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The Saturday Reader.

VOL. IV.—No. 101.

FOR WEEK ENDING AUGUST 10, 1867.

4D OR SEVEN CENTS.

MABEL'S PROGRESS.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "AUNT MARGARET'S TROUBLE."

From "All the Year Round,"

CONDUCTED BY CHARLES DICKENS.

Continued from page 335.

BOOK III.

CHAPTER III. KILCLARE.

Kilclare is, or was a. the time of my story, one of the prettiest and pleasantest towns in the south of Ireland. The river Clare flows past it, and falls into the sea a few miles below the town. But though so near the end of its course, it has none of that dreary and wide-spread desolation which often attends the last few miles of a river's journey to the great deep. It runs through a wide channel between high rocky banks, at a short distance before reaching Kilclare; and these rocks are mottled with patches of bright green turf, and decked with a luxuriant variety of creeping plants, with here and there a tall tree of some hardy species clasping its roots into the crevices of the stone, and bending down towards the water's edge like some wild creature stretching its graceful neck to drink. A mile or so above the town the river is spanned by a long wooden bridge approached at each end by a sharp declivity. On a sudden hill—little more, in fact, than a high knoll—on the opposite side of the Clare to the town, stands the ruin of a feudal castle, with its tall solitary round tower relieved against the sky, like some lone sentinel who has climbed to that vantage ground to keep watch and ward over the city.

Beautiful river Clare! I know few scenes more lovely than that which is beheld by one standing on your old wooden bridge and gazing up-stream at your winding course. Most beautiful it is, on a fine summer evening, when the daylight, flushed with slumber, shuts its eyes in the west, and the first star comes out into the pale green sky, and trembles with its pure lustre upon the hoary brow of the old ruined tower. The water washes with a sleepy inarticulate babble against the pebbly beach; the bats begin their rapid elfin flight, and brush so near that one can see their weird faces and bead-like eyes as they wheel past; and the fragrant breath of a turf fire curls slowly upward into the still twilight heavens.

Beautiful river Clare! My benison be upon thee in thy dark green depths and in thy sparkling shallows; whether thy waters flow all molten gold beneath the noonday sun, or tremble onward in the moonlight, like a silver banner, barred with sable shadows; or lie dreaming in some still pool with one beloved star upon their glassy bosom. My benison be upon thee, lovely Clare, for all the glad abundance of thy beauty, and for the images of those dear days that, with the eyes of fond remembrance, I see reflected in thy tranquil face!

Although Mabel Earnshaw had no such recollections to endear the scene to her, she nevertheless perceived it to be very fair when she first caught a glimpse of it on approaching Kilclare. The mail coach from Ballyhacket—at which point, in those days, the line of railway from Dublin terminated—came spinning down the steep hill, swung round the sharp corner at the base of the old castle, and rattled over the long wooden bridge at a reckless pace, that made the crazy planks start and clatter under the horses' hoofs. Then came about two miles of level road, leading past some scattered country houses of rather dilapidated aspect, and one lodge gate through which a fine avenue might be seen; then, a few cottages of the humbler sort; then,

little straggling shops, then, one or two good dwelling-houses, more shops, and at last at a point where the street suddenly narrowed very much, the driver pulled up his smoking team before the door of a large inn, and they were at their journey's end.

Mabel and her aunt alighted from the interior of the coach, and Jack scrambled down from the outside. "Here we are, Mabel!" said he, gaily. "Rather a closeish shave coming round that corner before the bridge, wasn't it? I hope you were not very much frightened. Give me your shawl and bag, mother. That's it. Hallo! There's Biddy, bless her old heart. How are you, Biddy? Here's my mother and the young lady."

A clean apple-faced old woman in a great mob cap came up to Mrs. Walton with abundance of smiles and curseys, and bade her heartily welcome to the "ould town" again. "I've got everything ready for yez," said she; "ye'd better step across at oncet, ma'am, and Teddy and one of the boys 'ull whip over the boxes. Don't be standing here in the street, ma'am dear, and both of yez tired and hungry. Sure the things 'ull be all right enough. This way, miss, 'tis just across the street there." The old woman took Mabel's travelling bag from her arm, in spite of the latter's remonstrances, and trotted on before them with wonderful briskness.

"That is our landlady," Aunt Mary explained to Mabel, "Mrs. Bridget Bonny, the best old soul in the world. I've lodged in her house three seasons. That is the place, over the shoemaker's shop, and that cheerful bow-window belongs to our sitting-room. It isn't grand, Mabel, but it's very comfortable, and exquisitely clean."

Mrs. Bonny entered the house by a narrow door at the side of the shop, which she always proudly spoke of as the "private entrance," though, as it was exceedingly straight and inconvenient, visitors after one or two trials usually abandoned that mode of ingress, and walked humbly and comfortably through the shop. Mabel and Mrs. Walton followed her up-stairs into the front sitting-room with the bow-window. It was a very cheerful room, looking into the main street of the town; its furniture was covered with a gay-patterned chintz, and the carpet, if not very rich in quality, was adorned with a lavish variety of colours. Everything was bright, neat, and admirably clean. At one end of the table, covered with a snowy cloth, tea-things were set forth.

"I thought, maybe, ye'd loike a cup of tay as well as anything, after yer journey," said Biddy. "An' I've got a roast fowl for yez, and a rasher of bacon. It'll be all ready in half a jiffy, ma'am. Sit down on the soppie and rest. Sure it's half dead they must be, the craythurs!"

Although by no means in so exhausted a state as old Biddy appeared to suppose, the travellers were yet sufficiently fatigued and hungry to enjoy sitting comfortably in a less cramped posture than had been possible in the coach, and to be prepared to do justice to the excellent meal which was presently set before them.

"What a dear old creature Mrs. Bonny is!" said Mabel, when they were all seated at table.

"Mrs. who?" cried Jack, looking up from the plateful of broiled bacon which he was discussing with infinite relish.

"Mrs. Bonny, the landlady!"

"Oh, Biddy! I never heard any human being call her by her husband's name before. And I got a confused idea in my mind that old Bonny must suddenly have committed bigamy!"

"Jack," said his mother, "you're a gander. But Mabel's quite right. Biddy is a pearl of price. I don't know a better, honest, harder-working woman than Biddy Bonny."

Then Aunt Mary went on to explain something of Biddy's history and family.

Old Joe Bonny was her second husband. Her first husband had been a widower with one son when she married him. This son, Teddy Mulloy, was a shoemaker by trade, and rented the shop in which he worked, of his step-mother; himself and his young wife inhabiting a separate dwelling-house. Joe Bonny was an Englishman, and though an old man nearer to eighty than to seventy years of age, had only given up his work during the last five years.

"And a nice time Biddy has of it with him," observed Jack. "He is the crustiest old fella! He was a navigator. Not Captain Cook, you know, but a 'pickaxe and a spade—a spade,' and that kind of thing. I believe that he hasn't two consecutive inches of unbroken bone in his body. He has factured both his arms, both his legs, all his ribs, and cracked his skull and collar-bone in several places. And as to his hand! Well, as well as I can remember, he has at the present moment only two fingers and half a thumb in working order."

"Oh, Jack?"

"Upon my word I am stating very nearly the literal fact. He was been broken and mended again, in every possible and impossible place; but he don't seem much the worse for it as regards his general constitution. Only, he finds time hang heavy on his hands, so he sits and smokes in the chimney-corner and consoles himself by growling at Biddy, and abusing the Irish."

"What a dreadful old man!" cried Mabel, laughing in spite of herself.

"Well, he has his good points too, has old Joe. He is thoroughly honest, and has a kind of bull-dog fidelity about him. But I must be off to the theatre, and see what's going on there. They open on Monday, and I dare say there will be lots of things to touch up in the scenery. Any commands, mother?"

"Give my kind remembrances to Mr. Moffat if you see him, and ask what the Call is for Saturday, and see that some arrangement is made for Mabel to dress in the same room with me, and come back time enough to post a letter that I'm going to write to father before the evening mail is made up. That's all, Jack."

"I'll not fail, mother. And Mabel, if you want assistance in unloading or unpacking, or any matter in which a fair amount of brute force is desirable, unadulterated by any intellectual element, I shall be happy to put myself at your service."

"Thank you, Jack; but I am in no need of a Caliban, and I think that's about what you have made yourself out to be."

So Jack, making the house ring with a peal of boyish laughter, ran down-stairs and betook himself to the theatre.

Mrs. Walton's first care was to write a few lines to her husband, which would be read to him by Janet; and then she and Mabel proceeded to busy themselves in unpacking and laying out their stage dresses, chatting all the time. For, as Mabel was to occupy a small room opening out of her aunt's bedchamber, by leaving the door of communication open, they were able to talk together uninterruptedly.

The wardrobes of Mrs. Walton and her niece were neither extensive nor splendid; but allowing for the necessary amount of paste and tinsel—for these stage queens wear a good deal of mock jewellery: unlike the real reigning queens of society, who never by any chance wear anything false, and who are well known to abhor shams in every department—they were good and picturesque, and made with exquisite neatness. Jack's artistic aid was often

called into devise effective shapes and contrasts of colour, and then Polly's nimble fingers went to work and carried out his ideas with wonderful dexterity. Polly, indeed, was endowed with that talent for all branches of needlework which appears to be a positive inspiration with some women; and as she was remarkable also for personal neatness and the care she took of her clothes, the inheritance which Mabel had come into of her cousin's theatrical costumes was by no means a despicable one.

"What pretty lace this is round the black velvet jacket, Aunt Mary!" called out Mabel from her room. She was contemplating the costumes spread out on her bed, with secret delight. At seventeen, one may still take pleasure in that source of happiness known to children as "dressing up."

"Oh yes," answered Aunt Mary, shaking out a brocaded satin petticoat from its creases, "that's real point, Mabel, and remarkably fine old lace. I gave it to Polly years ago. It was part of the wedding-dress of Uncle John's and of course also your father's great-aunt; but if you want to see fine old lace you must coax Mrs. Darling to show you her store."

"Mrs. Darling?"

"Our first old woman. She is the strangest old body you can fancy; but she has a wonderful wardrobe—such antique brocades, high-heeled shoes, fans, buckles, flowered satins, such as they don't make now-a-days, and, above all, such lace! I believe that she would not sell a yard of it to save her life; and some of it is of considerable value."

"Do you know all the other members of the company, Aunt Mary?"

"Why, yes; most of them, I believe. There are the Copestakes, husband and wife: he plays the heavy business, and she second old woman, or whatever is wanted. Then there are Mr. Moffatt himself and his daughter: Miss Lydia St. Aubert, the leading lady; old Shaw, the first old man—his real name is O'Shaughnessy, but he always denies being an Irishman; I'm sure I don't know why—and one or two more. I'm not at all clever at describing people; but you will very soon find them out for yourself."

In the evening Jack returned, and, having posted his mother's letter, came back to give an account of what he had heard and done at the theatre.

"Here's the bill of the first night," said he, pulling from his pocket a long narrow playbill, still reeking with damp printer's ink. "We open with Macbeth, you see."

"Yes; I knew that was to be the first piece. And the farce is the two Gregorays."

"There's a list of the company, Mabel. No stars. Moffatt entirely objects to the starring system. He won't even give Miss St. Aubert, who is a great favourite here, a line to herself in the bill. He says it would be invidious to the rest of the company."

Mabel ran her eyes over a number of names printed in a double line at the head of the bill. First came Mr. Moffatt's name in very large letters. "That's because he's the manager, you know," explained Jack. But by-and-by the name occurred again in a preliminary address or opening flourish, setting forth to the inhabitants of Kilclare at what vast trouble and expense Mr. Moffatt had succeeded in getting together a company of artists "culled from the principal members of the leading provincial and metropolitan theatres."

"Mr. Moffatt's name is in very conspicuous capitals here, too," observed Mabel.

"Ah, yes—well—of course you see he likes to have a little pull over the others. It makes the people fancy him a big man."

"And here, too, Miss Moffatt's name is quite striking in the size of its letters."

"Well, you know she's his daughter, and, of course—"

Mabel could not help recalling La Fontaine's fable, in which the lion hunts with the heifer, the goat, and the sheep, in a quadruple partnership; but when it comes to the division of the spoil, the king of beasts, having found good and sufficient reasons for taking three-fourths to his own share, puts his paw on the sole remaining

portion, and simply announces that as to that quarter, should any one offer to touch it, he will be strangled without more ado.

"Who is this lady?" asked Mabel, pointing to a name in the list.

"Ah! Who should you think, now?" Mabel coloured, and said, hesitatingly, "Is it—isn't—I?"

"Yes it is, though. That was my idea. Nobody had ever thought of a name for you."

"I should not have been ashamed of my own."

"Well, you can take it afterwards, if you like. But, for the present, there you are, transformed from Mabel into Miss M. A. Bell! I thought it ingenious, but if you don't approve—"

"Oh no, dear Jack. It will do beautifully. And when I said I should not be ashamed of my own name, I didn't think of Aunt Mary's having generously given up the name she had a right to bear, to spare a selfish pride. But I should think there's no one left now, to whom it matters very much whether I am Miss Earnshaw or Miss M. A. Bell in the playbill."

"The call is at ten, in the green-room, for the music of Macbeth, and at eleven on the stage. Everybody."

"I'm so glad I have nothing to do the first night but go on as a witch. I shall get a little accustomed to the look of the theatre. But I shall feel very shy at first, amongst all the actors and actresses."

"It isn't a very big 'all'. Courage, Miss M. A. Bell. Good night; and get a good rest to prepare yourself for to-morrow."

CHAPTER IV. IN THE GREEN-ROOM.

