agreement for jointly taking testimony in Cuba to be used by the Commission sitting in Washington for adjudication of claims of American citizens growing out of the present rebellion in Cuba.——Fifty-two shares of the capital stock of the *Tribune* Association, constituting a majority, were sold to H. M. Orton. The parties going out, besides Mr. Sinclair and the representatives of the dead proprietor, are George Ripley, Whitlaw Reid, John Hay and Thomas N. Rooker, Philip Fitzpatrick, Patrick O'Rourke, and Dr. J. C. Ayer. Each of the old proprietors, was earnestly requested to retain at least a part of his stock. Messrs. Reid and Hay refused. It is understood that eight shares are reserved for Schuyler Colfax, who is to be invited to assume the editorship. Mr. Reid was requested to remain but declined. The majority of the trustees who desired to continue the paper on the basis of Mr. Greeley's card Mr. Reid at its head needed only eighteen shares to secure a clear majority.

ENGLAND.—The ship "Matchless," of Boston, Mass., has been wrecked off the coast of Northumberland county. All on board were lost.——The River Cam has overflowed. The vicinity of Cambridge, for miles, is like a swamp, and the streets of the city are flooded. Brookdale and Egenburg are deluged. The recent rainfall is estimated at fifty millions of tons of water.——The international convention to secure uniformity of coinage, has been signed by the governments of Denmark, Sweden and Norway.——The Viscountess Beaconsfield, wife of the Right Hon. B. D'Israeli, died on 15th inst.——An open air meeting was held in Stockton County in favour of the Fenian amnesty, at which 12,000 persons were present. The crowd was very disorderly, and there was some fighting, during which several persons were injured. The English and Welsh, who outnumbered the Irishmen, charged on the platform, carried off the Irish flags and trampled them in the mud. Mr. Odger was announced to speak, but failed to appear.——The laborers who emigrated from England to Brazil, to work on farms, have petitioned the Brazilian Government to assist them in returning home. Letters have been received from them giving accounts of the hardships they have suffered, and warning their friends against coming to the country.——The river Thames has overflowed its banks at many places. At Windsor, Howe Park is one vast sheet of water, and thousands of acres of other land are submerged. The present inundation of the Thames is the greatest since the flood of 1850.


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*For the Hearthstone.*

## THE OLD-FASHIONED REVIVAL.

BY REV. WM. LUMSDEN, M.A.

Once on a time, in Spring's gay prime,
When boys and girls go courting,
A preacher came of wondrous fame
For shouting and converting.

Now at the news shook in their shoes
The publicans and sinners,
All those who in the ways of sin
Had gone or were beginners.

He then did call our leaders all
Each other for to rival,
To find a place for works of grace,
"A genuine old revival."

A grove was got, a favorite spot
With all our youths and wenches;
They set a stand on every hand,
Surrounding it with benches.

The old housewives as for their lives
Agreed 'twas no use speaking,
But turned them all, both great and small,
To boiling and to baking.

Along the roads in wagon loads
Roll crowds in expectation,
Some come to pray and some to play,
And some for speculation.

The sun's bright beams illume the streams,
Converging to the meeting;
There soon alit, in haste they sit,
Or bow a silent greeting.

The preaching band then mount the stand,
Each meeker than the other.
Prepared to groan or cry "Ochone"
To help the speaking brother.

He read his text, book upside down,
All wondered at his knowledge;
Well know the most the Holy Ghost
Ne'er called a man from College.

He thumped the desk and slapped his hands,
And set his nose a twanging,
And warned them all, both great and small,
With screeching and with banging.

They formed a pen for maids and men,
And then with wise assertion,
"From God, three score, and not one more,
Required for quick conversion.

Enquirers came in trembling frame,
A crowd but somewhat motley;
A call for prayers brings round the stairs
The brethren rather hotley.

Some one did say, "Come let us pray;"
Uprose the congregation,
Then down they went with one consent,
All roaring for salvation.

"Get up, get up," the preacher cried,
"Who'er's got the true riches."
Mike Farley jumped up four feet high,
And so he burst his breeches.

Hurt at the view, his mother flew—
A very gifted female—
And to the ground she brought him down
By pulling at his coat-tail.

Then uprose moans and shouts and groans,
Some falling and some kneeling,
And grunts and hems and loud amens,
To help the general feeling.

While they were down in kneeling rows,
All waiting for the down-pour,
Young Ida Brown sees Sally Shaw
A winking at Bill Seymour.

Provoked to see Bill wink at Sall,
That loved her ever almost,
She pull'd a pin from out her sleeve,
And stuck it in his sternpost.

He gave a start, he gave a yell,
All thought he was convicted;
Some show'd delight, in some affright
Or terror was depicted.

At this the work broke out with power,
And many were converted;
Who can forget that awful hour
For all the wicked hearted?

Then one upstands and claps her hands,
She screams and pious upturns
Her whited eyes unto the skies,
And flops down on her posterns.

"Now stop, arise," the preacher cries,
"We'll use the sword of Gideon;
Come let us sing a lively hymn
Who'er's got true religion."

A negro climbed a tree behind,
Where, sitting on his haunches,
Perch'd up on high towards the sky
He hid among the branches.

At once a roar from several score
Of those who had perfection,
A rousing psalm, a healing balm,
That mark'd the true election.

Just as the lay had died away
The black screamed "Halleluia."
"Who'll stand aside?" the preacher cried;
"God sends that voice to prove you."

Then did arise most awful cries
Till time to go to dinner
That common sense allows at length
To every saint and sinner.

In the highway an ass did bray,
And all the signal thought it;
They scatter'd quick in groups and knots,
Wher'er their friends had brought it.

Now Plenty spreads her bounteous cheer,
And all were asked and feasted
With welcome sweet to rustic meet,
By health and pleasure tasted.

So evening came with all her stars
To find the crowds all praying,
As under that rude eloquence
Their simple souls were swaying.

Then, with a warning voice, the dames
Go gather up their chickens,
Lest underneath the shades of night
They go and "play the dickens."

But spite of all they say and do,
Sue courts with Tommy Dawson,
And almost in their very view
Bob kisses Kitty Lawson.

They're fled, they're gone, those dear old times
Of roaring, rough salvation;
Now in a far more dandy way
The preachers save the nation.

Farewell, farewell, ye sheepskin hats
And jowls so cleanly shaven,
Like diving-bells and water rats,
That plunged the folks to heaven.

Farewell the sober Quaker shawl,
And holy shovel bonnet
With simple string 'neath pretty chin,
But then no bow upon it.

Farewell that honest roaring zeal
That battled with the devil,
And in a plain, sledge-hammer style
Attacked the powers of evil.

What'er they knew their hearts were true
To what's Divine and Royal;
Their lowly sleep my muse must weep,
The lovely and the loyal.

Farewell, farewell, ye grand old woods,
Old Nature's solemn splendor,
The murmuring fall, the shadowed floods,
Returning spring did send her.

Before the steady trampling tread
Of modern innovation,
The old Canadian simple ways
Have suffered declination.

Soon we shall too fleet all from view,
Our airy generation,
As rhyme and time and time and rhyme
Find fitting termination.

OAKVILLE, ONT.

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*For the Hearthstone.*

## THE MYSTERY OF THE CHATEAU RAMSAY.

BY G. S. BARNUM.

### CHAPTER I.

"L——, what do you say to a walk this afternoon?"

"By all means, my dear fellow," said my friend."

We had been sitting for half an hour in a hot little office in one of the large newspaper establishments in Montreal, in which both of us ground out our daily bread, and literally by the sweat of our brow in that hot summer weather. But, hot and dusty as this office was, it will always be a bright spot in our memories, though we should reach the three score years and ten allotted to the life of man. We had spent many happy hours there during the summer, in pleasant communion with a little coterie of mutual friends and co-laborers; and many an idle moment had been whiled away in conversation on literature, art, music, politics and heaven knows what—conversation such as none but a Bohemian could enter into. So, when I suggested a walk it was not so much with a view of escaping from the office as to allow the other occupants, less fortunate than we, to go on with their work.

We therefore put down our pipes, donned our hats and sauntered into Great St. James Street, walking at that easy and luxuriously indolent pace which only one who is so happy as to be thoroughly idle dares to assume. We passed through the little square in the Place d'Armes, stopping a moment to watch the water dripping from the ugly old fountain into the basin beneath, and to enjoy the shade which the umbrageous branches of the maples cast around, and then continued our course eastward along gay, busy Notre Dame Street. A short walk brought us to the Government Gardens, where L—— stopped, and, pointing to an old building on the opposite side of the street, which still showed some signs of ancient grandeur, said, "That, George, is one of the most historical buildings in Montreal. Alas! it is doomed in a very short time to destruction. Once it was the home of the French Governors, and later of the English Governors of the Province. It goes by the name of the Chateau Ramsay."

"It is certainly a romantic old place," I answered, "and must surely have some story connected with it. What a capital haunted house it would make."

"Is it possible, then, that you never heard the story of the nun?"

"I never have. In fact, although a great portion of my life has been spent in Montreal, I must confess to a profound ignorance of her traditions. We are a terribly material people here, and care little to look into the past; the future, with its bright golden prospects, has far more of interest in it for us. But there can be no better time than the present for improving my mind; so, pray let me hear the tale; it will serve as an antidote for the political meeting to-night, and keep me from quite dying of the dry rot."

Our stroll was at once resumed, and L—— began:

"The story of the nun, as it is generally known and believed, is somewhat as follows: During the Governorship of the Chevalier de Courcelles, which, as you know, began in the year 1665, a party of ladies departed from a convent in the south of France to plant a branch of their Order in the wilds of New France, as this country was then called. The good ladies had seen the letters sent home by the Jesuit fathers, and, fired with a holy emulation, had set out on a mission, by the side of which any missionary work of the present day pales and looks insignificant. Among them was one young nun, but lately admitted to their number, but whose patient and untiring zeal in good works and religious fervor had already won for her the high distinction, for such it was regarded, of being permitted to share in one of the noblest enterprises which the history of those times affords.

"The ladies arrived in the port of Montreal at about the end of the year 1670, and as there was no other lodging fit to receive them, they were accommodated with a suite of rooms in the Governor's residence. A week had been spent in preparation for their departure to the field of their labours—a mean wooden building at the western end of the town—when a terrible blow came upon the little community; the Sister Charity disappeared. She had gone to bed as usual in a room, which she occupied in common with two other sisters, at an early hour in the evening, after a day of fatiguing labor; but when the two holy women awoke in the morning their companion was gone. Search was made in all directions, but no trace of her was ever discovered, nor was any clue to the manner of her disappearance ever found, if we may believe the story. Many were the theories started, among the most probable of which would seem to have been that, like Elijah of old, she being too holy for this world, had been translated to heaven, were it not that some years later she took to visiting it again, or at least her unquiet spirit did. For in that suite of rooms which was occupied by the good ladies, and which still remains intact, ever at midnight comes, the figure of a nun, habited in the garb of her order, is seen to steal from one room to the other, uttering as she glides along, low moans and prayers, and counting with eager fingers the beads of a ghostly rosary.

"Such is the legend, founded partly on fact, as the sequel will show, but utterly at fault, as you will see, in many instances.

"The facts which I am now about to tell you, I have gathered from manuscripts in the possession of one of our oldest French families. The dates, names, &c., I have altered, in order that you may have no suspicion even of the family to whom I refer.

### CHAPTER II.

"In the year 1664 the De Beaumonts occupied, as their families had occupied for centuries before them, a fine rambling château in the south of France. These were the good old days, before the revolution, when the nobility were of the purest blood, and when to be noble was the only passport to any office in the State. But the De Beaumonts, unfortunately, had not the wherewithal to support their rank, as their estates, though large, were so heavily encumbered with debt and so ill-managed, that the revenues which they yielded were but trifling, and the old château, with the old family, was fast crumbling into ruins. One there was, of four sons, who doubtless, had birth given him the right, would have revived the glories of the ancient house, and literally put the family upon its legs again. It was useless, however, for him to do or attempt aught, and his attention was, therefore, solely directed to obtaining some honorable employment, by which he might carve out his own fortunes. Henri's efforts had been warmly seconded by those of an uncle, his mother's brother, who had some influence at court, and just as my story opens, their joint endeavor had procured for Henri an office under the Chevalier de Courcelles, who was about to depart to New France, the government of which had been entrusted to his charge on the death of the former Governor.

Years before, it seemed as if it had been but weeks, Henri had fallen deeply in love with Octavie Belfort, niece of the old curé, whom both dearly loved. They had loved at first sight, as little boy and little girl, and as they grew up together, meeting almost daily, their affection grew deeper and stronger. Perhaps neither knew of this; they were both young, he barely twenty, and she not past eighteen. I don't think that they had ever spoken of their attachment; yet each felt the need of the other, and even a day's separation was a grief to them. Of course, there were idle tongues in France, as well as everywhere else, and there were not lacking those to tell the Count everything that passed. Poor man; if there was one good and pure quality in him, it was his love for his younger son, a love and respect which none of the others could share, as none of the others were worthy of it. It made him shrink from causing him the slightest pain; and Henri, on his part, repaid his father by never keeping a secret from him. Therefore, the Count knew quite as much as the gossips, and was content. The Curé, good man, laughed at first at the *amour de veau*, as he named the attachment of the boy and girl, forgot all about it presently, but was wakened suddenly one day by the sharp, pricking tongue of a gossip to find that matters had gone far beyond his repairing, and that the best thing he could do was to let well enough alone.

Such was the condition of affairs when Henri resolved to go abroad and seek his fortunes in that new and terrible country of the west, concerning which a few meagre scraps of information occasionally found their way into France. Then it was that for the first time he understood the relationship in which he stood towards Octavie, and without one moment's hesitation, as he had never, since their childhood, kept anything from her, he sought her out, told her that he was going away, and then laid bare his heart before her.

She listened as one struck dumb; then threw herself into his arms and said:

"Oh, Henri, you cannot go; I shall die without you."

Little by little the poor fellow succeeded in soothing her, and at last obtained from her a consent to be married as soon as it should be possible. Like good children as they were, they went to the curé and told him all that had taken place, desiring him then and there to unite them. This the old man could not, of course, consent to, but he allowed them at last solemnly to betroth themselves in his presence. It was some consolation to the lovers to feel that in a manner they belonged to each other, and when they parted it was with the most solemn vows that each would be faithful to the other, and with a great deal of hopefulness for the future. On the following morning Henri went away to join his chief, sailed with him from the port of St. Malo, reached New France in safety, and entered upon his duties. Montreal was then a fortified village, but even then was growing yearly in importance, and already the Governor had thought fit to build an establishment here.

In a few months De Beaumont, who manifested not only ability, but tact, courage and firmness, was put in command of the garrison at Montreal, and was also charged to superintend the work of building the Governor's château, in so far as a man of his position might descend to such duties. He took kindly to this latter employment, and not only spent hours in watching the masons at their work, but suggested, as you will see, further on, several important changes in construction.

Leaving Henri busy in working out his fortune in Canada, I will return to Octavie in France, for it is with she that my tale has more particularly to do.

### CHAPTER III.

When Henri came no more to see her, Octavie felt as if the better part of her life were gone from her; and her only consolation now lay in the long talks with her uncle, and the bright pictures, which they made of the time to come when Henri should return to claim his bride Then there was the first letter, long, loving, full of hope; then other letters, and more long talks; until at last though Octavie missed her knight full sorely, yet much of the bitterness of her sorrow was passed, and she could live on the hopes of the future and the bright recollections of the past. Thus she had regained much of her old cheerfulness of manner, and much of the color, which for a time had faded out of her cheeks, had returned, when one day there came news from across the water, which inflicted so terrible a blow that she was crushed by it, her spirit broken and for long months her life and reason despaired of. Henri, had been taken prisoner, and burnt at the stake by the Indians. There was no doubt of it. The Governor, had sent a kind letter to the poor old Count, but gave him no room to hope that even a chance existed that his son might still be alive. No! his death had been witnessed by another captive, who through the kindly offices of one of the Indian women had made his escape before his turn for torture came.

Who can wonder at the effect which this intelligence had upon Octavie; she sank under it at first like a hot-house plant nipped by the frost, courage, reason, almost forsook her. But her's was too strong and devout a nature to be utterly overcome by even the most horrible calamity; and soon she was called back to life by the necessity of attending to her uncle, who though a hale man was old; and he had been so sorely afflicted by the death of his dear son, as he always called Henri, and by the grief of his niece, that his constitution broke, he became weak and infirm and in a few months died.

Sorrow often makes as brave and so it was with Octavie. To the first cruel blow she gave way; but at the second, her courage returned; and though she met the storm with bowed head, yet she met it. So soon as the last offices had been done for her uncle, and Octavie had time to think, she found the life which she then lead intolerable; and resolved to seek as a nun for a life of good works, in which that love with which her heart overflowed, and on which she now had nothing to expend it might be bestowed upon her poor and suffering fellow-creatures. The ladies of a convent, near at hand were very glad indeed to receive among them so sweet a novice; and soon she became known through all the country round, as the good Sister Charity. Her noviciate had scarcely expired, when a letter received by the Lady Superior, from her brother a Jesuit missionary in Canada, awoke among these holy women, a noble desire to emulate, those glorious fathers; and none was more anxious to engage in such an enterprise than the quiet and gentle Sister Charity. Soon a little company had been formed, the proper communications made to His Holiness the Pope, his consent to the undertaking obtained, along with letters patent for the establishment of a convent in Canada, from the French King, and in short everything that was necessary for the commencement of the good work. The ladies finally set sail from the port of St. Malo on the 12th of June 1670, and reached Montreal four months later, just as the forests with which, both banks of the St. Lawrence were covered, had put on their bright autumnal garb.

The Governor had by this time removed to Montreal, and occupied the residence, built for him under the superintendance of young De Beaumont.

As the good ship dropped her anchor in the harbór, she fired a gun which was answered by a hundred others from the walls of the fortress; and in a moment, the whole population of the town streamed out from the gates and ranged themselves on the shore, to greet the ladies on their landing. As there was no suitable residence for them in the town, the sisters were conducted to the Governor's chateau where a suite of rooms had been prepared for their reception. On the following morning they attended a thanks-giving service in the church of Notre Dame, which in those early days of the settlement bore no similitude to the grand edifice which now bears that name.

As they returned along the streets, the Sister Charity saw that which changed the whole course of her existence, and which had she not seen my story would never have been told. Departing from the church their route lay along the side of the Notre-Dame Street of to-day. Most of the ground had even then been built upon, but several large tracks still remained vacant and were either occupied by gardens, or were still free to the public. In one of these latter, a group of Indians and white men, who, but for their long beards, might have been mistaken for Indians, were engaged in pitching a rude encampment. It was not strange that a sight so novel to the eyes of a European, should have involuntarily arrested the attention of the sisters. In the Sister Charity the Indians caused a feeling of loathing and hatred almost; but they yet had a sort of mesmeric attraction for her, which made her look upon them even while she shuddered. As then she looked at the mottled group, with a feeling akin to horror, her eyes were arrested by the face of young man clad in the costume of a voyageur. He saluted the ladies respectfully, and raised his cap. His eyes met those of the Sister Charity for an instant, but in that short glance there was mutual recognition; the sister was Octavie Belfort, the voyageur was Henri de Beaumont. The Sister Charity cried out as if in agony, and sank fainting upon the pavement. Her companions gathered quickly around her, and she was conveyed into a house near by, where restoratives were administered.

When she had recovered sufficiently she was taken home in a carriage sent for her by the Governor himself.

### CHAPTER IV.

When Sister Charity reached home, she was assailed with so many questions as to the cause of her indisposition that she was compelled for the first time in her life to resort to subterfuge, at least, if not falsehood. She said it was fear and horror occasioned by the presence of the Indians. They all knew her story, were not therefore surprised at what had happened, nor were they lacking in sympathy for her weakness. In this manner she escaped question, and finally after urgent solicitation, was left alone to think and to pray. The first sensation of her heart was joy that Henri was safe; the next incomparable anguish at the thought that all hope for her was dead, she could never see him more, and perhaps it would have been happier for both, had his life not been spared; for she never thought for an instant that his love was less than hers, or that his suffering would not be quite as great. She would settle nothing, and before her there only appeared a life all blank and miserable.

But what of De Beaumont? He, you may be sure suffered not less than his betrothed; but unlike her, he had hope, and determination. His five years of forest life, had made him bold, intrepid and decided. Plans were evolved in his mind with wonderful rapidity and acted upon so soon as decided.

Perhaps here I had better tell you that Henri was not burnt at the stake. How he escaped I never learned; but he appears to have won from the chief, into whose toils he fell, an affection, which although for many months it kept him a captive, still saved him from death and from greater hardship, than was endured by the other members of the tribe. His captors were a roving band, and did not belong to any of the Indian nations of the North, who for the most part lived in towns. They had no settled abiding place; but at one time of the year trapped beavers on the Ottawa and St. Lawrence, and at another, hunted the bison on the prairies. They were a sort of Ishmaelites, every man's hand was against them and theirs equally against every man. They had taken scalps from almost every quarter of the continent, and few indeed were the hunting grounds where the bones of their slain comrades were not bleaching. With these men Henri had journeyed from a little outpost on the Ottawa, near which he had been captured, to the great grass covered plains of the South West. Journeying still southward, down the Mississippi river he had been, had he known it, in reach of the French settlement in Louisiana, in fact almost the whole of the Eastern part of the continent had been traversed ere he again set foot in New France and made his escape from captivity. At a place near the site of the present town of Ogdensburg he had joined a party of Indians and trappers, who were on the way to Montreal to dispose of their furs, and without revealing himself reached the town on the morning of the day succeeding that on which the Ladies of the Congregation had arrived in port; and it was while assisting his companions to prepare a shelter, that he saw and recognized Octavie in the Sister Charity.

As I have already hinted, De Beaumont made a determination to become possessed of his bride, and to make this easier, he resolved to preserve his *incognito*. Five years before, had he been told that a thought even of inducing a nun to break the sacred vows which bound her to her holy order would have entered his mind, he would have denied it a hundred times over. At that time his conscience was young and fresh, and would have kept him from acts far less wicked; but those terrible five years, away from all religious influences, and during which he had been surrounded with everything calculated to debase the mind, had had their effect; and while they had brought with them great decision of character and boldness, they had also blotted out much that was good. There still remained a noble nature, which, but for the temptation to which he was so soon subjected, would, no doubt, have saved him from so grave an error.

His first care was to communicate with Octavie, and this he succeeded in doing through the agency of one of the Governor's servants, who, during the time that he was in command of the garrison, had attended upon him. He first wrote a long and passionate letter, in which he reminded his betrothed of the solemn vows which she had made to him, vows which were as sacred and binding as any which she could have made to the Church, and which, having the priority, must be broken before she could renounce him. He then told her of his suffering, reminded her of how she must suffer, and counselled and entreated her to fly with him.

When Octavie received this letter her misery was increased fourfold. Doubts now existed in her mind as to which was the right course. In either case a vow must be broken and wrong done; by following one course she could only injure herself; by the other she condemned another to a life of misery. Could she either, with that love in her heart, a love which must be guilty while she remained a nun, give God the service which she had promised? Must not her whole future life be an hypocrisy?

While she thus hesitated, another letter arrived from Henri, again urging her to fly, setting forth more specially than before all the arguments of his first letter, and in many cases answering, as it seemed to her, the questions with which she had been tormented. Had she but sought the counsel of her Superior, no doubt the clear mind of that lady would have enabled her to point out to the erring one which was the right course, while her kindly sympathy and gentle manner would, perhaps, have soothed the bitterness of the hour. But Octavie feared to ask for advice on such a subject; and when at last another letter came, telling her that everything was prepared for flight, and giving her directions how to act, she yielded, and sent back by the messenger the answer which Henri so much desired.

I told you in the early part of this history that De Beaumont had made important changes in the construction of the Chateau. With what end I cannot say, he had caused a sliding panel to be made in one of the walls. This communicated with a secret staircase so ingeniously constructed that its existence was known only to the men who had been employed in the work, and who had all gone back to France. Nothing externally denoted its presence, which, therefore, remained a secret known only to Henri. Now it so happened that Octavie, with two other sisters, occupied the room with the sliding panel. De Beaumont's plans were thus very much facilitated. His directions to Octavie were that at midnight, or as soon after as possible, she should rise from her bed, open the wall, and descend the staircase; at the bottom of the stair she would find a little room, where a lamp and the costume of a young habitant woman would be left for her. The dress she was to assume instead of the habit of her order. A tap at a door opposite to the one by which she had entered would inform De Beaumont that her preparations were all made, and they would then, without further difficulty, effect their escape.