The Theatre Royal, Kilclare, stood in a retired and obscure part of the town, and the end of a dismal narrow street, one side of which consisted of a dead wall which bounded the large gardens of a Protestant clergyman, while the opposite side was partly formed by the high, blank, nearly windowless buildings of the back portion of a convent of Sisters of Mercy. Its front was adorned with a stumpy little portico supported by brick pillars, on each of which now hung a large green bill (technically termed a poster), setting forth, with a lavish expenditure of printer's ink, the intellectual feast that awaited the Kilclare play-goers within the building. I am too ignorant of architecture to be able to assign the theatre to any recognised "order." Perhaps it belonged to none. But it had two elements which I am told are indispensable to great architectural effects; breadth and simplicity. It was very wide, and its sole ornament was a wash of pale yellow ochre, which covered the whole surface, including the brick pillars of the portico. Beneath the portico were two green doors, one giving access to the pit, and the other to the boxes. The gallery entrance was at the back. At the back, also, in a lane that was always very muddy in winter and very dusty in summer, was the stage door. Mysterious portal, giving access to a realm of unknown enchantments, round which the little boys of Kilclare—the shod and the shoeless united in one crowd by the common instinct strong in little boys to do whatever they are expressly bidden to abstain from doing: which instinct, as we all know, is quite peculiar to little boys, and is never, never, found to survive in big boys—would congregate for hours, peeping and watching, and listening with breathless interest to any sound of voices that might reach their ears from the interior. Occasionally, the little crowd would be routed and sent flying in various directions by a vigorous sortie on the part of the stage carpenter. A very irascible personage, who would come out, hammer in hand, growling and swearing in a manner that was rendered inarticulately terrible by reason of his mouth being full of tin tacks,

But the boys invariably re-assembled very shortly, and there Mabel found them when, on Saturday morning, she accompanied her aunt and Jack to rehearsal.

"Take care, Mabel," said Jack. "You'd better give me your hand. It's very dark. Shall I help you, mother?"

"No, no. I know the way of old. Look after Mabel; I can take care of myself."

Cautiously and slowly, for to eyes just come from the outer daylight the way was absolutely pitch-dark, Mabel followed her cousin, and, ascending a short flight of rickety wooden stairs, passed through a heavy swing door, which he held open for her, and stood behind the scenes of the Theatre Royal, Kilclare.

The interior of a theatre by day was no new scene to Mabel Earnshaw, although she had not been in one, except as a spectator, for more than six years. The Kilclare theatre was of course, very small and very shabby; but the shape of the audience-part of the house was good, and the stage very spacious for the size of the whole building. Potter, the irascible carpenter, was hammering away at the porticulis of Macbeth's castle, and the propertyman, Nix—who was also the messenger, bill-deliverer, armourer, and general factotum of the establishment, besides personating all the invisible excited multitudes, and leading the buzzes of enthusiasm and the groans of disaffection at the wing—was communicating a lurid glare to the painted flames beneath the witches' cauldron by means of a judicious distribution of little bits of red foil. From the green-room came the thin tones of a fiddle.

"Oh, Mr. Trescott is here already, I hear," said Mrs. Walton. "He's always punctual."

Mabel followed her aunt into a long uncarpeted room, with seats fixed all around the wall, and the lower halves of the windows whitewashed, to exclude prying eyes. In one corner stood a bundle of spears, with tin tops, and a crimson calico banner. There were also two cane hoops, partially hidden by garlands of pink and white paper flowers, which had figured in some rural merry-making last season, and which, having remained there ever since, were now covered with a thick coating of dust.

About one-third of the extent of the room was taken up by a temporary construction made of scraps of old scenery to form a dressing-room; the accommodation of that kind in the Kilclare theatre having been originally provided on too scanty a scale even for Mr. Moffatt's small company of performers.

On the wooden chimney-piece stood a white earthenware jug full of cold water, and a tumbler; over it, hung a board covered with what had once been crimson cloth, but which had now faded into a dusty reddish brown; stuck on to this board with pins, were two or three scraps of paper, containing "calls" and "notices" announcements, that is to say, of the hours of rehearsal, and the pieces to be performed during the week.

Such was the aspect of the green-room of the Theatre Royal, Kilclare. When Mrs. Walton and Mabel entered it, it was occupied by two persons. One was Mr. Trescott, who, violin in hand, was limping up and down, occasionally playing a bar or two, and carelessly rasping out a few chords. The other was a thin, hatchet-faced old man, with a scorbutic complexion and a curiously sour expression of countenance. He was dressed in a threadbare brown coat, coming down to his heels, and buttoned tightly across his chest. He wore a pair of large woollen gloves (although the weather was bright and warm), and in the crown of his hat, which stood on a chair beside him, was a very big blue-checked cotton pocket-handkerchief. Perhaps I should have said that the room was tenanted by three persons—certainly the sour-visaged old man would have said so—for, stretched at his master's feet, with his nose between his fore-paws, lay a nondescript dog, bearing more resemblance to a Scotch sheep-dog than any other breed, and who, though evidently flattering himself that the world supposed him to be buried in slumber, was regarding everything that passed with one bright observant half-open eye. This was Lingo, Mr. Shaw's dog, companion, and only friend. Lingo's fidelity, accomplishments, sagacity, and high moral worth, were the only themes on which it was possible to elicit anything like enthusiasm from old Jerry O'Shaughnessy, alias Shaw; but on this topic the old man would dilate for hours to a sympathetic listener. Lingo was a celebrated character in theatrical circles in Ireland, and there were mysterious

rumours that Jerry Shaw believed Lingo's canine form to be animated by the spirit of a departed friend of his early life; but when such whispers reached the old man's ears he would sniff and scold and snap in his abrupt queer way, and aver that he had never known any man whose virtues could compare to Lingo's, and that if such an one could be found he would cheerfully walk fifty miles barefoot to behold them.

Mrs. Walton shook hands with the two men, and then presented Mabel.

"My niece, Miss Bell," said she.

Mr. Trescott had partly advanced on seeing Mabel, and then stopped as if uncertain how to greet her; but she held out her hand at once.

"You have only known me by my true name," Mr. Trescott, she said, smiling. "It has been thought well to give me another for the present. I hope little Corda is well?"

"Quite well, thank you, Miss—a—Miss Bell. She will be so rejoiced to see you."

"Mr. Shaw, let me introduce you to my niece. A young aspirant for histrionic honours."

Mr. Shaw rose and gave his head a sudden jerk that was intended for a bow, and then sat down again. "You've chosen a bad trade, miss," said he, encouragingly. He spoke with singular abruptness, and in short sentences, which seemed to come out of his mouth in spite of him, and which invariably ended in a prolonged sniff, that wrinkled up his nose and curled his upper lip.

"I hope not," said Mabel, smiling. "My aunt has not found it so very bad. Poor old boy, poor old dog. Is he yours? May I pat him?"

"You may—if he'll let you. He won't let everybody."

Lingo, however, was graciously pleased to permit Mabel's little hand to caress his rough head, and he even wagged his tail in a faint and lazy way.

"He likes her," said Mr. Shaw, turning to Mrs. Walton. "He decidedly likes her. And I tell you what, ma'am; I'd rather take his opinion than most people's. I've never known him wrong yet."

By-and-by more members of the company began to drop in, and by about a quarter-past ten they were nearly all assembled. There was Miss Lydia St. Aubert, very tall, very thin, with a head too small for her height, and dark eyes too big for her face. She wore a crop of waving ringlets, and a little infantine straw bonnet, the strings of which she untied as soon as she came into the room—not that Miss Lydia St. Aubert was very young or very childish. She had a husband and three children, and had not escaped the cares of life, poor woman! But her small head and curly crop gave her a juvenile air, and she rather acted up to her appearance in private life.

There were the Copestakes, husband and wife; he about fifty years of age, she at least ten years older. They were in the last depths of shabbiness: not from destitution—for between them they earned an income more than sufficient to have kept them in respectability—but because they spent an absurdly large proportion of their weekly earnings upon eating and drinking of the most costly viands they could procure.

There was Mrs. Darling, fat and stately, with a black satin reticule full of white wool, and a pair of wooden knitting-needles, wherewith she was manufacturing some mysterious article of clothing. There was the low comedian, bitter and sententious, and remarkably neat about his gloves and boots. The walking gentleman (whose wife was a dancer), neither so young, nor so smart, nor so good-looking as he once had been, but with a great deal of elegance—in the modern comedy style—and an amazing collection of riddles culled from all the news-paper columns of "Varieties" and "Random Readings" for the last fifteen years. Last of all came in Mr. Moffatt, the manager, with his daughter on his arm, and accompanied by Mr. Wilfred J. Percival, the leading gentleman, announced in the bills as being "from the principal theatres in the United States of America."

Mr. Moffatt was very cordial in his greetings to his company—almost too cordial, in fact, for cordiality did not seem to be naturally the most striking trait in Mr. Moffatt's character, and the effect of this sudden gush of it was a little oppressive. Mr. Moffatt was short and spare, with a close-shaven face and little cold grey eyes. His voice had a covert ill-tempered snarl in it, which was audible even in his most amiable moments. Miss Moffatt was a plump young lady—perhaps I might go so far as to say a fat young lady—with a round fresh-coloured face, widered-lipped mouth, turned-up nose, and bright blue eyes, with a strong cast in them. Mr. Wilfred J. Percival was a tall sallow gentleman, with a long chin and retreating forehead; and he wore a brown velvet collar to his coat, over which a gold chain was artfully disposed in many a cunning twist.

Mabel was received very graciously by Mr. Moffatt, and very condescendingly by his daughter. The latter was showily dressed, and especially revelled in bonnet-ribbon, of which she had a remarkable quantity of a very bright blue colour disposed in bows upon her head-gear.

"I'm glad you're a brune," said Miss Moffatt, with elaborately fine and French roll of the r (Miss Moffatt had been two years in a cheap boarding-school near Calais, and was a very accomplished person indeed): "so glad. Because, being a blonde myself" (then here so nasal that Miss Moffatt appeared to be seized with a sudden cold in the head), "we shan't clash as to colours."

"As to colours?" said Mabel.

"Yes. I consider that so important. But one never can get the English to think of these things. For instance, when I wear blue, you, playing in the same piece, would naturally wear cerise or amber, which would go so charmingly. But the fact is, we English are not artistic."

"Ain't we?"

"Oh dear no. We have no goût, no finesse, no je ne sais quoi. To any one accustomed to the foreign theatres we are sadly gauche and unfinished."

"Well," rejoined Mabel, quietly, "I hope the Kilcaree people have not been accustomed to the foreign theatres, and in that case they won't find us out."

Whereupon Miss Moffatt looked a little puzzled, and held her peace.

Rap, rap, rap. Mr. Trescott knocked sharply with his bow on the table before him. "Now then, ladies and gentlemen, music of Macbeth. I've been here since ten o'clock, and I can't afford to waste my time for the sake of other people who can't get up to breakfast. Now then, if you please. First singing witch."

Miss Moffatt, who had a very high squeaking voice, was the first singing witch, and Miss St. Aubert, who had a very deep and hollow one, sang the music of the second at the wing: it being found impossible to disguise the flowing robes of Lady Macbeth effectually by means of any cloaking or drapery.

So the rehearsal went on. The music was familiar to all, and as they most of them had tolerably correct ears, the effect was better than might have been anticipated, except that old Mrs. Copestake could not be induced to leave off as soon as she should have done, but insisted on singing the bits of symphony that ought to have been confined to the violin. Then followed the rehearsal of the tragedy on the stage. As neither Mabel nor her aunt had anything to perform in it, they returned home together, leaving Jack, in a canvas blouse bedaubed with many colours, putting the last black touches to the background of the blasted heath.

(To be continued.)

The following cure for gout is taken from an old work:—1st, The person must pick a handkerchief from the pocket of a maid of fifty years, who has never had a wish to change her condition; 2nd, He must dry it on a parson's hedge who was never covetous; 3rd, He must send it to a doctor's shop who never killed a patient; 4th, He must mark it with a lawyer's ink who never cheated a client; 5th, Apply it to the part affected, and a cure will speedily follow.

LABOUR AS IT USED TO BE IN ENGLAND.

STRIKES of labour against capital, and a Royal Commission to inquire into the system by which they are organised and maintained; these are the most noticeable facts in the British labour-market at the present moment. Thinking men, solicitous for the well-being of British trade and British workmen, are devising plans by which it is hoped to prevent for the future both the strikes and the heavy loss of time, money, and morale which are incidental to them.

While these plans are being matured, it may be well to take a look backward, and see what has hitherto been the relation between employer and employed in handicrafts and husbandry. Such a retrospection cannot fail to be interesting; it may also be useful. Without going back to quite feudal times, when might avowedly lorded it over right, and labour being weaker than wealth, went to the wall, men guiding themselves by 'the good old rule,'

The simple plan,
That they should take who have the power,
And they should keep who can,

there is a law in the statute-book of Edward III which clearly shows the unenfranchised condition of workmen in England under Plantagenet rule. It is called a Statute of Labourers, passed in the twenty-fifth year of the king, and in the formal enactment of an ordinance of the king in council, which was passed two years before, at a time when the parliament, though summoned, did not meet because of the plague (the Black Death) which was raging. The ordinance defined a labourer thus: 'Every man or woman of whatever condition, free or servile, able in body, and under sixty years of age, not living by merchandise or trade, or by his own property, or by cultivating his own land; and commanded that all persons coming within this definition should take such wages, and no more, as they had received in their several districts in the twentieth year of the king's reign, or five or six years before that.'

The quaint preamble to the statute states the ground on which the law was framed. It begins by saying: 'Whereas late against the malice of servants which were idle and not willing to serve, after the pestilence, without taking excessive wages, the recent ordinance was issued, and now forasmuch as it is given the king to understand that the said servants, having no regard to the said ordinance, but to their ease and singular covetise, do withdraw themselves from serving the great men or others unless they have liveries and wages to the double or treble of that they were wont to take the said twentieth year and before; to the great damage of the great men, and impoverishing of all those of the said commonalty.' It then fixes the wages to be paid to all sorts of workmen, the principle being that no more wages should be paid than had been paid in the twentieth year of the king. Agricultural labourers were to be hired by the year, and sworn to abide by their work, imprisonment and exposure in the stocks being the punishment provided for defaulters.

The whole thing was very unfair, because 'the great pestilence' which destroyed more than half the population of England, and which had doubtless told more severely on the labouring class, ill-housed and ill-fed, than upon the wealthier classes, had so lessened the supply of labour that wages ought naturally to have been increased to the survivors; but a parliament composed wholly of persons who employed labour, and who were interested in keeping down wages, could not perhaps be expected to consider others than themselves in the matter. There was positive injustice in fixing a standard based upon prices commonly paid in the twentieth year of the king, for, owing to the untitled state of the land, consequent upon the death of the tillers, provisions had become much dearer, and other courses had contributed to decrease the value of money. However, the standard was fixed, and the law was passed, and it is not too much to say that they were among the chief causes of the discontent of the labouring classes which found

expression in 1381 under the leadership of Wat Tyler. After the 'rebels' had been thoroughly subdued by a process which necessitated, even in those times, an Act of Indemnity for the suppressors, it was found that they were still wicked enough to want enough to live on; so, in the twelfth year of Richard II., the legislature passed an act which was meant to keep them in check. The act recited that 'servants and labourers will not, nor by a long season would serve and labour without outrageous and excessive hire, and much more than hath been given to such servants and labourers in any time past, so that, for the said servants and labourers, the husbands and land-tenants cannot pay their rents, nor hardly live upon their lands.' It then went on to fix the wages of agricultural labourers more particularly than had yet been done. A bailiff for husbandry was to have 13s. 4d a year, and his clothing once by year at most; a master-hind, a carter, or a shepherd was to have 10s. a year; an oxherd, 6s. 8d.; a swineherd, 6s.; and a woman-labourer, 6s. a year. The former Statute of Labourers was confirmed, and the new act added these restrictions, that no labourer or servant should quit the place where he worked without having a passport declaring his history, and containing a permit for him to go. If he were found without such a document, he was to be put in the stocks. It was also provided, in the spirit of the worst predial slavery, that children who had served in husbandry till they were twelve years of age, should 'from thenceforth abide at the same labour, without being put to any trade or handicraft.'