On the evening of the following day the Sister Charity and her companions retired to bed at their usual early hour. The little community were very busy making arrangements for departing to the convent building, which was now nearly ready to receive them, and when at night they retired to rest they were so wearied that sleep came to them almost as soon as their heads had touched the pillow, nor were their slumbers often disturbed until the matin bell called them to morning worship. Not so was it with Octavie on this night. Sleep had deserted her pillow. Her head was racked with a maze of confused and tormenting thoughts, through which shone clearly only the desire and determination to flee from a life which had in a few hours become intolerable to her; and yet, when she looked back upon it and thought of the future, it seemed to her that she would readily barter any pleasure, past or future, for the power to enjoy it again as she once had done. In thoughts like this she was still buried when the great clock in the hall, striking twelve, roused her from her reverie. She rose from her bed with utmost care, donned her nun's apparel for the last time, and stole noiselessly to that part of the wall indicated in Henri's letter. To a gentle pressure one of the panels yielded; two more pushes and it opened wide, leaving sufficient space to permit of the passage of her body. She stepped into a little recess, and closing the panel behind her, began to descend a narrow winding staircase. After going down a very long way it seemed to her, a light was visible, and in another moment she stood in a little vaulted chamber, with walls and ceiling of rough stone. It was lighted by a lantern, suspended from an iron hook driven into the wall. By the light which it cast around she discovered a bundle, which, on being unrolled, disclosed the complete dress of a habitant woman of nearly her own size. With a shudder she cast aside the habit of her order, and quickly donned the plain but substantial garb of the women of the country. Then, doubting her strength, she ran to the door and tapped gently upon it. It opened outwards, and in an instant De Beaumont stood before her. One long look they exchanged, and then Octavie threw herself into her lover's outstretched arms. Small time was there, however, for love-making; so De Beaumont, urging his betrothed to be strong and trust in him, gently disengaged himself from her embrace, and taking the lantern from the wall, led her out into a passage, closing the door behind him. A short walk along this subterranean passage, which gradually ascended, brought them to a wall of solid stone, in which was a small iron door. A sturdy push from De Beaumont flung it open, and, stooping, they crept through the aperture thus made. On the other side Octavie found herself standing on a narrow plank; beneath her the lamp-light showed her a pool of water, and looking upwards she saw a small patch of light, from the midst of which a star seemed to be looking down at her. At the opposite end of the plank was a ladder, up which Octavie mounted, closely followed by De Beaumont. In another moment she had reached the top, and found herself at the mouth of the well in the garden of the Chateau, and in the part of it overlooked by the windows of the apartment she had just left. De Beaumont, with the assistance of the old man, then removed the plank and ladder from the wall, after which all three hurried to the lower end of the garden, where they found the door of a little sallyport open, and, passing through it, came out upon the river bank. For a moment Henri conversed with the sentry, who allowed the party to pass without challenge, and they then walked quickly up the bank for a short distance. Soon they discovered a large canoe, well manned, in which they embarked, and in another moment were sailing swiftly down the St. Lawrence. After a great many perils they arrived safely in New York, which had then but recently come into possession of the English, and, as soon as possible, were married by a Protestant clergyman.

De Beaumont and his bride shortly after returned to Montreal, where the Governor welcomed the former as one risen from the dead. He soon received promotion to a good office, where he was enabled to lay the foundation of a substantial fortune. Representing Octavie as a young Acadian lady whom he had rescued from the Indians, he was married to her in the Church of Notre Dame so soon as the necessary arrangements could be made.

Perhaps you may think that, after so many troubles, Octavie should have lived happy ever after, but I cannot think that she did. There was a heavy sin on her conscience, as well as on that of her husband, which no good deeds

could wash away, and the record of her pious acts, which yet remains, clearly indicates that this was a constant burden to her. Her end, too, was most unhappy. The death of an only daughter, who was to have been a nun, brought on insanity. Her husband conveyed her to France, where she was treated with the utmost skill known to those days, but without avail, and she died miserably on the passage back to Canada without having regained her reason.

Perhaps I should tell you one further remarkable circumstance. On the night of the 10th of November, 1690, the inhabitants of the Chateau Ramsay were thrown into a state of great commotion. A lady who occupied an apartment which overlooked the garden of the Chateau had extinguished her light, and was in the act of retiring for the night, when there arose out of the bed the figure of a nun. The apparition at first walked stealthily towards the wall, against which it seemed to push; then turning and uttering a low moan, it stole silently across the floor, and as it reached the door disappeared. The lady uttered a loud scream, and fell fainting upon the floor. When she recovered she was surrounded by friends, to whom she told her tale. It ran among the servants, it was told in the town, and no one doubted it, for it was the twentieth anniversary of the night on which the young Sister Charity had disappeared, and many people still recollected the excitement which had been created by that event. But there is yet another coincidence. On the night of the 10th of November Madame de Beaumont died at sea."

L—— stopped here, and we walked silently back to the office, where I found plenty of work awaiting me.

## MY LOST DARLING.

BY LULA RIDELER.

Under the sod and the waving grass,
He is sleeping now, and my eyes are dim;
For all the visions of hope and joy
Went out from my life when they buried him.

Oh, had the lips that I loved so well,
Whispered good-bye ere they closed for aye,
It would be a joy to my weary heart,
And my tears wouldn't fall so bitter to-day.

He left me smiling that Summer morn,
And careless and gay were the words he said,
And I watched him go with a thrill of pride,
And at twilight they brought him back to me *dead*.

Cold were the lips that had smiled at morn,
White was the face that I tried to see,
White with the dews of death, and yet
'Twas the fairest face in the world to me.

Tenderly back from my darling's brow
They had brushed the curls so damp and wet,
And he seemed asleep with his blue eyes closed,
With a look on his face I shall ne'er forget.

Oh, the bitter pain that I felt that day—
Do you wonder then that I prayed to die?
It was worse than death when I turned away,
And knew I had kissed him a last good-bye.

And they buried my darling where the sun
Will shine, and the Summer flowers will glow,
But the sunshine into my darkened life
Never will come again I know.

## A CHRISTMAS STORY.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "LORD LYNNE'S CHOICE."

### CHAPTER III.

Christmas Day dawned bright and beautiful. After lingering long over the bounteous breakfast table discussing yesterday's pleasures and to-day's plans, we agreed that a walk and a drive in the clear bracing frost would the most agreeable thing possible. Dinner was arranged for that day at six, and a numerous party were invited. The long-talked-of charades were for the evening.

In spite of Mrs Gresham's intrigues, Philip managed to have Maud to himself for a long walk. What treason they talked and arranged was better known afterwards; Miss Bellingham, looking bewitchingly beautiful in her picturesque walking dress, seemed to fall naturally to the lot of Mr. Lindowes. Lady Flora went in the carriage with Mrs. Gresham, and beguiled the tedium of the drive by numerous and animated inquiries as to his rent-roll, extent of the property, and so forth.

"Shall you walk or drive, Bertrand?" asked Lady Hilda, looking timidly in his face.

"Neither," was the cold and brief reply: "I have to see my steward this morning about the dinner for the poor to-morrow."

The tears sprang to her eyes, and she turned away with a wistful sad look that went to my heart.

"What has come over Sir Bertrand?" I asked Philip; "he used to make opportunities for being near his wife, and now—see, she is getting into the carriage, with Captain Vaughan to attend her, and he is looking on.

"I cannot tell," replied my brother, thoughtfully; "I fear he is not well."

"That cannot be the reason of his treating her so coldly," I said; "last summer, when he was ill, you know he would have her with him continually."

"Perhaps he is cross or anxious about something," said Philip.

"He would never vent it upon her if he were," said I; "see, he is going in, and has not said 'good-bye.'"

"Never mind, Kate," said my brother; we novices cannot understand the many caprices of married people."

"Ah," said I, "but there is a mystery here; I know it, I am sure of it."

"If you like," laughed Philip; but he ceased to smile when the day wore on and we who loved them both noticed that Sir Bertrand never addressed word or look to his wife. All the others were too much engrossed in their own pursuits and pleasures to heed what seemed so strange to us.

One thing amused me at dinner. Part of our walk in the morning had been through a portion of the park where the laurustinus grew in great profusion and beauty. I saw Philip gather one choice little spray, and present it, as he thought unobserved, to Miss Gresham. When the dinner bell rang and the guests assembled I remarked that the holly wreath she had looked so like a Christmas fairy in the evening before was discarded, and she wore one glossy little branch in her hair and one in her bodice; very graceful it looked, too, on the white dress. Lionel Vaughan, who was never quite happy unless he had some one to tease, said to Maud, as we were waiting in the drawing-room, "How fond you are of evergreens, Miss Gresham!"

"Yes," she answered, "I do like them, especially at Christmas."

"I noticed you wore holly yesterday," he continued. "Pray forgive me, but it looked so very nice I could not help remarking it. I suppose holly is the essence or embodiment of Christmas; but do you know the meaning, the mystical meaning, of laurustinus?"

"I am not well skilled in the language of flowers, Captain Vaughan," she answered, with a crimson blush.

"I can enlighten you a little," said he. "This pretty evergreen speaks in a pathetic tone, unlike the merry holly or the sentimental mistletoe. It says, 'I die if I'm neglected.'"

Maud turned away; but Mrs. Gresham, who had accidentally overheard the remark, said, "I am sure Maud believes in no such nonsense, Captain Vaughan."

"I am delighted to hear it, madam," he replied with a low bow.

What a dinner that was! How the tables groaned beneath the weight of Christmas cheer! Every face was beaming with smiles, every heart was light and gay. There were but two exceptions. Sir Bertrand sat dull and listless at the head of his sumptuously appointed table, and Lady Hilda's beautiful face wore an expression of doubt and anxiety, that robbed it of its brilliancy and bloom.

The conclusion of that dinner and the charades were not enjoyed by either Philip or myself. A telegram came stating that my uncle had been suddenly seized with an apoplectic fit, and we were obliged to return home. We found him dangerously ill; but he recovered, and lived to continue his care and kindness to us for many long years.

I was grieved to leave the happy party at bright, cheerful Erlswood. I was anxious, too, about the dear friends there, and the cloud that evidently hung over them.

A few weeks passed, during which I was too much engrossed with my uncle's illness to have any leisure for letter-writing. At the end of that time I was surprised to hear from Philip that as soon as the Christmas party had dispersed Sir Bertrand had gone up to London alone, leaving Lady Hilda at Erlswood. Before we had recovered our astonishment Sir Bertrand had left England,—some said for Paris, others for Italy; no one seemed to know for certain where he was. He had left without going down to Erlswood; and people began to wonder, and to speak in whispers of Sir Bertrand Lyle and his fair young wife. The Summer passed, and he did not return. I did not like to intrude uninvited upon Lady Lyle; but, to my great joy, at length she expressed a wish to see me.

"I cannot promise you, dear Kate," she wrote, "any happiness or enjoyment; but I should like to spend a few days with you."

I went at once. I hardly knew Lady Hilda, she was so changed. The light in those brilliant, loving eyes was dimmed with tears; her face was pale and careworn, with a constant expression of dread and grief upon it. She did not mention her husband's name for some time, neither did I; but one morning, when I saw the traces of recent weeping upon her face, I ventured to ask her if she had had bad news from Sir Bertrand.

"No," she replied hastily, and, as I saw, unguardedly. "I never hear from him at all." To my look of surprise, she added, "Kate, let me open my heart to you; it will do me good, for grief is killing me. Sir Bertrand has left me; I know not why or wherefore. I only know he is gone, and I am alone."

"But, my dear Lady Hilda," said I, "there must be some reason; had you no disagreement or explanation?"

"Nothing," she replied. "We have never exchanged an angry word in our lives, Kate, and I knew no more the mystery of his conduct than you do. On Christmas Eve we were together as happy as possible; he was kind and devoted as usual; we were each busy entertaining our guests. On Christmas Day I noticed he did not seem like himself; he shunned and avoided me. At first I thought he was ill, and so redoubled my attentions to him. Through your going away, our party broke up much earlier than had been arranged, and to my intense surprise, on the morning our last guest went, Sir Bertrand, without one word of farewell to me, accompanied him; and, Kate, I have never seen or heard from him since."

"It seems incredible," said I; "did he leave no word of explanation?"

"No; but a few lines came by the post next day, saying, that he had withdrawn from me a presence that must be irksome to me, and that if I thought over my past life, I should understand that our parting was final; that I was at liberty to remain at Erlswood, and a handsome income was at my disposal, and my secrets and reputation were safe in his hands. I wrote, passionately imploring him to explain his mysterious conduct; but my letter was returned through his agent unopened. Oh Kate, what have I done to merit so sad a fate? Why have I lost his love?"

I was speechless with surprise. I could not believe she had lost his love. I remembered his glowing face as he fastened the bracelet upon her arm that Christmas Eve.

"I think, Lady Hilda," I said, "there must be a mystery. I suppose you neverdid or said anything that could annoy Sir Bertrand?"

"Never, Kate. I am as innocent of all offence as a child," she replied. "How could I, when I have loved him ever since I knew him better than my own life?"

"What shall you do?" I asked.

"Nothing," was the reply. "I have resolved to wait until he comes, if I remain until I die. If in anything he has judged me wrongfully, time will remove his error. If I never see him again, I will stay here, where the happiest days of my life have been spent. It will not be for long, Kate," she sobbed,—"my heart is breaking."

I could not understand it, and the longer I thought the more puzzled I became. I had heard of men doing such things under the influence of jealousy; but Lady Hilda was so noted for her great love of her husband, that such a cause was the last to be imagined. I could see no reason, no motive, no excuse for his desertion. I was obliged to leave the mystery, as his unhappy wife had done, for time to solve.

I promised Lady Hilda not to reveal one word of what had passed to any one, not even to Philip, and I kept my word.

### CHAPTER IV.

One morning, soon after the Christmas Day on which my story opened, I was sitting with Phillip, when suddenly Sir Bertrand Lyle was announced. Before I had time to recover from my surprise he stood before us,—thinner and paler than when I had seen him last at Erlswood, with a fixed look of deep sadness upon his face and a strange wistfulness in his dark eyes.

"What a man of mystery you are!" said Philip, as he cordially grasped the extended hand; "you disappear and go no one knows where, without one word of warning or good-bye, and now you reappear as suddenly."

"I returned to England on the twenty-third," he replied. "I grew tired of the Continent."

"I should say so," responded Philip, heartily. "With a home like Erlswood, and a wife like Lady Hilda, it would puzzle a philosopher to discover why you need have gone there at all."

Sir Bertrand winced uneasily, his lips quivered, and he answered quickly, "Philip, I have but a short time to spend with you; for the sake of our old friendship, let me beg of you not to mention either of those names again."

Philip looked at him with his clear honest eyes full of wonder.

"It must be so if you wish it, Bertrand," said my brother; "but I would far rather, in my right of an old and tried friend, ask you why that lovely and lonely lady is shut up there, and you roaming abroad in search of that which you will never find unless with her?"

He did not answer, and I rose to quit the room, thinking I had better leave them together. Sir Bertrand made no effort to detain me. I knew afterwards all that passed.

"What is all this, Bertrand?" said Philip, laying his hand caressingly on his friend's shoulder.

"It is this, Philip," said he, "that I am the most miserable man in the world. I have been duped and deceived as never human being was before."

"By whom?" asked Philip.

"By Hilda—by my wife," he replied. "I cannot bear to speak or think of it, and yet I could endure it better, old friend, perhaps, if you shared the secret with me."

"I do not know, Bertrand, what you are going to tell me," said Philip; "but of one thing I am quite sure,—Lady Hilda is as truthful and innocent as an angel, and nothing could ever convince me of the contrary."

"So I thought one short year ago," said Sir Bertrand; "but now, if I am to credit the evidence of my senses, I believe it no longer."

"Hush, Bertrand," said Philip "If my eyes told me she did wrong, I should say they were false to truth,—not she. My ears might deceive me; but that noble heart, never! If all my senses conspired to tell me she was aught but what I believe her to be, I would laugh them to scorn, and keep my faith in her intact and unbroken."

"I cannot help thanking you, Philip, for your trust in my wife," replied Sir Bertrand; "but, alas! I cannot share it. Listen, and I will tell you what I had said mortal should never know from me."

"Tell me all," said Philip. "Perhaps I, whose heart and happiness are less at stake than yours, can judge more coolly and calmly."

"You remember last Christmas Eve, Philip," he began. "You were all at Erlswood, and I need not tell you how happy I was then with my wife. To say that I worshipped her, would be to tell the merest truth,—if man could do more, I did it. I had no other thought save her and her happiness. I kept no secret from her; even all the details of my boyish life were laid bare before her. I lived but to love her. On that day, that Christmas Eve, I placed upon the Christmas Tree she had taken so great an interest in, a magnificent gold bracelet, that I had designed and had had made purposely for my wife. I remember taking it from among the fir branches and placing it on her arm, asking her, as I did so, if she would give me the last dance before supper. She blushed and smiled, and said 'Yes.' When the time came, I sought her, but she was nowhere to be found. I thought but little of it at the time; and a few minutes afterwards your sister told me Lady Hilda had gone to speak to the housekeeper. I thought it strange; but when a quarter of an hour had passed and she was still absent, I resolved to go and fetch her, thinking, like the simpleton I was, that it was hard for my darling to be kept away from that happy scene. I went to the housekeeper's room and asked for Lady Lyle, and was told that she had only been there for a minute, and had returned to the hall. Still unsuspicious, I went back in search of her.

"Leading on to the lawn at Erlswood, Philip, is a pretty little room, called, as long as I can remember, 'the green room.' Hilda was in raptures with it when she first came, and I had fitted it up in accordance with her favorite and somewhat peculiar taste. There was but little in it save flowers, a few rare pictures, and some easy chairs; but the flowers were so costly and fragrant, that the place resembled a miniature conservatory. Passing this little nook on my way back to the hall, I heard a low murmur of voices. I paused, for one sounded like my wife's.

"'What can she be doing here?' I said to myself, opening the door gently, and with a smile, thinking to surprise her; but, ah me! Philip, the smile died away—froze upon my lips,—and has never been there since. Hilda was sitting in a lounging chair, and standing by her, bending over her, was a tall and finely-built young man. He wore a large travelling cloak, and a cap concealed his features. She was looking up at him; love, surprise, and delight all shone in her face; something like rapture was in his. He murmured fond words to her, and she replied as tenderly. They spoke in German, but I could hear almost every word distinctly. He said for the last three years his life had been one longing to see her again; then he knelt before her, and she—she placed her white jewelled hand on his head, and drew him fondly near to her—she, my wife, whose heart, whose lips, I thought were my own, kissed his face again; and he took her in his arms, and held her as though death itself should never part them again. I saw her draw her purse, and gave it to him; she gave him the golden bracelet from her arm, and a ring of great value from her hand.

"All this time I stood paralysed. I have thanked God since that I was powerless to move, or he would have been slain where he stood. The clock struck, and he started; again my wife's hands drew his face down to hers. I heard him murmur, '*Lebewohl, meine liebe, lebewohl!*' and in another moment he was gone. He went through the long window that opened on to the lawn, and she stood looking after him. It was in my heart to confront her, but scorn and contempt prevented me."

"I should have done so, Bertrand, and have heard her defence," said Philip.

"I would not," he replied, sternly. "She had foully deceived me, Philip. So I let her go. She had vowed to me a thousand times that I was her first and only love; that her whole heart was mine;—therein she had spoken falsely. So I let her go. She watched until he had passed from sight, and then she clasped her hands and prayed that God would bless him and bring him back to her. I saw her face as she passed through the door to return to her own room; it was wet with tears, but wore a look of rapturous happiness which I could have thought sublime. I did not accuse her; my love seemed changed into a withering scorn. I let her go," he repeated again, "and I have never seen that false fair face since."

"It is incredible, Bertrand," said my brother. "I could think you had dreamed a vivid dream."

"Not so," he replied. "All the happiness and hope of my life is wrecked; men do not barter all for a dream. Though I have left her, and will never willingly look on her again, I am haunted by her; every ring of her musical voice and laugh sounds continually in my ears; every change of that bewitching face and expression of those matchless eyes haunts me. I can neither sleep, rest, nor live," he concluded, passionately.

Philip was silent for some minutes, and then said, "In spite of all you have told me, Bertrand, so high is my opinion of Lady Hilda that no matter what you have seen or heard, I refuse to believe ought of evil concerning her until her own lips proclaim her guilty. Did you never ask her for any explanation of what you had witnessed?"

"Never," he replied. "I only spoke to her four or five times after, in answers to questions she addressed to me before our guests."

"Did you give her no hint of why you were leaving her?"

"None. I wrote a few lines telling her that if she reviewed her past life she would understand why I never wished to look upon her more."

"Poor Lady Hilda!" said Philip.

"I see no cause for pity," said Sir Bertrand; "my blood boils when I think that he escaped who won her heart before I saw her, and keeps it even now that she bears my name."

"I do not—cannot believe it," exclaimed Philip; "if ever I saw entire and utter devotion, it was Lady Hilda's love for you. I am quite certain she would have cheerfully given her life for you"

"That did not prevent her from giving great love to another," retorted Sir Bertrand.

"There is some mistake or mystery, Bertrand; I am convinced of it," said Philip. "Why, I remember seeing her when she came back into the hall. Kate was teasing her for being absent so long. Never tell me that the sweet face I saw then was that of a guilty woman"

"For all that, what I have said is true," replied Sir Bertrand.

"It may have been some German friend that she knew years ago," suggested Philip.

"Then why the mystery?" said Sir Bertrand. "Every friend of hers has ever found a hearty welcome at Erlswood."

"I can neither see nor unravel it," said Philip; "but I shall keep my faith in Lady Hilda."

* * * * * * *

We were seriously unhappy over Sir Bertrand's health, for it was failing fast. After that one confidential conversation with my brother, he refused to renew the subject; he would not allow it to be mentioned; and though, I am sure, the gentle and unhappy lady was never absent from our thoughts, her name was never breathed among us. By my uncle's invitation Sir Bertrand remained with us for some weeks; his house in London was closed, and he did not care to re-open it.

Philip, who had been long meditating a journey to Italy, asked Sir Bertrand if he would accompany him; and his friend, only too pleased to absent himself with some shadow of an excuse, gladly availed himself of this.

The day before they started I resolved to brave Sir Bertrand's anger, and ask him if he would not leave one word of farewell for his young wife.

"No," he answered mournfully; "in this life Lady Hilda and I are virtually separated."

"But you would wish to see her once more?" I said; "you may be absent some time, and there are many dangers in travelling."

"I have seen her, Kate," he replied. "I saw her on Christmas Eve. False and untrue though she has been, my heart ached for one look at her. I went down to Erlswood and watched her for an hour."

"Did she know it?" I cried eagerly.

"No; no one saw me," he replied. "I knew my way to the drawing-room window. I stood there, and looked in upon her."

"How could you?" I asked, shudderingly.

"I shall never do it again, Kate," he said. "I have looked upon her for the last time, but it unnerved me. She wore the same dress and ornaments which she wore on that fatal Christmas Eve; she wept most bitterly, but whether for me or for others I cannot say,—the latter most likely."

In spite of himself, his voice shook and his eyes filled with tears.

The next day they started, and remained in Italy some months. The summer waned, and winter cold and frost began to appear. I was daily expecting their return, when a strange event happened that delayed that (to me) desirable event.

### CHAPTER V.

"This is a strange meeting," said the Countess von Rosenburg, as she held out both hands, one of which was grasped by Sir Bertrand Lyle, the other by Philip Dean. "Who would have dreamed of seeing you in Vienna?"

"We have been for a short tour in Italy," answered Sir Bertrand, with some confusion, "and made this *détour* in order to return with some friends."

"And poor Hilda is pining away at Erlswood," said the countess, unsuspiciously. "She told me some time since that you were gone abroad with your old friend, but that she, not being strong, preferred Erlswood."

Sir Bertrand made no answer; Philip asked hastily if Lady Hilda was well when she wrote.

"I have no doubt," replied Lady Rosenburg, "that all my news of Hilda would be old to you, Bertrand; but it did strike me that the poor child's letters were not so cheerful as formerly. How astonished she will be to hear that we have met by accident!"

"May I ask," said Sir Bertrand, courteously, "what has brought Lady Rosenburg so far from home?"

"Did you not receive my letter?" asked the countess, eagerly. "But no; how could you if you have been travelling? I wrote to you last week on a matter of the greatest importance, begging of you to join me here in Vienna as soon as possible. The moment I saw you I knew your coming must be accidental, for there has not been time yet for you to receive my letter, and come as I wished."

"I need not assure you," answered Sir Bertrand, "that this is the first intimation I have received of your wishes. I can only add that I am delighted we came here, and beg that you will consider my time and services all your own."

"I thank you," said the countess. "I expected nothing less from you, an Englishman, and my daughter's husband. I shall trespass upon your kindness so far as to ask you to place the week following at my disposal."

"I will do so with the greatest pleasure," he replied.

"Come to me this evening," she added. "I have apartments at the 'Lion d'Or.' You will hear a story that will surprise you."

Many were the conjectures of the two friends before evening arrived as to what possible cause could have taken the countess from her gloomy old castle to a modern hotel in Vienna.

"Something wonderful, I am sure," said Philip, "for I noticed a subdued kind of excitement about her that I never saw before."

The longed-for time came, and the friends hastened to make their *entrée* in the salon of Lady Rosenburg. She welcomed them warmly, and yet in a nervous agitated manner To their surprise, she carefully closed the door, and motioned them to draw their chairs nearer to her sofa.

"I asked your friend to come with you, Bertrand, because he knows all your affairs; and my secret," she said,—"the wearing, weary secret of the last fifteen years,—will now be yours. Listen patiently to an old woman's story, and you will know then how much a human heart can bear without breaking.

"I must begin by telling you that my late husband, the Count von Rosenburg, though good and in many respects kind, was one of the proudest men that ever lived. When we were first married he was immensely rich, and held a high position in the court and kingdom. His Imperial master distinguished him with many marks of favor, and I know no one save those of the blood royal to whom he was second. I, true, had a fortune of my own, the chief ornament of which was my castle of Rostein, on the Rhine, my present residence. How and why my husband lost his wealth and position, and ended his days in that gloomy home of mine, you shall hear.

"We were very happy. My husband, though proud and haughty to all the world, was kind and loving to me. We were blessed with two children, Hilda and Conrad. Ah! you start, Bertrand—you know not that I had a son. It is the first time for fifteen years that his name has passed my lips. Conrad, my eldest born, his father's heir, was a fine handsome boy, with a noble, generous heart; but he was in every respect the reverse of my husband. The pride that wrapped him as with an impenetrable garment did not exist in my boy's disposition. He was a democrat from his birth; pride of class or station could not be taught to him.