Under these laws, agricultural labourers existed more or less miserably for a long term of years. Workmen in towns, artificers and their labourers, were still nominally subject to the statute of Edward III., though in practice the provisions of that law were modified by the exigencies of the demand for skilled labour and the comparatively small amount of the supply. Corporations and guilds, especially in chartered towns, had also their rules and bylaws, which tended to diminish as against trade and manufactures the severity of the statute, though in the main their efforts were directed rather to secure profit to the masters than fair remuneration to the men. Still, the members of guilds finding it to be their interest to employ the very best kind of labour, and finding also that this kind of labour was not to be had, or, at all events, to be exerted, without a proportionate wage, managed to attain their object without going directly counter to the law of the land. They made presents, they stipulated that certain perquisites should be given, they found some means or other of remedying, in their own interest, the injustice of the law. As against artificers generally, however, in common with agricultural labourers, the law of Edward III. was binding, and continued in force till the fifth year of Elizabeth. An act was certainly passed in the eleventh year of Henry VII., which fixed 'the yearly wages of servants in husbandry, and the several wages of artificers, day labourers, and shipwrights; and the several times limited for their work, meals, and sleep;' but it was repealed in the following year; and with the exception of a statute of Henry VIII., which aimed at fixing the price of all kinds of labour, and the hours at which an artificer or labourer should 'begin and end his work, and what time he shall have for his meals and sleep,' there was no legislation backed up by penalties, and systematically enforced, till the fifth year of Elizabeth. In that year, a law was passed which remained in force till the fifty-third year of the reign of George III. By it, all former statutes were repealed, and re-embodied in a most comprehensive way: and rules, with punishments for the infraction of them, were laid down, with the intention of including all labourers and craftsmen in their folds. It must also, in fairness, be said that care was taken to provide against the hire of those who might be employed being kept back through fraud, a provision which seems to argue that the dishonesty of masters had made it necessary. The act recites that the wages fixed by former statutes 'are too small and not answerable to this time, respecting the advancement of prices

of all things belonging to the said servants and labourers,' and goes on to enact that every year, at the first general sessions after Easter, the justices of the peace in the country, and the sheriff, mayor, or other authority in towns, shall meet, and 'calling unto them such discreet and grave persons of the said county, or of the said city or town corporate, as they shall think meet, and conferring together respecting the plenty or scarcity of the time, and other circumstances necessarily to be considered,' shall be at liberty to fix the wages for the current year, of all artificers and labourers whose wages had been fixed by previous statutes, and also of all such artificers, &c. as had not been rated, but the assembled magistrats might think ought to be so. The wages agreed upon were to be proclaimed, and everybody convicted of giving more was to be imprisoned for ten days, and fined five pounds; everybody convicted of receiving more was to be imprisoned for three weeks. It was also provided by this act that no artificer in a large number of trades which were specified, should be hired for a less period than a year; that a quarter's warning should be given on either side before an engagement could be terminated, and that the hours of work for labourers hired by the day or week were, between the middle of March and the middle of September, to be from 5 A. M. till between 7 and 8 P. M., two hours and a half being allowed for breakfast, dinner, and drinking. But the most objectionable restraint on individual liberty contained in this act was that which forbade an artificer to depart from the town or city where he worked without he was furnished with a testimonial under the seal of the town, and of two 'honest householders,' declaring the lawfulness of his departure. This testimonial had to be registered in the workman's parish, and was in the following form, prescribed by the act.—*Memorandum*.—That A. B., late servant to C. D. of E., husbandman, or tailor, &c. in the county of—, is licensed to depart from his said master, and is at his liberty to serve elsewhere, according to the statute in that case made and provided. In witness whereof, &c.

Dated—the day, month, year, and place, &c. of the making thereof.

By this same statute, the apprenticeship system which had been moulded in various trade corporations, was made part of the law of the land, and all persons were forbidden to engage in any trade at that time established, unless they had served to it a seven years' apprenticeship.

Various laws were enacted subsequently to regulate the prices of labour in particular trades; thus, by a statute passed in the seventh year of George I., on the occasion of an endeavour among the London tailors to get more wages, it was ordered that journeymen tailors in London and Westminster, and within the bills of mortality, should, between the 25th March and the 24th June, work from 6 A. M. to 8 P. M., an hour being allowed for dinner, for two shillings a day, and during the rest of the year they were to take 1s. 8d. Any master giving more was to be fined five pounds, and any workman receiving more was to be imprisoned for two months. By an act of the eighth of George III., the hours were changed to between 6 A. M. and 7 P. M., with an hour for dinner, for a wage of 2s. 7½d. a day; and masters giving more than this sum were to be imprisoned, without the option of paying a fine. This law continued in force, though it was necessarily often evaded, till 1825, when it was repealed.

Special statutes of a like nature were at different times passed to bind special trades, but the law of general application was that established by Elizabeth, which ordered the annual assessment of wages by those who were interested in keeping them down. It was not till the 16th April 1813, that by 53 Geo. III. c. 40, this illiberal and unfair system was abolished, while at the same time were repealed many statutes that had been made in restraint of those trades which not having been in existence in the fifth year of Elizabeth, were taken not to be included in the statute made in that year. Since 1813, the policy which could fix arbitrarily the price of wages or of merchandise has been for ever buried,

and though, as in the case of the tailors' act above quoted, certain special trade statutes were not repealed till twelve years later, workmen of all kinds have been practically left free to take their labour to the best possible market. They have also been able, since 1825, to a very great extent, to make their own market. Before that time, and while Elizabeth's law was in operation, it was forbidden to workmen, under heavy penalties, to combine for the purpose of raising wages, or 'obtaining a remission of the hours of labour.'

The first statute against combinations was the 13 Geo. I. c. 34. It recites that weavers and other persons engaged in the manufacture of wool 'have lately formed themselves into unlawful clubs and societies, and have presumed, contrary to law, to enter into combinations, and to make by-laws or orders by which they pretend to regulate the trade and the prices of their goods, and to advance their wages unreasonably, and many other things to the like purpose.' It forbids all such combinations in future among workers in wool, including clothiers, under a penalty of three months' hard labour; and any workman assaulting or threatening to injure his master for not complying with club by-laws, was to be transported for seven years. On the other hand, masters were ordered, under a penalty of ten pounds, to pay their workmen in money, and not at all in kind, so that the men were protected against a nefarious system of truck, by which they were at once cheated and rendered more dependent on their employers than if paid wholly in cash. Other like statutes were passed against combinations of workmen in other trades,—not a word was said against combinations of masters—so that, what with laws arbitrarily fixing the rate of wages, and laws forbidding recourse to the only means by which reasonable wages could be procured, the English workman was held in a state of most perfect thralldom.

The 53 Geo. III. c. 40, abolished fixed prices and fixed hours, the 6 Geo. IV. c. 129, repealed all the statutes against combination, leaving the workman free to get the best price he could for his labour, and, as far as he could, to regulate the market for it. In the first year of William IV., the last oppressive regulation affecting the freedom of the workman was abolished; the 'truck system,' by which masters made their men take part of their wages in kind, in goods supplied by the master's factors, in clothing or anything else, was prohibited by an act of parliament which ordered wages of all sorts and descriptions whatever to be paid in money only. The only restraint upon workmen in respect of their work now existing is that salutary one which forbids them to deprive their fellows of that liberty which they themselves enjoy. Under pain of imprisonment with hard labour, it is forbidden to intimidate any one into joining a union or society, or from taking or giving work, or by any means other than persuasion to interfere with the discretion of a man as to where he will work, or the sum for which he will labour.

A CRITICAL POSITION.

AN ADVENTURE AT SEA.

ON our homeward voyage from the East in the good ship *Shepherd Mary*, we had, for some time, had such unfavourable winds that there seemed little prospect of our making even a decent passage of it. When in India we had boasted much of the splendid sailing qualities of our vessel, and had set our hearts upon making a glorious run, for many and heavy bets had been made on us. She was indeed a noble vessel, but at times we were becalmed for days together, so that she really had not a fair chance; at other times we would have gales right in our teeth, and after beating about for many days we found that but little progress had been made. The Cape of Good Hope was reached at last, and when about a hundred miles to the southward we got a fair wind and plenty of it.

The weather for some days previously had been very unsettled, the wind flying about 'to

all points of the compass. One evening, however, the sun set red and angrily, and it was evident that a gale from some quarter was imminent. As I have said, it was in our favour, and right glad we were. For two days we bowled along, running right before it under a heavy press of sail.

With feelings of exultation we saw our galleant ship bound over the foam, for as she tore through each successive wave we felt that we were by so much nearer home. The huge, white albatross came wheeling round, and with fierce swoop and angry scream contrasted with the familiar little Cape pigeons that fluttered under our stern in vast numbers; whilst the stormy petrels piped shrilly as they skimmed along the wreaths of white foam left in our ocean track. On every hand, to the horizon, the great sea was ploughed into gigantic, white-ridged furrows by the strength of the gale, and the whole surface was covered with a white drift of blinding spray blown from the crests of the surging billows. We had been making an average of fourteen knots an hour, and although the outward-bound vessels were wrestling with the breeze under double-reefed topsails, our skipper was not content with setting all his light sails, but must needs carry his studding-sails as well.

It will be well here to remark that a ship's studding-sails are set outside the square sails, on booms which extend from the yards, half the length of the yards themselves. They are only available with fair winds.

As each additional sail was spread, the ship flew through the water with increased speed, and plunged madly through the seas, as though no earthly power could stop her. The last sail requiring more care and management than the others, I went on the fore-castle to assist in setting it. The vessel was rolling slowly but heavily, and the operation was one of no ordinary difficulty. The skipper remained on the poop, superintending the whole thing, and occasionally favouring us with a savage growl. The sail was about half set, and I was slacking away a rope attached to it and leading through a block at the topmast head, when the breeze suddenly freshening, the skipper shouted to us to keep all fast, and not set the sail. But he was too late. The wind filling the sail, put such a sudden strain on the rope to which I was holding, that it took me off my feet, and with the roll of the ship I swung out about fifty feet from the vessel's side, and there remained suspended from the masthead like a plummet.

As I felt the sickening sweep of my rush through the air, I instinctively closed my eyes. For some seconds I dared not open them, while I expected instant destruction, and wondered that I was not already in my death struggles with the water. Moment after moment elapsed. I still lived. I took courage, and looked around, and then I fully realised the horror of my situation. Death—inevitable death—stared me in the face. Were the rope to break—and it was a very old one—I must drop into the sea, and drown before the eyes of my comrades. No boat of ours could float in such a sea. If the ship rolled over a few degrees more, I should be so lowered that I should drag in the water. This could be but for an instant, for the rope, my only hope, would be torn from my grasp. No hands could stand the strain of a body towing through the water at the rate of sixteen knots an hour.

Worst of all, when the vessel rolled back in the opposite direction, I should acquire such a frightful velocity, on account of the great length of my rope, that I could not fail to be dashed to pieces against the ship's side, her mast, or rigging. In the last case, the rigging formed by no means the least part of the danger. By reason of the enormous strain, it more resembled a system of iron bars than of flexible ropes.

Strangely enough, the vessel would not roll over the other way. I was told afterwards that I was hanging thus for more than five minutes before she took her back roll. I should have thought that it had been five hours. Every second seemed an eternity; and yet I began to dread the time when I should swing in.

The rope was about the thickness of my little

finger. It burned and cut into my hands like a red-hot bar. Close beneath my feet the hungry waves leaped up and hissed at me as though impatient of their prey. Once—ay, twice—my feet dragged in the raging, seething foam, and as the cold wet spray dashed in my face, I thought the end had come. Would she never roll in?

I began to get giddy with watching the waves at my feet as they seemed to tear past with frightful rapidity. I speculated as to whether it would be better to let go and drown quietly, or hold on and be smashed against the ship's side, and then fall back, mutilated and stunned, into the sea. By holding on I should defer the fatal moment, but the end would be more horrible.

Then I watched the great ship proudly dashing the opposing seas from her sharp bows, sending them crashing back in huge cataracts of flashing foam, baffled and benten in their vain attempts to check her headlong career. Aloft towered a cloud of snowy canvas, making the strong spars bend like fishing-rods, whilst the wind in the rigging seemed to my excited imagination to be chanting a weird requiem. Never had I seen that gallant ship look so noble, and the tears filled my eyes as I thought how soon I should see her sailing away from me, and leaving me to my ineffectual struggle with the hungry albatrosses and more voracious waves.

It is only, I think, in times of extreme peril that one can realise the intensity of emotion with which the mind is affected by the thought suggested by the little word "home." It is simply indescribable, and is, therefore, only to be known by actual experience. I hope that none of my readers may ever experience it.

I felt myself getting more and more giddy, when I observed a giant wave, a very mountain of water, approaching the ship. It rushed under my feet, on, on towards the vessel, and with a crash against her broadside seemed to bury her, but in an instant she shook the water off, and rolled heavily over from the force of the blow.

The same fearful swing through the air, but with double the velocity of my outward rush. I cleared the ship's side and rigging, and sped on like a thunderbolt straight for the mast. At that instant I felt many hands clutch me by the feet. I was dragged down to the deck, my head falling at the foot of the foremast.

The men had watched me swinging in, and as I swept over their heads, they were just able to seize me by the heels, and thus I was saved. Had I been an inches higher, I should have been out of reach.

LOVE, THE AVENGER.

I HAD only returned from Australia a few days when I fell in, by one of those coincidences which people won't believe in novels, and which so often occur in real life, with a man whom I had not seen for ten years, and whom I had lost all trace of. He was Philip Chasemore, a surgeon, whose life and abilities had been devoted to the obscure well-doing of a country practice, although his abilities were worthy of a more brilliant sphere of action. And I specially wished to see him, because he had been the intimate college friend and companion of a man who was the admiration of most of the men in the university during my time, their admiration being only equalled by their perplexity; for the man in question, Gerald Stauncel,—“Firework Gerald,” as he was surnamed from his erratic genius,—was a person very unique in his way. With the most brilliant abilities and some of the best qualities, he united to these others proportionately bad. Generous, courteous, high-spirited, free of money, time, and interest on his friend's behalf, and the life and soul of every circle wherein he chose to exhibit his real wit and humour, he would change in a second from the frank brilliant *bon vivant* companion to an enemy fierce and passionate as a revengeful southern, the blaze in his dark eyes, and the white pallor of fury which overpread his face, might be excited by a harmless speech at any

moment, and his physical strength rendered him a most dangerous antagonist. No wonder, then, that with all their admiration of his good qualities, men felt insecure as on a volcano's edge, when in Gerald Stauncel's society.

His intellect was of the highest order. How often have I heard the brilliant epigrams and the lucid arguments flow in an unbroken stream from his lips when he was really warm to his work and nothing crossed his temper. The lore of Greece and Rome was as familiar and dear to him, with all his fondness for modern life and pursuits, as the latest odds and the gossip on the things of the day were to his companions. The power of concentration, argument and fluent diction which he possessed—and he had little or none of the wordy crudity of youth—marked him out for distinction. So thought we all, and so, of course, did his father, a grand old specimen of the English squire, a stately country gentleman, who supported his load of years like a boy, and carried his white head as gallantly as a soldier of the old guard. He was the owner of the grey Stauncel Court, which stood surrounded by its beeches in the midst of a fair domain of three thousand acres, every tenant on which was prepared to fight any man who doubted that the young squire would be the best “member for the county” in Parliament.

When he and I quitted the university simultaneously, an advantageous offer in Australia caused us to separate. I had heard nothing of “Firework Gerald” for ten years. I had been thinking of him but a few hours back, for I landed at the place where ten years previously he had wished me good-bye, and the first man I lit on in London was one better able than most to tell me of Gerald's career.

“And you have never heard?” said Chasemore, gravely. “Why, his name was in most of the newspapers.”

“Likely enough; but in the bush, newspapers were very few and far between.”

“It's a long story,” said Chasemore; “dine with me, and I'll tell you about it. I'm all alone, for my wife and child are at the seaside.”

A few hours afterward I found myself an inmate of a house which showed that its owner had a good London practice. Chasemore had certainly made his *coup* in quitting Muddletown and settling in Tyburnia.

The cloth removed, my host pushed over the claret, and, drawing his chair to the fire, relapsed into silence; his cheery conversation ended, silence remained unbroken.

“Ah,” he said, suddenly, “I never feel so thankful for my own domestic happiness—I wish my Laura had been at home for you to make her acquaintance—than when I put together all the links, half forgotten, of poor Stauncel's story.”

He rose and went to a drawer, took something out, and brought it to me. It was a leathern case, in which was a gold hunting watch, with one cover dented in by a heavy blow. I looked at the crest and saw it was the Stauncel falcon.

“There,” said Chasemore, “there's my sole relic of poor Gerald. He gave it me just before he died.”

“Died!” I said in utter bewilderment; “do you mean that Gerald's dead?”

“Dead. Eight years ago.”

I was thunderstruck. I had so keen a remembrance of the man we spoke of. His athletic form and splendid health were the envy of us all. He came of a long-lived and sound stock as could be found in England; and eight years ago he was in the very first prime of matured manhood.

“Ah,” said Chasemore, as if he guessed my thoughts, “no disease carried off Gerald; he was killed. I'll tell you all the story.”

“You know the generous offer the old squire made to me to reside as the salaried physician of the family at the Court till I could find a practice to suit me. To a young fellow fresh from college and hall, with a brand new diploma, the attractions of a handsome salary, perfect kindness, and equality with an ancient family, one of the first in the county, were great temp-

tations. I went. I was treated by everyone as a friend and visitor, and shared all their invitations. My work was a sinecure, so I kept my hand in by prescribing for the village, and aiding a little the overworked Union medical officer. As for Gerald, he was my constant companion, shooting and riding, and filled up his working hours by studying for his political career; for he was no mere *sainéant* aspirant to legislative initials. You know what an intellect he had.

"One of Mrs. Stauncel's oldest friends was a neighbouring Mrs. Chetwynd, widow of an Indian Major, who had left her with a fair income and a beautiful daughter. The widow and her daughter were constant visitors at Stauncel, in fact they were on the most intimate footing, and Miss Chetwynd was 'Lucy' to everybody (Gerald included) except myself. She was a brilliant blonde, with a very fair complexion, deep blue eyes, and a rosebud of a mouth. Tall, graceful, slimly-formed, and light in all her movements, she was a model of feminine vigorous grace.

"The young lady was clever in her own way. She drew well, talked French and Italian well, and danced well, but she had no taste for music or intellectual pursuits, therefore there wasn't much sympathy on that point between her and Gerald.

"Gerald grew, I saw, fond of the young beauty, and he was not the man to enter half-heartedly on any cause. Ere long he was evidently passionately fond of Lucy Chetwynd. He told her so, and the girl confessed her *penchant* for him, for she was fond of him—very few girls would not have been so. And her mother, a thorough woman of the world, was alive to the eligibility of Mr. Stauncel's eldest son—Mr. Stauncel being a rich and long descended landowner. Generally you don't find the qualities united.

"Lucy behaved very prettily. That's a queer word, isn't it? but it means just what I think. 'Pretty,' her demeanour, and manner, and speeches to him were: 'loving; I never thought them. She was rather *distracte* at times when he used to try to make her as enthusiastic as himself over Byron and Edgar Poe, or ran on for an hour descanting on Mozart's sonatas. Music to him was his life-blood, with her it was a 'pretty' accomplishment. Still, to all appearance, they seemed to suit each other well. But the engagement seemed only a half one.

"In the summer down came a visitor. He had been a tuft at Christchurch in Gerald's time, and an ally of his on the river. He was a handsome man, rather *insouciant* in manner, and stupid in his ideas, or lack of them. But he was Raoul, fifth Viscount Desserton, and owner of half a Welsh county. That fact his admirers never forgot, and it threw a haze of romance and intellect round him. And the viscount never forgot it himself.

"He seemed very much struck with Lucy Chetwynd's beauty. Indeed, her tranquil loveliness was eminently adapted to catch admirers by a *coup d'œil*. And the young lady, even while knowing Gerald's fondness, and really fond of him herself, was not indisposed to receive a peer's glances of admiration. So matters went on for some days.

"Mrs. Chetwynd was an old campaigner. The glitter of a coronet dazzled her and made her feel thankful that the engagement between her daughter and Stauncel was only an embryo one. And so she gave her daughter sundry secret instructions.

"I don't think, looking back, that at first Lucy Chetwynd had any intention of jilting Gerald. But the girl's character was a weak one, and her love of admiration had been fostered from her childhood. So she gradually listened more and more complacently to Desserton's compliments, for a season of utter dissipation at Paris had taught him one accomplishment, which was his sole one—saying pretty things neatly, and as Gerald was away day after day on his electioneering business—poor fellow, he'd come in at night and tell Lucy his day's adventures canvassing, as if she should share them—the peer had good chance of making play. And he made it.

"The Squire and his son were too thoroughly high-bred to dream of treachery in a guest. Moreover, the generous spirit of Gerald led him to trust a former friend, and especially an university friend, implicitly; so he let the viscount escort Lucy hither and thither, with the full trustfulness of a confiding nature. But when those natures are deceived, their wrath is terrible."

"I can fancy what an unchained lion Gerald would have been," said I.

"Yes," said Chasemore, "you are right.

"After about three weeks, and during Gerald's absence, Lord Desserton formally proposed to and was accepted by Miss Chetwynd. The secret was well kept, and he having procured a license, they were married at a church near the parish, then Lord and Lady Desserton went suddenly abroad, accompanied by Mrs. Chetwynd.

"The old Squire's first intimation of the news was a letter well and craftily written by Mrs. Chetwynd. It dwelt much on the incompatibility of temper, &c., of her daughter and his son, and ended by every wish for Mr. Gerald Stauncel's happiness. When Gerald returned flushed with success (for he was returned by a majority), his mother met him, and lovingly, tearfully broke the news to him. He listened to her, and then rushed into the old hall, where I was pacing up and down, sorely ill at ease. His face was flushed crimson, and his eyes glittering as you have seen them once or twice when he was in a fury. He seized my arm like a vice, and his working lips showed how the fierce wrath within choked his words.

"You heard the news, Chasemore," he said at last. "You know what that villain has done. You know he's robbed me of Lucy. Smooth-tongued, lying, treacherous cur! Curse him! he's taken advantage of my miserable weakness and blighted my life."

"Hush, Gerald," said I, "the servants—"

"I had no need to say more; the pride of race was more potent even than love or hate. He bit his lip till it bled, and his anguished face settled into stern calm.

"You are right," he murmured; "but if I live I'll be revenged. Ah," and his voice broke, "my lost love! my lost love!"

"After this he grew calm and never spoke of the matter. Days, weeks, and months passed on, and though Lord Desserton's name brought the mad fury into his eyes, and a burst of curses from his lips, his fits of rage never turned against his false betrothed. To him she was a victim merely, he never blamed her in the slightest degree, his voice softened and his eyes filled at allusion to Lucy. But all his anger was reserved for Desserton. You know what his anger was, and can easily guess its intensity when roused by such a wrong.

"Two years rolled away. Gerald devoted himself to his parliamentary work. At the end of the time he asked me in the summer to take a walking-tour. We went, therefore, into Wales, with our rods and knapsacks, and amid the glorious scenery, the good fishing, and the novelty of life, enjoyed ourselves much.

"One day, as we were walking towards a small town, a carriage passed. Gerald started, turned pale, and gasped out one word, 'Lucy.'

"Whose carriage was that?" said I, to an English slate miner passing.

"His lordship's," said the man, civilly; "he owns all our mines hereabouts."

"Not Lord Desserton?"

"Yes, sir."

"Gerald Stauncel's face wore the old look of vengeance which had gone from it so long. I tried to soothe him, but my efforts were useless.

"You heard me swear, Chasemore," said he, sternly, "that I'd be revenged. You can do no good. You know me, and might guess that, therefore."

"I said nothing, and we reached our inn. All night long in the next room I heard my companion's restless steps, and in the morning he looked haggard with watching and care; but over his face there brooded that grim and savage look which boded the worst.

"He ate nothing, and after breakfast asked

the way to Desserton Hall. It lay three miles off, and seeing he was bent on going, I decided on accompanying him.

"We went on for some two miles, until we crossed a railway line. By the side of this ran a private road, marked 'Private.'

"His private path," said I, mechanically.

"Yes," said Gerald, with a ferocious glare in his eyes that made me shudder, "therefore, let us use it."

"Hardly had we crossed and entered on the road, when coming towards us from a little cove on the other side we saw two women. They advanced for some distance, and to reach us would cross the line.

"Merciful heaven!" said Gerald, with a quick gasp, "Lucy!"

"I looked, and recognised Lucy Desserton, her companion a nurse, carrying a cowering, laughing baby. Stauncel's eye fell on it like that of a famished wolf; the hungry glare in them was horrible, and the convulsion of his features was dreadful.

"His child," he muttered; "the future viscount—their heir!"

"Yes," said I, "and her child, Gerald, too."

"He shivered, and passed his hand over his eyes, and said in a calmer tone, 'Aye, hers—Lucy's—Lucy's,' with a pathetic intonation very pitiful to hear.

"The gallop of a horse was heard behind us. I looked back and saw Lord Desserton. Stauncel looked round and started, while the red flush darkened his face with passion.

"D'you see the dog?" said he, furiously "Now's my time—now!"

"He turned. I seized his arm, dreading some act of violence, when the shrill whistle of a steam-engine rang out. I looked and saw the express coming at a tremendous speed, while a shriek from Lucy drew my attention to what was indeed a terrible sight. The nurse had slipped on the rails, and the child had rolled in front of the advancing train, while the unhappy mother made the air resound with her screams; suddenly her eyes fell on my companion. Stretching out her hands, she shrieked, 'Save him, Gerald, save him!' and then fell fainting into her husband's arms, who had reached the spot.

"Gerald paused a second, and then, with a glance at Lucy, sprang on the line. He seized the baby, tossed it to the nurse, and turned; but the express was on him like a flash, it passed, and Gerald Stauncel lay motionless between the rails. Desserton, his face blanched to the lips, hurried over, as did some laborers near. I, half frantic, rushed to our poor friend, and a cursory examination showed me how fatal his injuries—arm and ribs broken by the blow of the engine buffer, and internal wounds. He only lived for an hour from the time he was struck down. He was sensible, and we carried him into a cottage near, and there in a strange group we stayed.

"By-and-by the white face grew for a second flushed, the eyes opened, the lips quivered. And Lady Desserton burst into bitter tears.

"The child?" gasped Stauncel, half inarticulately.

"You've saved him—you whom I so wronged," she sobbed out.

"I," he said, with a look of happiness on his bleeding face, "I, Phil; you hear her? That's my revenge."

W. READE, JUN.

A SCHOOLMASTER, who had an inveterate habit of talking to himself, was asked what motive he could have in doing so. He replied that he had two good and substantial reasons. "In the first place, he liked to talk to a sensible man; in the next place, he liked to hear a sensible man talk."

Two gentlemen, noted for their fondness of exaggeration, were discussing the fare at different hotels. One observed that at his hotel he had tea so strong it was necessary to confine it in an iron vessel. "At mine," said the other, "it is made so weak it has not strength to run out of the teapot."

A FENIAN ADVENTURE.

A TOURIST'S TALE.

I WAS travelling last winter in one of the most beautiful and most mountainous districts of Ireland, when I accidentally encountered some members of the famous Fenian Brotherhood about whom we have heard so much lately.

My tour was on foot, and one afternoon, when the daylight was fast departing, I found myself in the midst of a series of ranges of hills of more or less magnitude, and saw that my path lay directly over them, if I hoped to reach the village for which I was bound before night set in.