"I need not tell you how soon my husband and his heir clashed. Conrad was gifted with an intelligent disposition, and a mind of no common order. History was his favorite study, Rome and Greece his ideal of nations, before even he entered the university. He was an ardent republican. At eighteen he headed a troublesome revolution, and was found guilty of high treason, and condemned to death.

"I spare you the story of our grief. The blow laid my husband in his grave, but not before, by dint of ceaseless opportunity, he had procured the commutation of the dreadful sentence into one of perpetual banishment. Hard as it seemed for us, the innocent, to suffer for the guilty, still it was so. The emperor, perhaps, from the great peril he had incurred from the leaders of the rebellion seemed to be possessed with an implacable hatred to the whole of our unfortunate family. Our estates were all confiscated—nothing of our once vast wealth remained save my marriage portion and the castle of Rostein, the old family residence of my ancestors. My husband was deprived of all the offices and dignities he had held at court; and though not, strictly speaking, banished, he was advised to leave the kingdom, and not attempt to re-enter it during the lifetime of his august master.

"Ah, it was hard. Hilda was then a child of eight years; there is a difference of ten years between her and her brother.

"We removed from our brilliant residence, here in Vienna, and went to Rostein. My husband's heart was broken; I never again saw a smile upon his face, or heard a cheerful word from his lips. He cursed—ah me, I grieve to say it—the reckless, disobedient boy, who had drawn so cruel a fate upon him. More than that, on his death-bed he extracted from me an oath that his name should never more be mentioned, and that he should be considered in all things as one dead. I could almost believe that when his death agony seized him he repented of this, for there was a yearning, wistful look in his eyes, though his speech failed him.

"For twelve years I heard no tidings of my unhappy boy; then I was told that the emperor, repenting of the great severity with which he had visited the crime of the son upon the father, had consented to his liberation from all bonds on condition that he did not attempt to return to Austria.

"I must explain to you that my husband, in the height of his rage and disappointment, had compelled Hilda, child as she was, to share my solemn promise of never breathing her brother's name. We lived together, mother and child, with this dread bond of secrecy between us; she never broke it, nor did I. But the time has come when this unnatural state of things must cease. I am sure, if my husband were alive, he would wish it. Conrad's penance has lasted long enough; by

this time he must have suffered enough to avenge even the dead.

"I know that some time last year my poor boy was in England; I have an idea too that he saw Hilda. She dare not, poor child, mention his name to me; but I have other sources of information. He went there to solicit the co-operation of some of your most distinguished men. We have been told that the emperor, taking into consideration his extreme youth at the time the offence was committed, has graciously signified his intention of granting further pardon. I, his mother, am going now to throw myself at his majesty's feet, to implore from him the free forgiveness of my erring and unhappy son. In this mission I wish you, my dear Bertrand, to join me. You can be of use to me in a thousand different ways. I trust, I believe, we shall succeed."

Sir Bertrand sat silent, and unable for some moments to speak. With the rapidity of lightning, conscience showed him how in thought and word he had cruelly wronged and misjudged his fair young wife. He saw it all, and could have slain himself for the folly which had led him to doubt even for a moment that pure and noble lady. Philip, who guessed his thoughts, was the first to speak.

"When do you think," he inquired from the countess, "your son was in England?"

"I should imagine about a year last Christmas," she replied. "The information I received was vague, though reliable. No one connected with my own family has yet liked, or perhaps dared, to mention his name openly to me. You do not speak, Bertrand," she said turning to him. "Do you not approve of my plan? Will you not help me?"

"With my whole soul," he replied fervently; "but judge first whether I am worthy to do so. I was a witness—an unseen one—to the interview between my wife and your son. I knew not that she had a brother; and when I saw she met this stranger clandestinely, and gave him loving words and tender kisses, I dared to misjudge her, and suspect her of great wrong,—my innocent, noble wife!"

All regardless of those near him, Sir Bertrand bent his head, and bitter tears flowed down his face.

Anxiously did the mother listen to his story; no words could tell how she admired her child.

"She has endured all this reproach," she said, "this loneliness and impatience, and never breathed one word of her wrongs to me. My Hilda has, indeed, the pride of her race."

"Say rather," interrupted Philip, "she has lived on in hope, knowing that time would restore her husband to her, and solve the mystery of his conduct. I always said," he added, with pardonable triumph, "that she was innocent as the angels are."

"Let me atone," said Sir Bertrand to Lady Rosenburg. "Let me with you, implore his pardon. Let me find him; and, when once again with you, let us seek my wife together, and you will perhaps obtain my forgiveness. If all now goes well, we can yet spend Christmas at Erlswood with *Hilda*."

## CHAPTER VI., AND LAST.

A cannon exploding suddenly at my ears would not have caused me greater surprise than did my maid when she placed in my hands a voluminous despatch from Philip, marked "Immediate and important." I read it, and found the history as related above.

"I need not describe the joy with which I tell you we have succeeded," added Philip. "Owing in a great measure to the fervent entreaties and prayers of Sir Bertrand, his majesty has accorded to the culprit a full and entire pardon,—he is restored to the full enjoyment of his family honors and estates, and has taken the oath of allegiance. The homeless wanderer who, two years since, stole into his sister's house for one look at her whom he had not seen for so long, is now the Count von Rosenburg; and a handsomer, finer fellow does not live. But now, Kate, we have one task for you to perform.

"Lady Hilda knows nothing of all this; her husband hopes, by bringing her brother to Erlswood, to secure his pardon; he intends it for a most joyful surprise. Since the pardon of her son, Lady Rosenburg has grown young again; she too accompanies us, and we all purpose arriving at Erlswood on Christmas Eve. Will you go down now, at once, and remain with Lady Hilda until then? Sir Bertrand implores it as the greatest favor. You must not breathe one word of all this. If you are compelled to take any one into your confidence, let it be the German nurse, through whose agency, I had forgotten to tell you, the count was unable to see his sister on that fatal night. Do your spiriting gently, Kate, and as your reward, let me just whisper that Lionel Vaughan will join us on Christmas Day, when he has something very particular he informs me, to say to my sister. I have heard a rumor that Mr. Charles Gresham, regardless alike of 'the will' and the charms of the lovely Maud, has joined his destinies, with those of a soap-boiler's heiress, who is passionately addicted to rowing, and that their honeymoon is to be spent in cruising round Norway. I pray that rumor may in this case speak truly."

So ended one of the most welcome letters I ever received.

The next day—it wanted then but three days to Christmas Eve—I went to Erlswood. Lady Hilda was delighted, but evidently most astonished to see me.

"What can have induced you, Kate," she said, "to quit all gaiety and come to share my dreary solitude?"

"Nothing but the hope of enlivening it," I replied. "You have been dull long enough. Let runaway husbands please themselves,—Erlswood shall be brightened up for Christmas."

"It would destroy me, Kate," she said. "I try to forget what time it is that is coming."

"Do not think me unkind," said I, "but I shall try to remind you of it. You may sit in your room all day, if you can be so unsociable; but I come prepared to enjoy myself, and I am determined to make Erlswood more beautiful than ever."

"But to what purpose, Kate?" she asked. "It will not matter to you and me whether the evergreens are on the walls or not."

"It will be of serious importance to me," I replied. "Christmas is Christmas, and I like to see it properly observed, whether one is alone or not. Why should you be solitary? Are you conscious of deserving this dreary penance?"

"No, but my husband's will has imposed it on me," she replied.

"Nonsense, my dear Lady Hilda," said I. "You German maidens are too sentimental for anything. Now let me invite Maud Gresham to join us, and try what we can do to make Christmas happy."

"If you like, Kate," she answered, with tears in her eyes, and so listlessly, that my heart ached that I could not tell her of her coming happiness then and there.

The next morning I rose at a very early hour and sought the old German nurse. I thought she would have devoured me in the first excess of her joy. She promised me both secrecy and aid. We dispatched the men-servants in search of holly and all other evergreens, and before the evening of the next day Erlswood was itself again, nay, more beautiful than ever, for we spared neither time nor trouble. The dark fir, the glossy laurel, the holly with its shining berries, the mistletoe and the laurustinus where all there; every wall, every picture, every chandelier was wreathed with them; the hall looked like a miniature forest; never in its brightest days had Erlswood worn such a robe. We did not forget the kitchen department either; and the house-keeper, once more in her element, presided over turkeys and geese, mince-pies and plum-puddings that cheered one's heart to look upon.

Christmas Eve—oh, how I had longed for it—dawned at last. There was no snow, but there was a cold hard sunshiny frost, if possible more beautiful.

At noon Maud Gresham arrived alone, and glad enough I was to leave her with Lady Hilda in her cosy little boudoir, while I superintended all other arrangements. I had fires lighted in all the rooms, and ordered a grand supper to be prepared, as was usual on Christmas Eve. I could almost have fancied the servants suspected something, they exchanged such looks of quiet intelligence, and executed my numerous orders so quickly and so well. I persuaded Lady Hilda to order dinner at four. My heart smote me when I saw her pale, sad face and shadowed eyes. In my own excess of happiness at the coming joy I had overlooked her present sufferings.

When we had dined I urged her to come to the drawing room, telling her what pains I had taken to make it ready for her. Maud joined me in entreating her for this one evening to stay there with us, and she consented.

What a flood of light greeted us as the door was thrown open! I had not forgotten the yule-log, it burned upon the hearth, and its merry blaze danced upon the shining holly. We sat talking busily,—at least I was doing so, rallying Maud on the desertion of her lover. I could see Lady Hilda was making an effort to be cheerful, which her quivering lips belied. Her beautiful face was white and still; the tightly clasped hands showed that thought and feeling were busy under that calm exterior.

"Hark," said Maud, suddenly. "There's a carriage!"

My heart beat quickly. I knew the time was come.

"A carriage!" said Lady Hilda,—"impossible. No one is coming here."

"Nevertheless, there is one," said Maud. "Listen,—it has stopped." Then a loud peal from the hall bell sounded through the house.

I dared not look at Lady Hilda. My cheeks were like fire, and my heart beat so quickly I could hardly breathe.

"There is some one come," said Maud. "I can hear several voices. Who can it be?"

A servant entered with the most extraordinary expression of face I ever saw, it was such a compound of smiles and tears.

"Mr. Dean, my lady, to see Miss Dean." And Philip entered.

He passed me and Maud; he went to Lady Hilda, and took both her hands in his. I looked at her then, and the deadly pallor of her lovely face frightened me.

"You have returned," she said, in a hollow voice—"and alone."

"Not alone, dear Lady Hilda," he answered; but his sentence was never completed; for before the next word was formed, Sir Bertrand was there kneeling at his wife's feet, and her golden head was bowed over him. We went out and left them together. Angels might rejoice in such a scene, it was not for human eyes to witness.

How can I describe what followed;—how Sir Bertrand proudly led his beautiful wife to her brother, and placed her in his arms; how that fair face drooped upon his shoulder, hiding alike both smiles and tears; how the old countess held that trembling child to her heart, and whispered love and comfort to her. Best of all, as Sir Bertrand expressed, in word and action, the love and penitence that filled his heart. It was the most perfect and unalloyed scene of happiness ever witnessed.

Conrad von Rosenburg soon became a great favorite with us all. I think both Philip and Lionel were slightly jealous of him.

What a supper-table that was! And when we returned to the drawing-room, the count told us, as we were seated round the yule-log, the whole story of his life and wanderings. When he described his longing once more to see the darling sister he had left a child, Sir Bertrand bent his head until his face was invisible. He described how he had written to the old nurse, who in all his troubles had remained faithful to him, and she, after gently preparing his sister, had arranged their meeting at a time when the absorbing gaiety of the moment seemed to promise perfect security. He told us how his sister had wept over his poverty and woes; how she had taken the costly bracelet from her arm, and the ring from her finger, to give him help in his sore need. He had cheered her by telling her his hopes of pardon, and she had smiled brightly as she said *lebewohl*.

As Conrad finished his story the sound of the Christmas waits and the Christmas bells rang out in the clear night air. As I had seen them two years before, Sir Bertrand and Lady Hilda went to the window, to listen better to the melody; and as the sweet, loving words of old stole upon them, I saw him clasp her to his heart, as though death would have no power to part them. There, happy, loving, and beloved, I leave her. But I cannot refrain from telling you that in the following Spring three weddings took place at Erlswood.

Conrad von Rosenburg married a cousin of Maud Gresham's; Philip realised the dream of his life, by making pretty Maud his bride; and Captain Lionel Vaughan placed a ring upon the finger of—well, some one who loved him very much, and who, twining an orange-blossom with a wreath of Christmas evergreens, wishes you all "A MERRY CHRISTMAS AND A HAPPY NEW YEAR."

C. M. B.

DESMORO.—*From page 3*

did not, I hope, gratify his curiosity by telling him who the stuff was for?" she added, in a tone of anxious inquiry.

"He questioned me concerning the matter, and I spoke the truth," he answered.

"Well, it is of no consequence," madame rejoined. "I have simply an objection to making strangers as wise as myself, that's all."

All that night Desmoro was unable to close his eyes in sleep; he was thinking of the sick Captain Volderbond, and of the poison he had been to fetch for madame, and his brain was all doubt, commotion and pain.

On the following morning, the old Captain was reported as being much worse, and the doctor gave no hope whatever of his recovery.

The medical man was perplexed to understand the old man's malady, and he said as much to Madame Volderbond, who listened to him with her handkerchief pressed close to her eyes, her bosom upheaving all the while, as if she were quite convulsed with violent emotion.

Another day went by. The Captain was now insensible, and those around him were each moment expecting to see him draw his last breath. Olympia was by his bedside, looking deadly pale, and apparently much distressed.

At length, the writhing form before her was still, and the laboured breathing had ceased—Captain Volderbond was at rest.

The widow inherited all the dead man's wealth, and looked bright and contented in her weeds. Olympia was a free woman, for her husband, she reflected, could not come out of his grave to claim her.

"So Captain Volderbond is gone from amongst us," said Doctor Nielson to one of his professional brethren. "What ailed the old gentleman—he seemed well enough when I met him last, now about a fortnight ago?"

The person addressed shook his head.

"You ask me what was the matter with the Captain? On my honour, as a medical man, I do not know. I attended him, and prescribed for him—first this medicine, and then that, all the while in a state of perplexity concerning the nature of his disease. Had he died under any other circumstances, I should have stated that he had been treated unfairly—in other words, that he had been poisoned."

"Heavens!" exclaimed his listener. "Poisoned, Durgan! Who would poison him?"

"Now, don't run away with a false impression, my dear fellow; I say, had the Captain had any other than that lovely creature for his wife, I should have suspected that he had been hurried out of the world in order that she might obtain full possession of all his money."

Doctor Nielson pondered for a few seconds; he appeared to be searching his memory for something or other—for some circumstance that he had almost forgotten, but which was now gradually rising to the surface of his recollection.

"His sickness presented symptoms of poison, you say, eh?"

"I fancied so," returned Doctor Durgan; "nay, I could almost swear to the fact."

"That Captain Volderbond died from the effects of some life-destroying drug?"

"Precisely."

"And such is my impression also," returned Doctor Nielson.

"Your impression, my dear fellow?" repeated his friend, in great astonishment, "I don't exactly understand you."

"I dare say you don't," answered the other. "Now, listen to me! Only the other day, Madame Volderbond sent here for a certain quantity of arsenic!"

"Great powers! is it possible?"

"It is not only possible, but *true*!"

"Nielson, you astound me! There must be some mistake! Madame Volderbond could not commit such a cruel and dreadful deed!"

"That remains to be proved, my friend. What could she want with arsenic?"

"Why did you not ask that simple but necessary question when you sold her the drug?"

Doctor Nielson shook his head by way of reply.

"I don't think, as honest men, that we ought to keep our suspicions to ourselves," he said, after a pause.

"What would you advise?"

"Well, I have a visit of a professional nature to make this evening to Judge Donnithorn, to whom I shall mention this case and all its bearing. Of course, I have your free permission to do so?"

"Assuredly."

"For the present, then, good day; you shall hear further from me to-morrow."

And with these words, the two medicos parted.

(*To be continued.*)

## LADY DRUGGISTS.

It may perhaps interest some of our lady readers to learn that the course of study and the examinations of the Royal Pharmaceutical Society have been thrown open to women, and that two ladies have already availed themselves of this privilege, and are now in attendance on the classes as students. It is further expected that the number of lady students will soon be very largely reinforced. To attend these lectures it is not essential to be an apprentice or an associate of the society, and the lectures are excellent. The laboratory is not, as yet, open to women students, for the reason that it would be inconvenient for them to work there; but laboratory practice can be obtained in other ways, such as in the chemistry classes for women, organised by Professor Williamson at University College.

This opening to women of the courses of study and the examinations of the Pharmaceutical Society gives them for the first time the opportunity of becoming regularly qualified and registered as chemists. In the dearth of occupations in which women can engage, the opening of one so suitable to them is a fact which cannot be too strongly dwelt upon; and it is one which will afford true gratification to all who are anxious to increase the number of employments open to women.

The examinations of the Pharmaceutical Society are of three grades—(*a*) The First or Preliminary Examination, for registration as apprentices or students; (*b*) The Minor Examination, for registration under the Pharmacy Act, 1868, as chemists and druggists; (*c*) The Major Examination, for registration as pharmaceutical chemists, under the Pharmacy Act, 1852. Certificates of having passed the Local Examinations of the Universities of Oxford, Cambridge, or Durham, the Examination of the College of Preceptors, or those of any legally-constituted examining body approved by the Council are accepted in lieu of the preliminary examination.

## THE POTATO ROT.

There can be no doubt that there are certain atmospheric conditions which favour the development and increase of certain minute fungoid growths, which in their turn materially influence both animal and vegetable life. Dr. Lionel Beale, one of our best microscopists, insists most strongly on this point. The very great quantity of rain and the great humidity of the atmosphere during the months of September and October, conditions peculiarly favourable to fungoid growth, may in all probability have had its effect on the potato crop in the Province of Quebec, for all throughout it—more particularly in the Gaspé district and the low lands lying between Montreal and Three Rivers—the potatoes are more or less diseased.

Some eminent botanists and microscopists are firmly persuaded that the disease is traceable to minute fungi or parasitic growth, which first attacks the under side of the leaves of the potato plant, stopping up their breathing pores and preventing the emission of perspiration; consequently the potato plant gets surcharged with moisture, which rots the stem and leaves, and gives the spawn the opportunity of preying upon the tissues most disastrously, for in almost incredibly short space of time the whole plant becomes one putrid mass

In England the damage done to the potato crop has been immense, and is estimated by a writer in the *Times* at about $100,000,000; and probably the amount is not exaggerated when the rapid growth of this "potato fungus" is taken into consideration, for it is stated with authority that in a few days a whole tract of country will be overspread by it, and the evil will then be apparently incurable. All fungoid growths are remarkable for their amazing rapidity of development and it is important to bear this in mind.

One of the remedies proposed is to mow the stems down as soon as the disease makes its appearance. This plan often fails, because the tubers may be diseased before the plants are cut down, and when that is not the case the potatoes are often so weakened by the process as to be of little value.

Admitting the cause of the disease to be known there is great contrariety of opinion as to its cure. A writer in the *Gardener's Chronicle* advises growers always to plant early varieties, and to get the potatoes out of the ground as soon as possible. The difficulty is that we cannot tell beforehand when the crop is likely to be affected, and then, when symptoms of disease appear, it is often too late to apply the effectual remedy.

English scientific writers have called attention to the singular circumstance that the periods of maximum sun spots coincide with periods of great national epidemics. The years 1848, 1860, and 1872 are specially cited by astronomers as dates for the periods of maximum sun spots, and in each of these years the potato disease was prevalent, as were also other epidemics. A writer in *Nature* suggests the idea that such diseases may be expected in periodically recurring cycles. Again, may not the same electrical conditions which have been favourable to the spread of the potato disease in Europe have had some share in the production of the "epizootic" malady in America?

It would be well if the Professors of Meteorology would present to the agriculturist some of the physical laws on which meteorology depends, and the relation between the weather and disorders of particular character which affect both animal and vegetable life, or, in other words, the influence of peculiarities of weather on the functions of organized bodies, so as to awaken a more lively interest in the subject of meteorology, when so much depends upon an acquaintance with its laws.

## MISCELLANEOUS ITEMS.

CHICAGO possesses sixty miles of wooden pavement.

ACCORDING to the recent Census, Italy possesses a population of 26,783,005, against 25,024,191 in 1861, showing an increase of 0-70 per cent. per annum, at which rate the population would be doubled in 98 years.

ACCORDING to Baron Richthofen and others, the Chinese coal-fields cover an area of upwards of 400,000 square miles; 12,000 miles of coal have sufficed to make Great Britain the greatest workshop of the world.

IN Germany washing is not done every week, but at intervals varying from two or three weeks to two or three months or more. The longer the time the more respectable the family, as indicating a great abundance of linen. Twelve sets of every article are considered barely respectable.

A GAME shop of a rather peculiar kind has been opened in a street near the Halles, Paris. It is dedicated to "Gourmets without Prejudices," who can be furnished therein with the flesh of badgers, weasels, ferrets, wild-cats, foxes, owls, jays, rooks, crows, magpies, and *gibier des gouttières*—a euphemism for domestic cats, rats, mice, and such "small deer."

TEXAS BEEF.—Philadelphia has started a monthly line of steamers for the purpose of bringing fresh beef from Texas preserved by refrigeration. By the process employed the meat does not come in contact with the ice, but is kept fresh by currents of air forced through the ice, keeping the storerooms cool and the meat pure. It will be recollected that a cargo was brought to Philadelphia last Summer and sold off very satisfactorily.

THE RUSSIAN EMPIRE.—Under the present reign, the area of the Russian Empire, including Finland, Poland, Russia, and Siberia, is nearly 370 million square miles. Siberia and Caucasus add nearly nine millions to the population of the entire Empire, which thus stands, as nearly as possible, at 77 millions. The density of the population to the geographical square mile ranges from a maximum of 2,204 in Poland to a minimum of 17 in Siberia.

ARITHMETIC FOR MILLIONAIRES.—The following paragraph is going the round of Indian papers:—The Chinese have a most ingenious method of reckoning by the aid of the fingers, performing all the operations of addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division, with numbers from one up to 100,000. Every finger on the left hand represents nine figures, as follows:—The little finger represents units, the ring finger tens, the middle finger hundreds, the forefinger thousands, the thumb tens of thousands. When the three joints of each finger are touched from the palm towards the tip they count one, two, and three of each of the denominations as above named. Four, five, and six are counted on the back of the finger joints in the same way; seven, eight, and nine are counted on the right side of the joints from the palm to the tip. The forefinger of the right hand is used as a pointer. Thus, 1, 2, 3, 4 would be indicated by first touching the joint of the forefinger next the hand on the inside, next the middle joint of the middle finger on the inside, next the end joint of the ring finger on the inside, and finally the joint of the little finger next the hand on the outside. The reader will be able to make further examples for himself.

## GEMS OF THOUGHT.

HAVE not the cloak to make when it begins to rain.

EXPECT nothing from him who promises a great deal.

NOTHING is more easy than to do mischief, nothing more difficult to bear without complaining.

WHEN Heaven sends storms upon men, they must imitate the humble grass, which saves itself by lying meekly down.

A RESTLESSNESS in men's minds to be something they are not, and have something they have not, is the root of all immorality.

WIT loses its respect with the good when seen in company with malice; and to smile at the jest which plants a thorn in another's breast is to become a principal in the mischief.

NOT a tempest sweeps through the earth that is not needful; not a trouble breaks upon the human heart that is not necessary. If so, let us take heart and rejoice that we are in the road that leads upward to Heaven.

THE false shame which shrinks from exposing to the world a necessary and honorable economy: which blushes more deeply for a shabby attire than for a mean action; and which dreads the sneer of the world more than the upbraiding of conscience—this false shame will prove the ruin of every one who suffers it to influence his thoughts and life.

LIFE is made up of little things. He who travels over a continent must go step by step. He who writes a book must do it sentence by sentence; he who learns a science must master it fact by fact, and principle after principle. What is the happiness of our life made up of? Little courtesies, little kindnesses, genial smiles, pleasant words, a friendly letter, good wishes and good deeds.

WHEN a cup is full it runs over, and the human heart cannot hold more than a certain amount of sorrow; what is over remains unfelt. Great calamities are to be measured by the length of time in which they involve us in suffering, rather than the intensity of the suffering they cause. Some griefs stretch their black shadows over whole lives; others but darken a short passage of our history.

METHOD is the very hinge of business, and there is no method without punctuality. Punctuality subserves the peace and good temper of a family; the want of it creates disappointment and strife. Punctuality is like packing things in a box; a good packer will get in a great deal more than a bad one. The calmness of mind which it produces is another advantage of punctuality; a disorderly man or woman is always going to do something and never does it.

No two qualities in the human mind are more essentially different, though often confounded, than pride and vanity. The proud man entertains a high opinion of himself by reason of his acknowledged worth; the vain man only strives to infuse such an opinion into the minds of others. The proud man finds admiration to be his due; the vain man is satisfied if he can but obtain it. Pride, by its good works, demands respect; vanity, by little artifices, solicits applause. Pride may make men disagreeable, but vanity makes them ridiculous.

## WIT AND HUMOR.

SIC TRANSIT.—That across the ocean.

GEOGRAPHICAL CON.—If the world is round, how on earth can it come to an end?

THERE are 22,000 threshing machines in the United States, not counting the schoolma'ams.

WHEN Jonah's fellow-passengers pitched him overboard they evidently regarded him as neither prophet nor loss.

IT is a grate deal eazier tew be a philosopher after a man has had hiz dinner, than it iz when he don't know where he iz agoing tew get it.