Slowly and wearily I plodded onwards, finding out, as each step seemed more difficult, that the way I had chosen was a very toilsome one, and the sun sank behind the range of hills in front of me just as I reached the bottom of the first valley. A violent snow-storm increased the darkness, and in a few minutes I could hardly see a yard before me. Slowly and laboriously I toiled up one range after another, not being able in the darkness and snow to choose the easiest paths, till, after several hours of tedious climbing, I was completely exhausted. Just as I rounded the base of one range I saw a light, apparently from a cottage some distance before me higher up the mountain, and I joyfully made for it.

The rude shelter of an Irish hovel would be a blissful exchange for the fury of the tempest on such a night. It was not the only cottage on the side of the mountain: there were several others, but scattered at a distance from each other, so that I could not then perceive them. They were, like the hovels of most of the native Irish, of a miserably poor kind, seldom having more than two apartments—the kitchen and “the room,” as it is called; often only one. The walls were built of mud, the old rotten and moss-grown thatch, sinking in here and there, let in both rain and wind; the windows were mere holes in the wall, stuffed with straw or closed by a wooden board at night. The fire in such cottages—of peat, or turf as it is called—burns on the floor, and the smoke finds exit by a hole in the thatch, or by the door. The pig occupies the best place by the fire. “And who’d have a better right to it, yer honour? sure, an’ isn’t it him that pays the rent?” says the tenant. The manure-heap, or at least a green stinking pool, stands just before the door; and a fierce, snarling, dirty cur keeps angry watch over the family possessions. Such a hovel was that which I now entered. There was no one within but an elderly woman, dressed in miserable rags; a tolerably good peat fire was burning on the hearth, and a pot-full of Indian meal stir-about was set thereon, and being assiduously tended by her.

“A wild night, ma’am,” said I, as I entered. “Will you be good enough to allow me to rest in your cottage till morning, for I am fairly exhausted crossing the mountains, and the snow-storm is so severe I can get no farther? I will pay you well for my night’s lodging.”

“Troth will I, yer honour,” she replied. “An’ it’s not pay ye need be talkin’ of, for I wouldn’t see a dog outside my door sich a night as this an’ not take the craythur in, let alone a Christian. Where was it ye came from? ‘Deed an’ ye had a wild road across the mountain the night.”

And as she spoke I drew near her fire, and warmed my well-nigh frozen limbs.

“Whisht, here’s a stool for yer honour,” she said, wiping one as well as it might be done with her apron. “Ye don’t belong to this country?”

“No, ma’am,” I replied. “I live near Dublin, but I came from England.”

“From England did ye?” she said quickly. Then went on after a short pause, “What will I do wid ye when the boys come in? they mightn’t be pleased to find ye here.”

“Why should they not?” I said. “I shall be glad to make friends with them.”

“Oh, it’s not our owa boys,” she replied, “they’re quiet enough; but there’s a power of

the neighbour boys was to be in here the night for a meetin’ like, an’ they’ll be afther havin’ a dthrap to warn them maybe, an’ betimes they be hasty like.”

“What kind of a meeting is it to be?” I said. “Well, your honour, it’s a sort of a meetin’ the boys are goin’ to have. That’s all I know, and there’ll be speechifyin’, an’ the like; an’ Mick, that’s the head o’ them, he’s uncommon wicked when he’s got a dthrap o’ dthrink, an’ swears he’ll put his knife through the first Sassenach he can find, an’ Barney he’s as bad, an’ you’re like a decent gentleman, an’ I wouldn’t like to see no harm come of it, an’ in my house too, that’s a quate widdy this fifteen years come Gandemas.”

Here was a pleasant prospect for me. The civil old woman’s evident anxiety made me excessively nervous. I was aware that the use of the knife was becoming too common in this particular county, and of the bitter feelings entertained against the Sassenach, whether recently come from England or of a family settled in Ireland, and I knew how outrageous was the violence sometimes manifested by the Celtic peasant under the influence of drink. But I hardly knew what to do, for if I faced the storm again I was certain to perish on the mountain from cold and fatigue. While I was meditating somewhat ruefully over my position, the old woman, who had been looking anxiously out at the door, suddenly exclaimed—

“Troth thin, an’ here they are a-comin’. Rin intill the room an’ lie down till they be gone. Jimmy an’ Pat sleeps in the far bed, an’ me an’ Biddy in the near one; she’s away since Christmas, an’ I’ll be for sittin’ up. Jist lie down on my bed an’ rest, an’ I’ll keep the door shut betwixt.”

On the whole, this seemed the best thing to do, so I did as the old woman bid me. The two beds were very poor, though far superior to what may ordinarily be found in Irish cottages, being placed on bedsteads furnished with coarse blue curtains along the outer side, whereas a straw pallet thrown on the ground is the usual sleeping-place. The bedsteads were placed end to end, and completely filled the room, the uncurtained head of the one she bid me lie down on being close against the wooden partition between the two apartments, and the open chinks in the partition allowed me a full view of what passed in the kitchen. Coarse as was the couch, it could not be otherwise than agreeable to my weary frame, but I had hardly thrown myself down on it when the house door opened, and six or seven young men tramped in, stamping their feet to shake off the snow.

“Good-evenin’ till ye, Judy. Sure an’ here’s a night if iver there was one; it’s mighty little dthrillin’ we’ll be afther havin’ the night, barrin’ we do it here in the kitchen.”

The speaker was a ferocious-looking, short, thick-set man, powerfully built, and with a hang-dog expression of countenance; his black brows, shaggy unkempt hair, and badly-shaven face adding to the wildness of his aspect; he seemed to be regarded as the leader.

“That’ll be a small parade ground for ye, Mick, though most o’ the boys is away the night,” said a more youthful speaker, with a less repulsive countenance.

“We’ll jist niver mind paradin’ and dthrillin’ the night, but take a dthrap more to warm us, and dthrink success to ould Ireland an’ dthrowin’ to iver Sassenach in her.”

“Thruv for ye, Barney,” said the first speaker, “an’ I’ll jist read a letter for the boys from Ameriky, from Paddy Phelan; an’ sure an’ he’s a captain now in the army of the great Irish republic, an’ he says we’re to keep up heart and work all together, for that we’ll surely have the boys across from Ameriky afore Patrick’s Day, an’ thin won’t we see the Sassenachs flyin’?”

The letter was produced, as was also an ample supply of the potteen, or mountain dew, but at this stage of the proceedings fatigue got the better of me, and I fell into a sound sleep.

I hardly know how long I may have slept, certainly more than a couple of hours, when I was awakened by loud and angry voices in the kitchen; and looking through the crevices in the

wooden partition, I could see the man addressed as Mick and a younger member of the party facing each other on the floor with angry gestures and violent language.

“Is it you, ye spalpeen, that dar’ say a word agin’ me?” cried Mick. “By jabbers, if ye don’t jist do every Lasporth I bid ye, I’ll make sich a scarecrow of ye that yer own dog ‘ll bark at ye.”

“I dar’ ye, so I do,” shouted the younger defiantly. “Jist let me see ye lay a sign of yer finger on me, an’ ye’ll see what I’ll do.”

Mick seemed provoked beyond expression at this, and he advanced rapidly and struck his opponent a violent blow on the side of the head. The young man staggered a little, but instantly recovering himself, planted a straighter and better-delivered blow right in Mick’s face.

It was Mick’s turn to stagger now, and one or two of the “boys” shouted, “Well done, Tom, give it to him again.”

This expression of their opinion roused Mick still more; his face grew purple with passion, and calling out to his comrades, would they see their leader beaten and not stand by him? he was immediately joined by Barney and one of the others, while the three remaining members of the party as quickly sided with Tom, and the scrimmage became general.

Mick and Tom had laid hold of each other, and were apparently fighting rather by a kind of wrestling and struggling than by blows, when Tom again managed to throw his antagonist against the jamb wall which, in Irish cottages, generally forms a screen between the outer door and the hearth. Livid with rage, Mick seized a clasp-knife which lay open on a stool beside him, having been apparently used for cutting tobacco, and struck Tom two rapid blows with it, wounding him first under the ear and then in the heart. The poor young man instantly staggered back and expired without a groan.

I was horror-struck; and remembering what the old woman had said about Mick’s readiness in using his knife, could not but feel that I had had a narrow escape from a similar fate. Tom’s fall instantly sobered the party, and they gathered round him with terrified faces; Mick and Barney alone were unconcerned and defiant.

The old woman had run out into the byre, screaming “Murther, murther,” probably without knowing how awfully true her words were.

“Och Mick, och Mick,” the men cried, “ye shouldn’t have struck him like that, though ye were scrimmagin’.”

“An’ what did he aggravate me for?” said Mick. “Why didn’t he do what I told him?”

“It’s no rason for using the knife, Mick, ye’re always too ready with it,” said one of them; but a savage scowl from Mick, and a hurried motion of his hand to the fatal knife again, made the speaker draw back, and the ferocious leader of gang was reproached no more for this his murderous deed.

There was no help for it, however, and they consulted together what was to be done with the corpse. To my horror, they decided on putting it on one of the beds, till, as they said, they were ready to start, and then I heard them bringing it to the bedroom. I crouched down as close to the wall as I could. I had no time to get under the bed; but when they came in I was instantly discovered, and dragged out into the kitchen.

“What brings you here, I’d like to know?” shouted Barney, roughly seizing me, and with anger and fear visible in every feature. “So you’ve been watching us, have you?”

I replied quietly that I had been overtaken by the snow-storm on the mountains, and being quite worn out, had sought shelter in the cottage. I added that I had been no spy on their movements, and that I was quite willing to pay handsomely for my accommodation, I did not mention the old woman, fearing to get her into trouble with her savage friends.

“A likely story,” sneered Barney, “an’ how did ye come to pick out this house of all the others?”

I replied that it was the only one I saw; Mick, meantime, had entered the room.

"Ye sarpent," said he, "do ye think we'll just believe that? I'll tell ye what ye are, ye're a Sassemech spy, so ye are, an' ye'd hang us every one if ye could."

"That's jist it," said Barney. "Do ye think we'll be aither lettin' you carry tales on us to the castle of Dublin, an' gettin' us hung up at next sizes?"

Expressions of approbation followed on all sides, and it was evident they meditated violence. In vain I protested my innocence of all intention of becoming acquainted with their proceedings, and pleaded that I was only a benighted traveller.

"Ay, ay," said Mick, "jist so, out of the snow ye came, did ye? Faith, and ye had better have stayed in it, we'll let ye know what bein' in the snow is, so we will."

They tied my hands tightly with a handkerchief taken from the neck of one of them, and effectually gagged me by stuffing another filled with tow into my mouth. Then they brought me into the kitchen, and Mick went round from one to another whispering. That they meant to take my life was evident, but how, I could not then make out. They bound my hands with twisted hay-ropes, took the door of the hovel off its hinges, and, placing the corpse on it, Mick and Barney guarding me, the other men took up their fearful burden, and we set off over the snow. It had ceased falling, but lay deep on the hills, forming immense drifts here and there. It was a bright moonlight night, and I could see below me the lights of a town shining, as I walked between my savage guards to my unknown death.

The party stopped at last near a small thorn bush, evidently a familiar landmark. Two of them taking the corpse by the arms and two by the feet, they swung it slowly but with increasing energy backwards and forwards a few times, and on Mick crying "Now," suddenly let it go. It fell head-foremost on the snow about eight or nine feet from them, and instantly disappeared with a loud dull sound.

"How do ye like that for a cowl'd bed the night?" laughed Mick savagely to me.

I turned pale and shivered with horror as the truth burst on me. There was a deep and steep gully in the mountain side; it had been nearly filled with the drifting snow, but its edge was accurately marked by the well-known thorn-bush; they were going to throw me in there along with the corpse to perish in the snow, which often lasts for weeks in such a gully, notwithstanding any amount of thaw. Had my hands been tied with an ordinary rope it would have betrayed the murder, but the hay would be rotted and washed away by the wet before I could be discovered; it would then seem as if my murdered companion and I had fallen by accident into the snow, or if his body was still so far undecayed as to show his wounds, it would be supposed that I was his murderer, and had fallen in along with him in the struggle. I had some thoughts of pleading for mercy, and offering them a bribe to release me; but I had been an unwilling spectator of Mick's deed, and I knew they would never consider themselves safe if I was at large.

I had not much time for these reflections, however, for they bound my feet as tightly as my hands with an additional piece of hay-ropes which they had brought for the purpose, and then Mick, as being one of the strongest, himself helped to take me up. As they began to swing me one took the gage out of my mouth; a few wild despairing shrieks escaped me, and then a short flight through the air, a dull shock in the snow, and I sank down into the cold soft drift.

How far I may have sunk through the yielding snow I know not—it seemed several feet; but I stopped gradually and without inconvenience, and found myself resting on my side in a bed fitting accurately to the shape of my body, and hence singularly easy, moreover, after the first few moments, I was not even cold; the snow, being a bad conductor of heat, formed a very warm and comfortable covering round

me. Overcome by fatigue, and knowing that I was in no immediate danger, I positively fell asleep, and must have slept some time, when I was roused by falling still further into the gully. The warmth of my body was melting the snow—I was sinking still deeper into my grave.

I knew that such drifts in deep ravines lasted for many weeks. If I called out no one would hear me; and should a cry by any accident reach the upper air, it would serve to make the fact of my being alive known to my foes. I gave myself up for lost. Death stared me in the face.

Deeper and deeper I sank at intervals during these two days and the intervening night, listening meanwhile to the trickling of the little stream formed of melted snow which ran down the centre of the gully, and appeared not far from me. I was completely buried in the snow, owing to the continual drifting by the wind, and only the small passage which the warmth of my breath kept free remained to maintain my communication with the upper world or with the vital air. I tried to be as patient as I could, alternately resigning myself to my fate, and then again trying to hope for some chance release.

Towards the close of the second day—for I could distinguish the light from the darkness by means of the aperture—I experienced a sensation, after one of those short, sudden descents that I have mentioned, caused by the melting snow giving way under me, as if something sharp were pressing into my right shoulder, which was undermost. Wriggling a little to relieve myself from it, I made it worse, and then became aware that it was a sharp piece of rock on which I was leaning. I had sunk to the ground or nearly so, apparently not far from the centre of the gully. A gleam of hope shot across my mind. Might I not manage to cut the hay-ropes which bound my hands by means of friction against this same sharp rock? Working and pushing, wriggling and turning, with great difficulty I got myself forward through the snow till I brought my wrists against the piece of rock instead of my shoulder, and then slowly and laboriously commenced rubbing the hay-ropes against the sharp edge. It was weary work, behind my back, and under a weight of snow. The hay was very tenacious, and friction had not so much effect on it as it would have had on a hempen cord; but by degrees I managed to insert little sharp points of the rock between one or two of the straws and the rest of the rope, when the former was of course broken without any difficulty. It was necessary, moreover, to cut through the rope in two places, so effectively was it bound round my arms, but at last my toilsome work was accomplished, and I found myself free.