A MAN up in New Hampshire named his two children Ebenezer and Flora; he always speak of them as Eb and Flow—very *tidy* nicknames.

"WHY should we celebrate Washington's birthday more than *mine*?" asked a teacher. "Because he never told a lie!" shouted a little boy.

SPRIGGLES bought a thousand Havana cigars, yesterday, and on being asked what he had, replied that they were tickets to a course of lectures to be given by his wife.

MUSICAL INTELLIGENCE.—A thief was lately caught breaking into a song. He had already got through the first two bars, when a policeman came up and hit him with a stave.

AN editor, who has been soliciting "short articles" from the subscribers of his paper, lately received a baby's under garment, somewhat dilapidated, but short enough doubtless, to meet all requirements.

A MISSOURIAN who stole a kiss from a pretty girl was fined by a magistrate, horsewhipped by her brother, and hurried into the brain-fever by his wife. The clergyman also alluded to the affair in a sermon, the local editor took sides with the clergyman and reviewed the case in print, and the potato-bug ate up every blade of the malefactor's wheat.

A GLASS TOO MUCH.—The latest verdict recorded was upon a gentleman who expired in a fit of inebriation. The jury returned, "Death by hanging—round a rum shop." This was savage, and devoid of regard for the gentleman's family. In a similar case in California the verdict was more gracefully and considerately put: "Accidental death while unpacking glass."

THE latest specimen of the stage drunkard is Old Grimey, produced at the Grecian Theatre, London. The old ruffian, half miser, half sot, varies the performance by haggling for another coin after his friend had given him sixpence. "Why, you old villain, I've just given you a sixpence to buy rum with, have I not?" "Yes Dick, dear Dick, my boy" hiccoughs out old Grimey; "but you don't think I'm going to spend my hard-earned capital in rum, do you? I never drinks but when I'm treated."

## HEARTHSTONE SPHINX.

### 23. RIDDLE.

I'm something no one ever likes to feel;
Annoyance at me few can e'er conceal;
Decapitated, then no doubt I might
Upon this knotty subject throw some light.

JESSY.

### 24 ENIGMA.

Often cracked but never broken,
Yet I manage to exist;
Courted by society,
Very few can me resist.

Introduced both here and there,
Causing mischief, causing fun;
Some through me will disagree,
And oft regret what they have done.

Take care with me how you deal;
Much about me might be said;
I form a great variety
In the *Herald* you may have read.

WM. TYRELL.

### 25. NUMERICAL CHARADE.

I am composed of twelve letters. My 1, 2, 11, is a vessel for holding water; my 8, 5, 4, every soldier possesses; my 3, 5, 11, 12, is a gentle respiration; my 6, 12, 7, 9, 8, part of the face; my *whole* a well known judge.

S. H. A.

### 26. GEOGRAPHICAL REBUS.

A county of England; one of the Canary Islands; an English city; a town in Stirlingshire; a province in Belgium; a village in Middlesex; a town on the Arno; a peninsula of British North America; and a seaport of Scotland. The *initials* will give a manufacturing town in England, and the *finals* its county.

E. T. S.

### ANSWERS TO CHARADES, &c., IN No. 49.

26.
F A L L
A C R E
L E A N
L A N E

27. Shakspere — Ben Jonson—Thus: 1. SouthcheR; 2. HidE; 3. ArraN; 4. KellS; 5. SagO; 6. PeaN; 7. EmpresS; 8. RollO; 9. EdeN.

28. Nep-tune (Nep—reversed—pen.)

29. Fire.

THE HEARTHSTONE.

### WHO WILL CARE.

Who will care?
When we lie beneath the daisies,
Underneath the churchyard mould,
And the long grass o'er our faces
Lays its fingers damp and cold;
When we sleep from care and sorrow,
And the ills of earthly life—
Sleep, to know no sad to-morrow
With its bitterness of strife—
Who will care?
Who will care?
Who will come to weep above us,
Lying, oh! so white and still,
Underneath the skies of summer,
Where all nature's pulses thrill,
Full of beauty rich and sweet,
All the world is clad in splendor
That the years shall o'er repeat—
Who will care?
Who will care?
Who will think of white hands lying
On a still and silent breast,
Never more to know a sighing
Evermore to know of rest?
Who will care? No one can tell us,
But if rest and peace befal,
Will it matter if you miss us,
Or they miss us not at all?
Not at all!

## MISS FOXWOOD.

BY MARY KYLE DALLAS.

Miss Foxwood was good looking. There is no doubt whatever about that. But uglier women had married, and she had been bride's-maid to them too, and still she was Miss Foxwood.

Whether the gentlemen who figured in her letters to her friends as having proposed to her, and having been rejected, were myths; whether they occupied the position in her life that Mrs. Harris occupied in that of Sairey Gamp; or whether she actually *had* tortured so many estimable gentlemen with the stings of unrequited passion, her most intimate acquaintances could not be sure. But, as they said, why Sally Ann Foxwood should reject such good offers passed their comprehension; for Sally Ann never pretended to be sentimental, and owned to being at her wit's ends for money; and Sally Ann had glided from the twenties to the thirties, and would be over the forties, as one dear friend remarked, very soon indeed, "if she did not take care."

Meanwhile Sally Ann took all the care she could. She sang sentimental songs, and made big eyes at every man she met. She neglected nothing unmarried that wore hat and boots, from boys in jackets to old men in wigs. "Her eyes looked love to eyes that" old not "look love again." But all did not go merry as a marriage bell.

At first Miss Foxwood had been particular about looks, position and money. Then she would have had any manner of man, as far as outward form went, if he possessed position and money. Now she had given up position. It was anybody with money—anybody, no matter who. She still sang her favorite song:

"I cannot give my hand
Where my heart can never go,"

with *empressement*, and with a roll of the eye toward the masculine who turned the music. But when she first sung it, she had had an idea that her heart might be the victim of a pair of fine whiskers some day, and now she knew that she had no heart to give any one. She had flirted it away in little bits, until it was all gone.

So was the little money that her mother had left her. Miss Foxwood had actually made up her mind to advertise for a husband, and take anything that offered, when there came into the boarding-house in which she was located an old gentleman, stout, red-faced, gouty, hot-tempered, and rolling in gold. That is, the landlady said he was rolling in gold—a figurative expression that suggests an unlimited supply of cash, and a sort of Fortunatus purse always in the waistcoat pocket. Miss Foxwood "went for him." Who can keep out of slang in these degenerate days? Miss Foxwood "went for him" at once.

She sang the divine songs; she rolled the divine eyes; she smiled; she fanned herself; she expressed fine sentiments. She professed to scorn beardless youth, and to admire men in their prime—*about seventy*. And Mr. Gaspard, who had a young heart in his old bosom—who had always liked fine women, and who had been kept a batchelor by cruel fortune, who had only dispensed her blessings after he was in what Miss Foxwood called his prime—saw a fine woman evidently smitten with him, possessed himself of the idea that she was an angel, "courted her with brooch and ring," and finally popped the question in Mrs. Timpkins' back parlor with Mrs. Timpkins' housemaid listening at the key-hole—a fact of which, of course, neither Miss Foxwood nor Mr. Gaspard were aware.

"And says she," said Maggie, rehearsing the scene to Mrs. Timpkins, "'Lor! Mr. Gaspard,' says she, 'this is so on.xpected,' says she. 'Not onwelcome, I hope,' says he. Says she, 'How kin it be,' say- she, 'when it comes from one like you?' Then I dropped the broom, and had to run away."

And curious Mrs. Timpkins, espying a diamond ring on Miss Foxwood's taper finger, after a few days made up her mind that her maid-servant had not spoken falsely.

Miss Foxwood *was* engaged to Mr. Gaspard. She had promised to marry him in three weeks.

He, for his part, was delighted with his promised bride, and wore his hat very much on one side, and assumed a youthful and jaunty gait, in the delight he felt at his own success. He believed that all the men at the table—little Simpkins the dry-goods clerk, Tappen the law student, the Rev. Mr. Holdfast, and Charles, Mrs. Timpkins' sixteen-year-old nephew—envied him from their souls.

Could he have known how Miss Foxwood had sung, "Oh, believe me, if all those endearing young charms," to Simpkins, so evidently meaning his, Simpkins', charms; had he known how Tappen had had need of his legal knowledge to evade a case of breach of promise; and how the Rev. Robinson Holdfast, a meek young clergyman, dreadfully afraid of women, had been almost proposed to out and out by the despairing Sally Ann; had he seen the look of hair culled from his tresses by Charley Timpkins, for the same lady's wearing in a locket, he would have been a sadder but a wiser man. And oh, had he read the letter, the dreadful letter written by Sally Ann to her Aunt Maria, on the night of her engagement! But you, dear reader, shall see it:

"DEAR AUNT: You told me when we last met, that it was high time I made my market. I acknowledged the truth of your suggestion. I've done it. I'm engaged!

"Dear me, when I look back and think how very much I did fancy myself smitten by young Holbrook, a big blonde fellow with English whiskers; and then there was Capt. Craik, with his black eyes and dashing way. I used to say I'd only marry a handsome man, and now— Well, if you could only see him. He is fat enough to roll. You can just see his eyes. He is all muffler and umbrella and overshoes. He has the gout now and then. He has never been good looking; and now he's seventy. No matter; he is very rich, and dreadfully spoony about me. He shall take me to Europe, and hang diamonds all over me. And he sha'nt make his will so that I can never marry again, if I know it. I shall live like a queen. *Do* send me either my wedding-dress, or money to get one with. Daddy Gaspard shall pay it back some day. If you don't or can't, I'm sure I don't know what I shall do. And you ought to be glad enough to do it, instead of having me quartered on you for life."

When Miss Foxwood had written thus far, she made a great blot, which forced her to copy the letter before she could dispatch it to her aunt. But all that followed were the usual affectionate niece and the signature.

Sometimes Satan deserts his friends in their greatest need. I am sorry to say his majesty must have behaved thus to poor Sally Ann at this moment, else what could have impelled her to thrust the blotted letter into her portfolio instead of tearing it up?

She did it, however, and the copy was sent, and by return mail came a reply.

Aunt Maria summoned her niece to her presence, and promised an outfit. And in great glee Miss Foxwood bade a temporary adieu to her betrothed lover, and went off to her aunt's, promising to return in a week at farthest.

It was midnight. The house of Timpkins slept. Suddenly there came a sound to break the silence. What was it? What could it be? Cannon? An earthquake? A comet's tail? The English bombarding the city? Mrs. Timpkins and boarders appeared in shawls, dressing-gowns, water-proof cloaks, and even blankets. All were there but Mr. Gaspard, and howls came from that gentleman's room. Mrs. Timpkins produced her keys. None fitting the door. Charley Timpkins suggested breaking it down, but at this a faint voice proceeded from within the room.

"He's alive," said Mrs. Timpkins.

"Poor dear!" cried the ladies.

"Anything the matter?" cried the gentlemen.

At this moment the door opened. A ghost in a counterpane hobbled out. A cloud of white dust came with him. The ceiling of Mr. Gaspard's room had fallen, and a piece had hit his gouty toe.

"It's a massy it warn't his neck or his back, and him to be married so soon," said the housemaid.

Mr. Gaspard heard the words; they comforted him. After all, what was one's toe, when one's heart was light with love?

"Dear, dear," said Mrs. Timpkins. "I'm very sorry indeed, Mr. Gaspard. It's that nasty landlord. I've showed him that crack fifty times. Where shall I put you? Oh, it's just a lucky chance. Here is Miss Foxwood gone to her aunt's, and her room empty. You can take that for to-night, and to-morrow I'll fix the back parlor, if I can't do better."

And the door of the vacant room was unlocked, and Mr. Gaspard in his counterpane toga entered, and was seen no more, except when his head emerged from the aperture of the nearly closed door and he asked for a match.

Shut in, locked in, he sat down in a chair. His toe hurt him very much, but he forgot it. This then was her room. Here she sat and dreamt of him. Here she slept and dreamt of him still. She had told him so.

"Ah, my dear girl," said Mr. Gaspard, who was genuinely in love in an honest way that did him credit, "how I will pet her; how I will try to make her happy when she's mine. They'll talk about May and January, I know; but, bless my soul, it isn't May and January. It's full bloom beautiful August and ripe October. She says I'm a very handsome man still. I hope I'm not vain, but it's very pleasantthat she should think so."

There was such a beautiful fascination in the room that he could not think of sleep. He walked about, touching the little things that belonged to the absent Miss Foxwood—her work-basket, her books, her knitting needles, her inkstand. He found a mysterious white garment on a chair—a garment with ruffles on the wrists and at the throat—and wondered, in masculine ignorance, whether that might not be her wedding dress. And then he sat down at her desk and opened her portfolio.

"Dear little soul!" said he, "I wonder whether she ever writes poetry? I mean to see."