To work my knees up through the snow and release my feet was an easy task compared with that of setting my hands at liberty, and now at length I began to have some definite hopes of surviving my entombment. Luckily, the ruffians had left me my pocket-flask and sandwiches, and to satisfy the excessive cravings of hunger was my first step. How intense these had become, I think no one can know who has not been in a similar situation, and the knowledge that I had food about me certainly did not tend to diminish my energies. Having demolished my sandwiches with great relish, and also made a liberal demand upon my flask, I set to work in earnest, scooping away the snow above with my hands, and working it behind me like a terrier dog in a hole, or a mole burrowing his underground passage. But it would not do; my weight pressed down the snow behind me tighter than that which was above me; so that I had soon a chamber as high as I could reach, and further progress upwards was, of course, impossible. It then occurred to me that if I could run a level in the downhill direction I must soon come out to the light of day, and on this track accordingly set to work in the pitchy darkness that surrounded me during the night. It was weary work, for although the exercise kept me warm, the fatigue was very great, and my hands were torn and lacerated with the sharp pieces of stone and fragments of thorn branches which were imbedded in the snow. The first object I encountered was the corpse of the poor young fel-

low who had been so brutally murdered, and whose fate I had so nearly shared. Shuddering with horror, I endeavoured to avoid it in my course; but when I got past it I determined to try and bring it along with me, and after some hours of patient work I succeeded, to my great joy, in boring my way out to the upper world again, just as the first beams of light were illuminating the eastern sky across the mountain range. I brought the corpse also along with me, but of course no further than out of the snow-drift.

I have little more to tell. I made my way in safety to a lower and more hospitable region, and on to the next village, where, seeking out the constabulary sergeant, I told him my story, inquiring whether he knew who the individuals were who were addressed as Mick and Barney.

"I rather think I can guess, sir," he replied. "Mick must be a fellow of the name of Flannigan, the biggest ruffian on the country side; and Barney, I have no doubt, is Bernard Ryan, who is well known to be his right-hand man. I shall see after them."

So I have no doubt he did to the best of his ability, but without effect, for I heard from him subsequently that they had both without question left the country; accompanied no doubt by the rest of the party, early on the morning after the murder of the young man, and their endeavour to bury me along with him in his snowy grave. At the inquest on poor Tom warrants were issued for their apprehension, but they were doubtless already on safe ground in some unknown region. For weeks after my adventure, I was haunted by the remembrance of the dangers I had experienced, and would wake in the night with the old falling sensation like that in the snow-drift. My present task recalls it all now, and I have given up walking tours till Ireland shall be in a more settled condition.

A WOOLING.

I wooed, but could not win her, though
My hands were full of gems and gold;
And to her beauty bonding low,
I proffered wealth in sums untold;
She said that not for such as this,
Or trebly such, could love be sold.

I led her where the steep ascent
Saw all my hills and pasture-land,
To where the far horizon bent,
Or dim blue forests clothed the ground,
I called it hers that she alone
Should in my roll of wealth be found.

She turned on me her wandering view
With sad reproach in eye and mien;
And "God," she said, "to me and you
Hath given diverse hearts, I ween:
I would not barter that is mine
For thrice what I this day have seen."

We parted, and the years went by:
In gold and purple went by me;
On her they cast an evil eye,
And moved in cold sterility,
And once again I proffered all,
In vain to changeless constancy.

My wounded love was fain to turn,
And sat itself with wild desires;
I strove that fiercer flames might burn
And scar my heart to softer fires;
But there is laughter filled with pain,
A path where every footstep tires.

I sought for other comfort, sweet
The lonely fields, the crowded ways;
About my ruined life there crept
A growth of weeds—the faded days—
And hid from me the pleasant dews
Of grief, and from the hopeful rays.

I let each fancy work its will,
All careless of my wasting age;
And drank of pride and pleasure still,
Although the draught could not assuage
The fevered thirst of heart and brain,
When love can rest not from his rage.

A little, and my fortunes ran
Their utmost length; I stood alone.
A stricken wreck of what was man,
When friends are turned to him as stone;
Then last with this my utter loss,
I won what did for all atone. J. S. W.

ALLITERATION.

ALLITERATION, has been considered by some critics a "false ornament in poetry," by others it has been looked upon as frivolous, while a third class have sanctioned its use as a worthy and impressive embellishment. It is a somewhat mechanical aid to the rhythm of verse, and in the reciting or reading of a long piece of poetry, the reader might find his organs of speech aided in some degree by the succession of similar sounds, and it might also have a pleasant sound to those who heard. This, however, could only apply for a short time, for alliteration too long continued would weary and become ridiculous, and suggest that a laborious effort had been made to keep up the alliterative strain, and the pleasure derived from it would only be as transitory as that derived from witnessing the clever feats of an acrobat, with a corresponding sigh of relief when the performance was safely concluded. Alliterative writing does not necessarily imply, however, that each word or syllable must commence with the same letter, it being sufficient that a repetition of similar or imitative sounds are produced, so as to give a certain degree of harmony and strength; and in the sense of its utility in this way it has been used by the whole range of poets. In the early ages such a feature in poetry might have been welcome, and in some degree necessary, when the rhyme was usually wanting, and something was needed to fix the attention and create an interest. In this way, we find that in the Scandinavian and old German poetry alliteration took the place of rhyme: and, even yet, Icelandic poetry considers the same feature its greatest charm. Alliteration does, however, when sparingly and discreetly used, add to the beauty of a poetical sentiment, and may also aid the force and piquancy of a witty remark. For the one, take an example from Sidney Smith, who, when contrasting the position of curates and the higher dignitaries of the English Church, spoke of them as "the Right Reverend Dives in the palace, and Lazarus in orders at the gate, doctor-ed by dogs, and comforted with crumbs;" for the other, take Pope's line—

"Fields over fresh, and groves for ever green,"

Thus, when an alliterative phrase presents itself with some degree of spontaneity, it adds to the expression of the sentiment; but when hunted after and strained for, it is as certain to deform it. Our early poets, Spenser, Dryden, Gray—the latter two professing to take their style from the first named—all dealt largely in alliteration. Gray especially gave particular heed to this embellishment, and, in his Odes, almost every strophe begins with an alliterative line, thus:

"Ruin seize thee, ruthless king."
"Weave the warp, weave the woof."
"Eyes that glow, and fangs that grin."
"Thoughts that breathe, and words that burn,"

The early Scottish poets also used this style frequently—Gawain Douglas, Dunbar, and Alexander Scott especially. The "Dance of the Seven Deadly Sins," by Dunbar, contains the following verse:—

"Then Iro came in, with sturt and strife,
His hand was aye upon his knife,
He brandist like a bear;
Boasters, braggarts, and bargainers,
Afor him passit in pairs,
All bodin in feir of wir.
Next in the danco followed Envy,
Filled full of foud and felony,
Hid malice and despite."

Alexander Scott, who has been called the Scottish Anacron, sent "Ane New Year's Gift" to Queen Mary, which contains many alliterative lines, such as the following; when speaking of the Reformers, he says they go about

"Rugging and rying up kirk rents like rooks;" and the Address concludes with a stanza beginning—

"Fresh, fulgent, flourist, fragrant flower
Lantern to love, of ladies lamp and lot,
Cherry maist chaste, chief carbuncle and choso, &c.
Neither has Shakspeare omitted this feature, for, amid many others, we find this example in "As You Like It":—

"The churlish chiding of the winter's wind,"

Lord North, at the court of James I., wrote a set of sonnets, each beginning with a letter of the alphabet, in regular succession; and, in the seventeenth century, this practice was carried to the verge of absurdity, when even in the pulpit, the minister would address his flock as "chickens of the Church, sparrows of the Spirit, and the swallows of salvation." Our later poets have also found a charm and occasional aid in this style, and Coleridge, in one of his poems, gives a fine specimen of this kind of word-painting:—

"The fair breeze blow, the white foam flow,"
"The furrow followed free"

And Burns terms Tam O'Shanter,
"A blethering, blustering, drunken blemum,"
while he calls the ploughman's collic,
"A rhymin', rantin', rovin' bittle."

We cull the following acrostic alliteration from Mr. Southgate's "Many Thoughts on Many Things":—

"An Austrian army awfully arrayed,
B oldly by battery besieged Belgrade;
C ossack commanders cannonading come,
D ealing destruction's devastating doom;
E very endeavour engineers osenay
F or fame, for fortune, forming furious fray.
G aunt gunners grapple, giving gashes good;
H eaves high his head heroic hardhood;
I braham, Islam, Ismael, Imps in ill,
J ostle John, Jaroviltz, Jem, Joe, Jack, Jill,
K ile kindling, Kutosoff, kings, kinsmen kill;
L abour low levels loftiest, longest lines;
M en marched 'mid moles, 'mid moulds, 'mid mur-
d'rous mines.
N ow nightfall's near, now needful nature nods,
O pposed, opposing, overcoming odds.
P oor peasants, partly purchased, partly pressed,
Q uite quaking, Quarter! quarter! quickly quest.
R eason returns, recalls refulgent rage,
S aves sinking soldiers, softens seigniors sage.
T ruce, Turkey, truce! truce, treacherous Tartar train!
U nwise, unjust, unmerciful Ukraine,
V aulch, vile vengeance! vanish victory vain!
W isdom wails war,—wails warring words, What were
X erxes, Xantippe, Ximenes, Xavier?
Y et Yassoy's youth, yo yield your youthful yest.
Z ealously, zanies, zealously, zeal's zest."

The Latin language has also had its alliterative versifiers, for we find that one Hugbald, a monk, wrote an *Ecloga de Calvis*, in which all the words began with a c. So also in the *Nuga Venarum*, there is a poem of a hundred lines, called *Pugna Porcorum, per Publium Porcium, Poetam*, in which all the words begin with a p. Subjoined are a few lines of this curious effusion:—

"Propterea properans Proconsul, poplite prono,
Præcipitem Plebem, pro patrum paco poposcit.
Persta paulisper, pubes preclosa! precamur.
Pona profectum parvum pugne peragende.
Plures plorabant, postquam preclosa premetur
Prælatura patrum, procelli percutientur
Passim, posteaquam pingues porci periero."

Whatever beauty may lie in alliteration, it is to be found largely in the proverbial expressions, and common sayings of all countries; thus, in our own, we frequently couple "hearts and hands," "hearths and homes," "life and limb," "great and good." The last instance we give is one picked up in a provincial newspaper, containing an account of a local *fête*, and not only the words, but each syllable in the line begins with the same letter:

"Let lovely lilies line Lee's lonely lane."

In contrast with the alliterative style, others have exercised their ingenuity in reversing the process, and made their lines all end with a particular letter, as in the poem entitled the *Moral Proverbs of Christiana of Pisa*, of which every line almost has been made, by its noble author, Earl Rivers, to end with the letter e.

Without commenting further upon various kinds of literary frivolities, we may conclude with a notice of one which, we trust, is unique, for nothing ever approaching it in absurdity or inutility has come under our notice—or that of anybody else, it is to be hoped, as it might fairly be taken as an evidence that something was decidedly wrong with the mental condition of any person who might throw away his time and labour upon so frivolous an object. The case referred to was that of an unfortunate genius, who had discovered that there were 33,535 ways of spelling the word *scissors*! Imagine any sane person sitting down and laboriously following out the idea of writing any word, and

this word especially, 33,535 times. Imagine the frequent revisals necessary to ascertain the certainty of non-repetition—reminding one forcibly of the labours of Sisyphus, always pushing the stone up the hill, and then having immediately to go back and repeat the process when it had rolled down again. Yet this was actually done—done in a neat and handsome manuscript volume, containing three hundred pages of three columns each. The most patient man that ever lived would have been beaten in a trial of this nature—the crank were nothing to this.

BIRDS OF PREY.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "LADY AUDLEY'S SECRET," &c.

(Continued from page 343.)

Book the Sixth.

THE MISTRESS OF THE HAYGARTH.

After we had talked for a long time, Miss Haliday suddenly proposed that I should read to her.

"Dianna once told me that you read very beautifully," said this flatterer; "and I should so like to hear you read—poetry, of course. You will find plenty of poems in that old bookcase—Cowper, and Bloomfield, and Pope. Now I am sure that Pope is just the kind of poet whose verses you would read magnificently. Shall we explore the bookcase together?"

Now if there is any manner of beguiling an idle afternoon which seems to me most delightful, it is by the exploration of old bookcases; and when that delight can be shared by the woman one fondly loves, the pleasure thereof must be of course multiplied to an indefinite amount.

So Charlotte and I set to work immediately to ransack the lower shelves of the old-fashioned mahogany bookcase, which contained the entire library of the Mercer household.

I am bound to admit that we did not light upon many volumes of thrilling interest. The verses of Cowper have always appeared to me to have only one fault—there are too many of them. One shrinks appalled from that thick closely-printed volume of morality cut into lengths of ten feet; and, beyond the few well-worn quotations in daily use, I am fain to confess that I am almost a stranger to the bard of Olney.

Half a dozen odd volumes of the *Gentleman's Magazine*, three or four of the *Annual Register*, a neatly-bound edition of *Clarissa Harlowe* and *Sir Charles Grandison* in twelve volumes, *Law's Holy Cull to a Serious Life*, *Paradise Lost*, *Joseph Andrews*, *Herrn's Meditations*, and *Gulliver's Travels*, formed the varied contents of the principal shelves. Above, there were shabbily-bound volumes and unbound pamphlets. Below, there were folios, the tops whereof were thickly covered with the dust of ages, having escaped the care of the handmaidens even in that neatly-appointed household.

I knelt down to examine these.

"You'll be covered with dust if you touch them," cried Charlotte. "I was once curious enough to examine them, but the result was very disappointing."

"And yet they look so delightfully mysterious," I said. "This one, for instance?"

"That is an old history of London, with curious plates and maps; rather interesting if one has nothing more amusing to read. But the perennial supply of novels from Mudie's spoils one for that kind of book."

"If ever I come to Newhall again, I shall dip into the old history. One is never tired of dead and gone London. But after Mr. Knight's delightful book any old history must seem very poor. What is my burly friend here?"

"O, a dreadful veterinary-surgeons encyclopaedia—*The Farmer's Friend* I think it is called; all about the ailments of animals."

"And the next?"

"The next is an odd volume of the *Penny Magazine*. Dear aunt Dorothy is rich in odd volumes."

"And the next,—my bulky friend number two,—with a cracked leather back and a general tendency to decay?"

"O, that is the Meynell Bible."

THE MEYNELL BIBLE! A hot perspiration broke out upon my face as I knelt at Charlotte Halliday's feet, with my hand resting lightly on the top of the book.

"The Meynell Bible!" I repeated; and my voice was faintly tremulous, in spite of the effort I made to control myself. "What do you mean by the Meynell Bible?"

"I mean the old family Bible that belonged to my grandmamma. It was her father's Bible, you know; and of course he was my great-grandfather—Christian Meynell. Why, how you stare at me, Valentine! Is there anything so wonderful in my having had a great-grandfather?"

"No, darling; but the fact is that I—"

In another moment I should have told her the entire truth; but I remembered just in time that I had pledged myself to profound secrecy with regard to the nature and progress of my investigation, and I had yet to learn whether that pledge did or did not involve the observance of secrecy even with those most interested in my researches. Pending further communication with Sheldon, I was certainly bound to be silent.

"I have a kind of interest in the name of Meynell," I said, "for I was once engaged in a business matter with people of that name."

And having thus hoodwinked my beloved with a bounce, I proceeded to extract the Bible from its shelf. The book was so tightly wedged into its place, that to remove it was like drawing a tooth. It was a noble-looking old volume, blue with the mould of ages, and redolent of a chill dampness like the atmosphere of a tomb.

"I should so like to examine the old book when the candles come in," I said.

Fortunately for the maintenance of my secret, the darkness was closing in upon us when I discovered the volume, and the room was only fitfully illuminated by the flame that brightened and faded every minute.

I carried the book to a side-table, and Charlotte and I resumed our talk until the candles came, and close behind them uncle Joe. I fear I must have seemed a very inattentive lover during that brief interval, for I could not concentrate my thoughts upon the subject of our discourse. My mind would wander to the strange discovery that I had just made, and I could not refrain from asking myself whether by any extraordinary chance my own dear love should be the rightful claimant to John Haygarth's hoarded wealth.

I hoped that it might not be so. I hoped that my darling might be penniless rather than the heir to wealth, which, in all likelihood, would create an obstacle strong enough to cover us eternally. I longed to question her about her family but could not as yet trust myself to broach the subject. And while I doubted and hesitated, honest blustering uncle Joe burst into the room, and aunt Dorothy awoke, and was unutterably surprised to find she had slept so long.

After this came tea; and as I sat opposite my dearest girl, I could not choose but remember that gray-eyed Molly, whose miniature had been found in the tulip-wood bureau, and in whose bright face I had seen the likeness of Philip Sheldon's beautiful stepdaughter. And Mr. Sheldon's lovely stepdaughter was the lineal descendant of this very Molly. Strange mystery of transmitted resemblances! Here was the sweet face that had bewitched honest, simple-minded Matthew Haygarth reproduced after the lapse of a century.

My Charlotte was descended from a poor little player girl who had smiled upon the roysterous populace at Bartholomew Fair. Some few drops of Bohemian blood mingled with the pure life-stream in her veins. It pleased me to think of this; but I derived no pleasure from the idea that Charlotte might possibly be the claimant of a great fortune.

"She may have cousins who would stand before her," I said to myself; and there was some comfort in the thought.

After tea I asked permission to inspect the old family Bible, much to the astonishment of uncle

Joe, who had no sympathy with antiquarian tastes, and marvelled that I should take any interest in so mouldy a volume. I told him, with perfect truth, that such things had always more or less interest for me; and then I withdrew to my little table, where I was provided with a special pair of candles.

"You'll find the births and deaths of all poor Molly's ancestors on the first leaf," said uncle Joe, "Old Christian Meynell was a rare one for jotting down such things; but the ink has gone so pale that it's about as much as you'll do to make sense of it, I'll lay."

Charlotte looked over my shoulder as I examined the fly-leaf of the family Bible. Even with this incentive to distraction I contrived to be tolerably business-like; and this is the record which I found on the faded page:

"Samuel Matthew Meynell, son of Christian and Sarah Meynell, b. March 9, 1796, baptised at St. Giles's, Cripplegate, in this city.

"Susan Meynell, daughter of Christian and Sarah Meynell, b. June 29, 1798, also baptised in the same church.

"Charlotte Meynell, second daughter of the above Christian and Sarah, b. October 3, 1800, baptised at the above-mentioned church of St. Giles, London."

Below these entries, in blacker ink and in a different handwriting—a bold, business-like, masculine calligraphy—came the following:

"Charlotte Meynell, married to James Halliday in the parish church of Barngrave, Yorks. April 15, 1819."

Below this there was an entry in a woman's penmanship—Susan, the beloved sister of C.H., died in London, July 1, 1835.

"Judge not, that ye be not judged.

"I came to call sinners, and not the righteous, to repentance."

This record seemed to hint vaguely at some sad story: "Susan, the beloved sister;" no precise date of the death—no surname! And then those two deprecating sentences, which seemed to plead for the dead.

I had been led to understand that Christian Meynell's daughters had both died in Yorkshire—one married, the other unmarried.

The last record in the book was the decease of James Halliday, my dear girl's grandfather.

After pondering long over the strangely-worded entry of Susan Meynell's death, I reflected that, with the aid of those mysterious powers Hook and Crook, I must contrive to possess myself of an exact copy of this leaf from a family history, if not of the original document. Again my duty to my Sheldon impelled me to be false to all my new-born instincts and boldly give utterance to another bounce.

"I am very much interested in a country history now preparing for the press," I said to my honoured uncle, who was engaged in a hand at cribbage with his wife; "and I really think this old leaf from a family Bible would make a very interesting page in that work."

I blushed for myself as I felt how shamefully I was imposing upon my newly-found kinsman's credulity. With scarcely anyone but uncle Joe could I have dared to employ so shallow an artifice.

"Would it really, now?" said that confiding innocent. "Well, I suppose old papers, and letters, and such like, are uncommonly interesting to some folks. I can't say I care much about 'em myself."

"Would you have any objection to my taking a copy of these entries?" I asked.

"My word, no, lad; not I. Take half a dozen copies, and welcome, if they can be of any use to you or other people. That's not much to ask for."

I thanked my simple host, and determined to write to a stationer at Hull for some tracing-paper by the first post next morning. There was some happiness at least in having found this unlooked-for end to my researches. I had a good excuse for remaining longer near Charlotte Halliday.

"It's only for my poor Mary's sake I set any value on that old volume," the farmer said presently, in a meditative tone. "You see the names there are the names of her relations, not

mine; and this place and all in it was hers. Dorothy and I are only interlopers, as you may say, at the best, though I brought my fortune to the old farm, and Dorothy brought her fortune, and between us we've made Newhall a much better place than it was in old James Halliday's time. But there's something sad in the thought that none of those that were born on the land have left chick or child to inherit it."

Uncle Joseph fell for a while into a pensive reverie, and I thought of that other inheritance, well nigh fifty times the value of Newhall farm, which is now waiting for a claimant. And again I asked myself, Could it be possible that this sweet girl, whose changeful face had saddened with those old memories, whose innocent heart knew not one sordid desire—could it be indeed she whose fair hand was to wrest the Haygarthian gold from the grip of Crown lawyers?

The sight of the old Bible seemed to have revived Mr. Mercer's memory of his first wife with unwonted freshness.

"She was a sweet young creature," he said; "the living picture of our Lottie, and sometimes I fancy it must have been that which made me take to Lottie, when she was a little one. I used to see my first wife's eyes looking up at me out of Lottie's eyes. I told Tom it was a comfort to me to have the little lass with me, and that's how they let her come over so often from Hyley. Poor old Tom used to bring her over in his Whitechapel cart, and leave her behind him for a week or so at a stretch. And then, when my Dorothy yonder took pity upon a poor lonely widower, she made as much of the little girl as if she'd been her own and more perhaps; for not having any children of her own, she thought them such out-of-the-way creatures, that you couldn't coddle them and pet them too much. There's a little baby lies buried in Barngrave churchyard with Tom Halliday's sister that would have been a noble young man, sitting where you're sitting, Mr. Hawkehurst, and looking at me as bright as you're looking, perhaps, if the Lord's will hadn't been otherwise. We've all our troubles, you see, and that was mine; and if it hadn't been for Dorothy, life would not have been worth much for me after that time—but my Dorothy is all manner of blessings rolled up in one."

The farmer looked fondly at his second wife as he said this, and she blushed and smiled upon him with responsive tenderness. I fancy a woman's blushes and smiles wear longer in these calm solitudes than amid the tumult and clamour of a great city.

Finding my host inclined to dwell upon the past, I ventured to hazard an indirect endeavour to obtain some information respecting that entry in the Bible which had excited my curiosity.

"Miss Susan Meynell died unmarried, I believe?" I said. "I see her death recorded here, but she is described by her christian name only."

"Ah, very like," replied Mr. Mercer, with an air of indifference, which I perceived to be assumed. "Yes, my poor Molly's aunt Susan died unmarried."

"And in London? I had been given to understand that she died in Yorkshire."

I blushed for my own impertinence as I pressed this inquiry. What right had I to be given to understand anything about these honest Meynells? I saw poor uncle Joe's disconcerted face, and I felt that the hunter of an heir-at-law is apt to become a very obnoxious creature.

"Susan Meynell died in London—the poor lass died in London," replied Joseph Mercer gravely, "and now we'll drop that subject, if you please, my lad. It isn't a pleasant one."

After this I could no longer doubt that there was some painful story involved in those two deprecating sentences of the gospel.

It was some time before uncle Joe was quite his own jovial and rather noisy self again, and on this evening we had no whist. I bade my friends good-night a little earlier than usual, and departed, after having obtained permission to take a tracing of the fly-leaf as soon as possible.

On this night the starlit sky and lonesome moor seemed to have lost their soothing power. There was a new fever in my mind. The simple

plan of the future which I had mapped out for myself was suddenly shattered. The Charlotte of to-night—heiress-at-law to an enormous fortune—ward in Chancery—claimant against the Crown—was a very different person from the simple maid “whom there were none”—or only a dotting simpleton in the person of the present writer—“to praise, and very few to love.”

The night before last I had hoped so much; to-night hope had forsaken me. It seemed as if a Titan's hand had dug a great pit between me and the woman I loved—a pit as deep as the grave.

Philip Sheldon might have consented to give me his step-daughter unpossessed of a sixpence; but would he give me his step-daughter with a hundred thousand pounds for her fortune? Alas no; I know the Sheldonian intellect too well to be fooled by any hope so wild and baseless. The one bright dream of my misused life faded from me in the hour in which I discovered my dearest girl's claim to the Haygarthian inheritance.

But I am not going to throw up the sponge before the fight is over. Time enough to die when I am lying face downward in the ensanguined mire, and feel the hosts of the foe man trampling above my shattered carcass. I will live in the light of my Charlotte's smiles while I can—and for the rest—“*Il ne faut pas dire, fontaine, je ne boirai pas de ton eau.*” There is no cup so bitter that a man dare say, I will not drain it to the very dregs. “What must be, shall be—that's a certain text;” and in the mean time *carpe diem*. I am all a Bohemian again.

Nov. 5th. After a day's delay I have obtained my tracing-paper, and made two tracings of the entries in the Meynell Bible. How intercourse with the Sheldonian race inclines one to the duplication of documents! I consider the copying-press of modern civilisation the supreme incarnation of man's distrust of his fellow-men.

I spent this afternoon and evening with my dear love—my last evening in Yorkshire. To-morrow I shall see my Sheldon, and inform him of the very strange termination which has come to my researches. Will he communicate at once with his brother? Will he release me from my oath of secrecy? There is nothing of the masonic secretiveness in my organisation, and I am very weary of the seal that has been set upon my unwary lips. Will Charlotte be told that she is the reverend intestate's next of kin? These are questions which I ask myself as I sit in the stillness of my room at the Magnic, scribbling this wretched diary of mine, while the church-clock booms three solemn strokes in the distance.

O, why did not the reverend intestate marry his housekeeper, and make a will, like other honest citizens, and leave my Charlotte to walk the obscure byways of honest poverty with me? I do believe that I could have been honest; I do believe that I could have been brave and true and steadfast for her dear sake. But it is the office of man to propose, while the Unseen disposes. Perhaps such a youth as mine admits of no redemption. I have written circulars for Horatio Paget. I have been the willing remorseless tool of a man who never eats his dinner without inflicting a wrong upon his fellow-creatures. Can a few moments of maudlin sentimentality, a vague yearning for something brighter and better, a brief impulse towards honesty inspired by a woman's innocent eyes—can so little virtue in the present atone for so much guilt in the past? Alas! I fear not.

I had one last brief *tête-à-tête* with my dear girl while I took the tracing from the old Bible. She sat watching me, and distracting me more or less while I worked; and despite the shadow of doubt that had fallen upon me, I could not be otherwise than happy in her sweet company.

When I came to the record of Susan Meynell's death, my Charlotte's manner changed all at once from her accustomed jocoseness to a pensive gravity.

“I was very sorry you spoke of Susan Meynell to uncle Joseph,” she said thoughtfully.

“But why sorry, my dear?”

I had some vague notions as to the cause of this sorrow; but the instincts of the chase impelled me to press the subject. Was I not

bound to know every secret in the lives of Matthew Haygarth's descendants?

“There is a very sad story connected with my aunt Susan—she was my great-aunt, you know,” said Charlotte, with a grave earnest face. “She went away from home, and there was great sorrow. I cannot talk of the story even to you, Valentine, for there seems something sacred in these painful family secrets. My poor aunt Susan left all her friends, and died many years afterwards in London.”

“She was known to have died unmarried?” I asked. This would be an important question from George Sheldon's point of sight.

“Yes,” Charlotte replied, blushing crimson. That blush told me a great deal.

“There was some one concerned in this poor lady's sorrow,” I said; “some one to blame for all her unhappiness.”

“There was.”

“Some person whom she loved and trusted, perhaps?”

“Whom she loved and trusted only too well. O, Valentine, must not that be terrible? To confide with all your heart in the person you love, and to find him base and cruel? If my poor aunt had not believed Montagu Kingdon to be true and honourable, she would have trusted her friends a little, instead of trusting so entirely in him. O, Valentine, what am I telling you? I cannot bear to cast a shadow on the dead.”