And then it came into his mind that if he found verses addressed to himself, and written before she knew he loved her, that he should be a very happy man. Don't laugh at him. This sort of thing comes to every one some time. He had never been in love before.

My friend, I am going to take you out of the room now. You may see Mr. Gaspard open the portfolio. You may see him find that unlucky blotted letter which lies within—the letter Miss Foxwood wrote to her Aunt Maria—but you shan't see my poor old Gaspard read it. He may be past youth, he may have had a little vanity in his honest heart, but he was a true man and a true lover for all that. Come away.

You remember the case of Foxwood versus Gaspard, don't you? And how the beautiful plaintiff shed tears in court, and how her lawyer called the defendant "a monster unworthy of the human form," and how his love letters were read aloud, and how the fact that he called her "his angel," "his pearl," "his nightingale," and his "own one," were brought up against him; and how the feelings of the injured angel were valued at ten thousand dollars and costs by an admiring judge and jury. Very well. Then you know the end of my story.

FROM OBSERVATIONS UNDER THE MICROSCOPE of the blood of patients using Fellows' Compound Syrup of Hypophosphites, taken from time to time, positive proof has been obtained of the steady removal of diseased and dead blood particles and the substitution of vitalized discs, so necessary to the construction of healthy muscle.

### PERFECT RESIGNATION—AN ACROSTIC.

BY J. MOORE.

(The initial letters of the alternate lines beginning with the first give the word FATHER. The remaining initial letters taken in order give the word MOTHER.)

Father, to thee I lift my longing eyes,
My hope, my love, my all now rest in thee;
Around my shatter'd bark the tempests rise,
O let thy arms of love encircle me.—
The lights of time are fading one by one,
The glow of earthly bliss has fled my gaze;
Hung on thy mercy and thy love alone,
Here would I linger out my fleeting days.—
Entwine thy arms around thy lonely one,
Enwrap him in thy robe of perfect love,
Remove each stain, and when life's work is done
Raise to a mansion in thy court above.

## Caught in his own Trap.

Lennox Ray sprang from the train just as the June sunshine was dropping down the west in a flood of golden glory, and the air was fragrant with the perfume of new-mown hay, and dewy with approaching twilight.

"Well, this is rather purer than London air!" sighed Lennox, drawing a deep breath of delight, as he hastened up the green lane to the wide, old-fashioned farm-house, carrying his valise in his hand. "I wonder if Nannie got my note and is looking for me. Hallo!"

This last exclamation was drawn from Mr. Ray's lips by a big, ripe cherry, which descending from above somewhere, came into sudden contact with his nose. He looked up, and there perched like a great bird upon the bough of a huge cherry tree, and looking down at him, with dancing eyes and brilliant cheeks, was a young girl, pretty and wilful enough to set a man crazy.

"How-do, Lennox? Come up and have some cherries!" was her mischievous greeting, with saucy dimples playing about her crimson lips.

"Nannie! Is it possible?" exclaimed Lennox, sternly.

"What! that the cherries are ripe? Yes, and splendid, too! Have some?" returned the nymph, coolly holding out a great ruby cluster.

"Nannie, will you come down from there?" said Mr. Ray, not seeming to notice the cherries.

"Yes, to be sure, now you've come, and I have had all the cherries I wanted."

And while Mr. Ray looked on in stern disapproval, the young witch swung herself lightly down from her perch, and lit on the grass at his feet.

"Now don't look so serious, Lennox dear!" she said, slipping her little hands into his with a coaxing motion. "I know it's tom-boyish to climb the cherry tree, but then it's such fun."

"Nannie, you should have been a boy," said Lennox.

"I wish I had! Then I wouldn't have everybody scolding me if I happened to move. No, I don't either; for then you wouldn't have fallen in love with me. What made you, any way, dear?" with a fond glance and a caressing movement.

"Because you are a sweet darling!" answered Mr. Ray, melted in spite of himself. "But I do wish Nannie, you would leave off these hoydenish ways and be more dignified."

"Like Miss Isbam?" asked Nannie.

"Miss Isbam is a very superior woman, and it would not hurt you to copy her in some respects," said Lennox, stiffly.

The tears sprang into Nannie's eyes at his tone; she took her arm from his, and dropping down on the emerald grass at his feet, began to braid a bracelet of the long blades, in silence, with a grieved expression around her sweet mouth which he did not see.

"There!" cried Lennox, pettishly. "Now you look more like a five-year-old baby than a well-bred young lady."

Nannie threw away her bracelet and got up again. "I didn't mean to vex you. Shall we go in?" she said, gently.

They went into the parlour, and Mr. Ray took a seat in a great arm-chair, while Nannie flung open the window and dropped down on her knees beside it, letting her glossy curls fall in a great shower on the window-sill.

"Now, don't do that!" exclaimed Mr. Ray, drawing a chair near his own. "Come here, and sit down like a rational being."

Nannie gave a rueful glance at the stiff-backed chair, but giving her curls a toss backward, obediently went and sat down.

"I wish you would put up those flyaway curls and dress your hair as other young ladies do," said Mr. Ray. "And see here, Nannie, I want to have a talk with you. You know I love you: but in truth, my dear, my wife must have something of the elegance of refined society. Your manners need polish, my dear."

Nannie reddened, and her scarlet lip curled a little; but she said nothing.

"A few weeks in fashionable circles will be a great benefit to you, and I wish you to have the opportunity. In short, dear, I came down to tell you that my sister Laura is making up a party to visit some noted watering-place this summer, and she wishes you to be one of the number. And I wish you to accept the invitation, Nannie."

"Are you going?" said Nannie.

"No; my practice will not allow it. But I shall see you several times. Will you go?"

"Oh, Lennox, don't make me!" sobbed Nannie, hiding her face on his shoulder, as a vision of his stylish and haughty sister rose before her. "I don't want to go! I hate fashionable society! I don't want to be polished! I'd rather stay here, in the country, and not wear any bonnet, and climb cherry trees every day."

"Nannie! I am surprised at this display of childishness! I must insist upon more self-control," said he coldly.

"But don't sent me away! Don't Lennox!" she pleaded.

"I must!" he returned, but more gently, softened a little by her agitated eagerness. "It is for your good, Nannie, and you must consent to go. Will you?"

The supper bell rang at that instant, and, anxious to escape before the rest of the family came in and saw her tears, Nannie hastily answered, "Yes; let me go, Lennox!" and ran out of the room, and up-stairs to her own chamber.

They were at supper before she came down again, with smooth curls and no traces of tears, but with a bright light in her brown eyes, and a firm look on her pretty face; and as she went through the hall out to the vine-shaded porch where the tea-table was set, she murmured, "Yes, I'll go! And I'll teach you one lesson, Mr. Lennox Ray. See if I don't!"

It was Lennox Ray's intention to join his sister's party in July, but his law-business prevented him. When Nannie received the letter expressing his regrets, she only smiled, and said to herself, "All the better! I shall have time to learn my lesson more thoroughly by September, Mr. Lennox!"

It was nearly the middle of September before Mr. Ray, heated, dusty and weary, entered his room in the Scarborough hotel where his sister's party was stopping.

"Dear little Nannie!" he said, as he made a careful toilet, before going down stairs. "I'm dying to see her, and I know she'll be glad to see me. A moment of her sweet naturalness will be quite refreshing after all these artificial women. They don't know I've come, so I'll just go down and suprise them."

As he entered the apartment, amid a flash of jewels and rustle of silks and laces, he met his sister Laura.

"Lennox! you here?" she said, giving him two white hands.

"Yes. Where's Nannie."

"She was on the terrace, talking with a French count, a moment ago. Ah! there she is, by the door."

"Ah!" said Lennox, dropping Laura's hand, and making his way towards the door.

But it was difficult, even when he drew near, to see in the stylish, stately lady, whose hair was put over a monstrous chignon, and whose lustrous robes swept the floor for a yard, his own little Nannie of three months ago.

Lennox strode up with scarce a glance at the bewhiskered dandy to whom she was chatting, and held out his hand with an eager exclamation: "Nannie!"

She made a sweeping curtsey, and languidly extended the tips of her fingers; but not a muscle moved beyond what accorded with well-bred indifference.

"Ah! good evening, Mr. Ray."

"Oh, Nannie! are you glad to see me?" said Lennox, feeling his heart chilled within him.

"Oh, to be sure, Mr. Ray—quite glad. Allow me to present Count de Beaurepaire. Mr. Ray, monsieur."

Lennox hardly deigned a bow to the Frenchman, and offered his arm to Nannie.

"You will walk with me a little while?"

"Thanks; but the music is beginning, and I promised to dance with Mr. Blair."

"But afterwards?" said Lennox, the chill growing colder.

"Thanks again; but I am engaged to Captain Thornton."

"When, then?" demanded Lennox, with a jealous pang.

"Ah, really, my card is so full I hardly know. I will try to spare you a waltz some where,"—with an indifferent glance.

Lennox bent down, and spoke, with bitter reproach in his tone, "Good heavens, Nannie! What affectation is this?"

She favoured him with a well-bred stare.

"Pardon! I do not understand you."

And taking the arm of her escort, she walked away with the air of an empress.

Lennox sought his sister.

"Laura, how have you changed Nannie so?" he demanded.

"Yes, she is changed—greatly improved. Isn't she perfect?"

"Perfect? Rather *too* perfect to suit me!" growled Lennox, turning on his heel with a realizing sense that he was caught in his own trap.

"To-morrow I shall see more of Nannie," he thought.

But to-morrow, and to-morrow, and to-morrow it was always the same; and "that elegant Miss Irving," as they styled her, was always in demand. She played the *rôle* of an accomplished, icy-hearted coquette to perfection; and poor Lennox, from the distance at which she kept him, looked on almost heartbroken, varying between wrath, jealousy, pride, and despair.

"Nannie," said he, one morning when he found her a moment alone, "how long is that to last?"

"How long is what to last?" asked Nannie, innocently.

"How long are you going to remain the conventional creature you are?"

"I believe you wished me to come here to improve my manners, Mr. Ray; to acquire the elegance of society," she said, coldly.

"But, Nannie——"

"Your sister thinks I have been an apt pupil."

"Yes, too apt, by heavens!" cried Lennox.

"Well, if you ain't pleased with the result of your own advice, I am not to blame. You must excuse me now, Mr. Ray; I am going to ride with the Count de Beaurepaire."

And with her sweetest, hollowest smile, she made a graceful gesture of adieu, and left him sick at heart, puzzled and disgusted.

That afternoon, as Laura and Nannie were about dressing for the evening, Lennox walked, unannounced, into Laura's little parlor, where they sat alone.

"I thought I'd drop in and say good-bye before you went down-stairs," said he. "I leave for London to-night."

Laura elevated her eyebrows a little.

"Sudden, isn't it? But since you are going, I will give you some commissions."

"You needn't. I shall only stay in town a day."

"Indeed! Where are you going?"

"Oh, I don't know!" was his savage reply.

Laura give him a look of cool surprise.

"At least you will take a note to George for me."

"Yes, if you get it ready," said he, ungraciously.

"Very well; I will write it now."

Laura went to her own room, and Lennox stood moodily at a window. Presently Nannie, who had not spoken one word, came and stood near him.

"Are you really going away?" she asked.

"Yes, I am," was the short answer.

"And won't you tell us where?"

"I don't know myself — neither know nor care!" he growled.

She slipped her hand in his arm, with the old caressing movement he remembered so well, and spoke gently, using his name for the first time since he came.

"But, Lennox, dear, if you go away off somewhere, what shall *I* do?"

He turned suddenly, and caught her to his heart.

"Oh, Nannie, Nannie!" he cried, passionately, "if you would only come back to me, and love me—if I could recover my last treasure, I would not go anywhere. Oh, my lost love, is it too late?"

She laid her face down against his shoulder, and asked, "Lennox, dear, tell me which you love best, the Nannie you used to know, or the fashionable young lady you found here?"

"Oh, Nannie, darling!" he cried clasping her closer, "I wouldn't give one precious toss of your old brown curls for all the fashionable young ladies in the world. I wouldn't give one careless ring of your merry laugh for all the polished belles in society. I wouldn't, my darling, I wouldn't."

Nannie laid her arms caressingly around his neck, and said, softly, "Then I think you will have to take your old Nannie back again, and pet her and love her as you used to do; for I am as sick and tired of the fashionable young lady as you can be, Lennox, dear."

And Lennox, passionately clasping her to him, begged to be forgiven, and vowed he would not exchange his precious little wild rose for all the hot-house flowers in Christendom.

"Laura!" Lennox called, tapping on Laura's door a little later.

"Well?" answered Laura.

"You needn't write your note. I sha'n't go to town to-night."

"Lennox, I never saw such a fellow to take fancies!" cried Laura. "Are you crazy?"

"No; I have been, but I am coming to my senses now," said Lennox.

* * * * * * *

Lennox and Nannie have been sedate married people several years; but I never heard that Lennox complained in the least of his wife's want of conventionality, or ever wished to pursue the acquaintance of the fashionable lady whom he met at Scarborough.

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