“My dear love, do you think I cannot pity this injured lady? Do you think I am likely to play the Pharisee, and be eager to bespatter the grave of this poor sufferer? I can almost guess the story which you shrink from telling me—it is one of those sad histories so often acted, so often told. Your aunt loved a person called Montagu Kingdon—her superior in station, perhaps?”

I looked at Charlotte as I said this, and her face told me that I had guessed rightly.

“This Montagu Kingdon admired and loved her,” I said. “He seemed eager to make her wife, but no doubt imposed secrecy as to his intentions. She accepted his word as that of a true-hearted lover and a gentleman, and in the end had bitter reason to repent her confidence. That is an outline of the story, it is not, Charlotte?”

“I am sure that it was so. I am sure that when she left Newhall she went away to be married,” cried Charlotte eagerly; “I have seen a letter that proves it—to me, at least. And yet I have heard even mamma speak harshly of her—so long dead and gone off the face of this earth—as if she had deliberately chosen the sad fate which came to her.”

“Is it not possible that Mr. Kingdon did marry Miss Meynell, after all?”

“No,” replied Charlotte very sadly; “there is no hope of that. I have seen a letter written by my poor aunt years afterwards, a letter that tells much of the cruel truth; and I have heard that Mr. Kingdon come back to Yorkshire and married a rich lady during my aunt's lifetime.”

“I should like to see that letter,” I said involuntarily.

“Why, Valentine?” asked my darling, looking at me with sorrowful, wondering eyes. “To me it seems so painful to talk of these things: it is like reopening an old wound.”

“But if the interests of other people require—” I began, in a very blundering manner.

“Whose interest can be served by my showing you my poor aunt's letter? It would seem like an act of dishonour to the dead.”

What could I say after this—bound hand and foot as I am by my promise to Sheldon?

After a long talk with my sweet one, I borrowed uncle's Joe's dogcart, and spun across to Barngrave, where I found the little church beneath whose gray old roof Charlotte Meynell plighted her troth to James Halliday. I took a copy of all entries in the register concerning Mrs. Meynell Halliday and her children, and then went back to Newhall to restore the dogcart, and to take my last Yorkshire tea at the hospitable old farm-house.

To-morrow I am off to Barlingsford, fifteen miles from this village, to take more copies of

registries concerning my sweet young heiress—the registries of her father's marriage and her own birth. After that I think my case will be tolerably complete, and I can present myself to Sheldon in the guise of a conqueror.

It is not a great conquest to have made? Is it not almost an act of chivalry for these prosaic days to go forth into the world as a private inquirer and win a hundred thousands pounds for the lady of one's love? And yet I wish anyone rather than my Charlotte were the lineal descendant of Matthew Haygarth.

Nov. 10th. Here I am in London once more, with my Sheldon in ecstasies, and our affairs progressing marvellously well, as he informs me; but with that ponderous slowness peculiar to all mortal affairs in which the authorities of the realm are in any way concerned.

My work is finished. Hawkehurst the genealogist and antiquarian sinks into Hawkehurst the private individual. I have no more to do but to mind my own business, and await the fruition of time in the shape of my reward.

Can I accept three thousand pounds for giving my dearest her birth-right? Can I take payment for a service done to her? Surely not: and on the other hand can I continue to woo my sweet one, conscious that she is the rightful claimant to a great estate? Can I take advantage of her ignorance, and may it not be said that I traded on my secret knowledge?

HOW VOGEL VON FALCKENSTEIN BECAME A SOLDIER.

IT may be remembered that Vogel von Falckenstein was at the head of that division of the Prussian army which acted on the Main against the Bavarians and Confederate troops during the late war, and was thus called the “Main armée.” The following story, given from his own words, will help to show what might also be proved from many other instances, viz., that the successes of the Prussians were owing less to any special preparation on their part, than to a thorough devotion to their calling in the officers, and an untiring industry in fitting themselves for its practical work. He says:—

I passed the whole of my early life in the belief that I was destined for a priest. The idea took my fancy excessively, and it never occurred to me for a moment that at some future day I should cause my poor mother a great deal of grief and anxiety by breaking free from this plan of my own accord.

Our family is a very old one, but at the beginning of the present century was sadly reduced in circumstances. My father had been major in the Prussian army, and as such, assisted at the siege of Gosele, soon after which he died, leaving my mother almost penniless. She therefore looked upon it as a marvellous piece of good-fortune when my uncle, the Archbishop of Breslau, offered to provide for me on condition that I should enter the Church.

In Germany, Roman Catholic noblemen so seldom take holy orders that with my own old name and my uncle's protection, I had every prospect of a brilliant career, and my mother cannot be blamed for having allowed this thought so completely to possess her mind, that she afterwards used every endeavour to persuade, and even compel me to persevere in it. But surely seldom had a son weightier grounds for disobedience to his mother.

A feverish thrill was running through the land: men said that Germany was to be German once more; that our king had flung the gauntlet to the foreign conqueror; that from every province old and young were crowding round his standard—that he himself had called his people, one and all, to arms. It was as if a whirlwind had seized me in the midst of my quiet studies—in one day all former plans vanished; my relations entreated, besought, and threatened—all was in vain. The Prussian and the Falckenstein awoke within me, and in opposition to my weeping mother arose the remembrance of my dead father; he, while only major, had gained the order *pour le mérite*, and his memory

bade me do my duty to my fatherland. Then came a hard struggle. My mother, backed by the family, positively forbade me to carry out my wish; and I, on that very day, gave in my name as a volunteer. I was just sixteen. It seemed, however, as if my family were right. I was rejected on the ground of bodily weakness. I tried another regiment with the same result; a third; and at last the Foot-guards themselves. The colonel, after listening quietly to my petition, asked whether I had "brought the others."

"What others?" said I, in surprise.

"Why, the men to carry your gun and knapsack, for you certainly can't do that yourself."

I turned as red as fire, ran off like a madman, and, child as I was, told the whole story to my mother.

The truth was that no regiment could have been expected to admit me. I was unusually weak for my age, my chest was narrow, and people thought I must be consumptive; indeed, one physician told me so point-blank. This brought me to despair; I had no rest day or night, and the triumphant feeling of my relations made the matter harder to bear. Then, one sleepless night, I remembered that, at my father's funeral, one of his friends, a Colonel von Klux, had told my mother to rely on his help if she should ever wish to place her son in the Cadet College, a promise which, of course, had never been chimed, since I was destined for a seminarist. In a moment my mind was made up, and the next morning I started, found the colonel, told him my decided resolution to go into the army, and at the same time all the hindrances which lay in my path, and begged him in my father's name to help me. Now, at last, I had succeeded in finding some one who quite understood my feelings in the matter, and he promised me all the assistance in his power. I went home in triumph, and, as usual, told my mother everything. She put on her walking-dress at once and left the house, returned in an hour's time and reported that she had seen the colonel herself, and that he had said it was utterly impossible to make a soldier of me, for I had not as much strength as a girl of twelve, but that he had not liked to tell me this because I seemed so excited about it. Here was a petrifying piece of news! Of course I wanted to rush off at once and ask what he had meant by thus deceiving me; but this my mother would on no account allow. She went out again, and to make my obedience sure, locked the outer door of our apartments. There was I shut up and chafing like a wild beast in its den, raging against myself and my miserable fate, but especially against the colonel for having cheated me so shamefully.

Quite by chance I went into the kitchen, and there saw, as I stood looking down into the courtyard, that one of the windows in the public staircase had been left open. A daring idea came into my mind. I took a long ironing board which stood in the kitchen and pushed it out from one window to the other. Oh, joy! it just reached across. In another moment I was on my bridge; my head swam; I could think of nothing but the pavement underneath me, and the chance of falling; however, there was no choice, on I was obliged to go, and did go, and at last was free. I rushed off and presented myself boldly before the colonel. He laughed at me for having been so easily hoaxed by my mother (who was probably acting under the advice of the family), but said that, on the contrary, he had told her I should become a sturdy soldier some day, if the French would only give us time. "And now," he went on, "to put an end to all these lamentations, here are twenty-five thalers, buy your equipments and appear with the battalion at Jauer," naming a particular day.

I will not stay to describe all the scenes which took place at home before I left. It was a great trouble to my poor mother. And that was not all; when I reached the battalion the captain of the company to which I was assigned looked at me and cried, "Can't make any use of you; you may go home. I want men, not children." This was another fatal blow; my energy and my invention were now exhausted, and there seemed

only one chance left, viz., to wait (as a friend advised me) for the colonel's arrival, and trust to his speaking with the captain in my favour.

Fortunately he came the next day, and the battalion had to desfile before him at once. Contrary to the captain's orders I stepped into the ranks, but made myself as small as possible to escape his notice.

The colonel rode up, halted in front of our line, and called out in a tone which I have never forgotten, "Where is the volunteer, Von Falckenstein?"

"Here, colonel," I answered, stepping out of the ranks and going up to the captain, who could scarcely believe his eyes.

"Gentlemen," said the colonel, turning to the officers, "I must beg you to be considerate with this young man while on march. He is young, and not strong; but his father was a brave officer, and he himself has given up everything to fight for his king. You will have to take some pains with him; but when we catch sight of the enemy he will do his duty like a man; I will answer for that."

So now, after all, I was really a soldier, and the captain who had sent me off yesterday was the first to offer me his hand and wish me success. The result, however, proved that the officers who had refused to let me serve in their regiments had not been mistaken. Though I exerted an almost unnatural strength of will, I should certainly have broken down on those long, weary marches, if the officers had not come to my help. One day one of them, a Herr von Kleist, sent for me. "Falckenstein," said he, "this won't do; you are killing yourself with that confounded knapsack. I would let you put it on the baggage-waggon with pleasure, but that the men would be sure to laugh at you; so, look here, take your things out, put them with mine, and we'll stuff the knapsack with straw; that will set the matter right every way."

No sooner said than done.

"By the bye, though," said Herr von Kleist, the next morning, as he saw me marching along like a veteran, "this permission can only last till the next engagement. Then you must win your epaulettes, and get rid of your knapsack that way."

These words haunted me day and night. I really believe I would rather have died at once than feel my breast-bone torn asunder again by that awful knapsack. And so it was that, at the close of the very first action in which our troops were engaged, I was asked to take my choice between the rank of officer and the Iron Cross. All my bravery must be attributed to the dreaded knapsack, for Herr von Kleist had seemed to think the time of leave getting too long, and the fearful alternative left me no peace. I must confess it was a great temptation to think of wearing the much-sought-for Iron Cross at seventeen, but still I chose the epaulettes, and comforted myself by thinking that the war was not over yet, and the Iron Cross could still be won. At Montmirail, soon after, I did win it. I was the only officer in the battalion uninjured. The rest were all killed or wounded. I had to command the battalion at eighteen, and the same evening the Iron Cross became mine.

Of the next few years of my life I have no agreeable recollection; a thorough military education was harder to gain than the Iron Cross, but I gave my whole heart to the work, and in time became a tolerable lieutenant. During the long and tedious years of peace which followed I was fortunately appointed to the topographical bureau, an appointment which has laid the foundation of a military career for many beside myself. Here I learnt drawing. But, like my colleague Moltke, I had nothing but my lieutenant's pay, and I venture to think that my financial operations were even more brilliant than his, for I managed not only to obtain lessons in painting and modern languages, but to keep a horse, a thing which, to this day, I am proud of. My secret was work and economy; I was bent on making a career which, in time of peace, without fortune or friends, was difficult, if not impossible; I determined, therefore, to perfect myself in some one branch of my calling, and pursue that meanwhile as a secondary occupa-

tion. Drawing was my greatest pleasure; I undertook to survey for maps, and as these were afterwards engraved, I not only furthered my topographical knowledge, but earned a sum sufficient to help out my pay. Some years passed in this manner, till, by the time the desired captain's epaulettes appeared, I not only was well up in my own profession, but, if necessary, could have earned my bread by painting and drawing. Promotion came slowly at first, but as the years went on its steps quickened, and at last I reached the rank of colonel, and was attached to General Wrangel's staff.

After the war in Schleswig, where I held the post of chief to the general staff, my career seemed at an end, and I was content, for I had succeeded in gaining the highest wish of my whole life. The order *pour le mérité* that my father had worn hung round my own neck, and I desired nothing more than to spend the evening of my life quietly in my own family. But, far from this! in the last few months I have lived to see more than in my whole previous life.

Everything in the army of the Main was extemporised, even its commander; and this is the best answer to those who say we had been long preparing for war with South Germany. A prepared Prussian army looks, I must say, rather different from the one of which I had then to take the command. Everything necessary to an army in the field was wanting there, but what was *not* wanting was a courage in the men, a devotion and intelligence in the officers, and a sagacity and energy in the leaders commanding immediately under me, such as I had not expected to find.

We forced ourselves, like a wedge, between the two hostile armies, and pressed on both sides till they were rent asunder. I am at a loss to account for the weakness of the enemy; their soldiers fought well; the lists of killed and wounded prove that the officers did their duty; their men are, without question, better shots than our own; they had splendid cavalry, good arms, a perfect knowledge of the ground, and the great advantage of always being able to act on the defensive on ground which offers great difficulties to an attacking force. I can only come to the conclusion that their weakness must have lain in a want of unity and energy among their leaders, who, besides, had evidently no correct idea of the organisation or powers of the Prussian army. Yet even this will not entirely account for their unprecedented weakness. In my opinion, the real ground must be sought for in their entire organisation. I shall not live to see the day, but, when once the German armies are all organised on the pattern of our own, let come who may we can defy the world.

At Aschaffenburg we had the army of the empire against us. Ah! if I could only lead those brave fellows and my own Westphalians together against a foreign enemy, why then we should see wonders! But these are castles in the air for an old man who will be seventy next January.

ELEANOR GROVE.

LA FLEUR DE RUEL.

CHAPTER I.

"SO we have failed, altogether failed, Monsieur de Brassy?"

"Ma foi! yes, miserably. We could not tell he would sleep in the palace. We were all ready; he also was ready, as Monsieur the Duc de Beaufort knows by this time."

"You are as ready as before to distinguish yourself, I suppose, and earn those golden honours that France would bestow upon the man who had the misfortune to be present at the death of M. le Cardinal?"

"I am very humble, but I think the office of 'rat-catcher to her majesty' would suit me."

"Or that of 'rat-killer,' if the rat's name began with an M—?"

"Truly, I should kill the rat if I caught it; rats that are not killed when you catch them are apt to bite very seriously when they get loose."

"There are many ways of killing rats I have heard, M. de Brassy?"

"Yes, M. de Campion; in the country they hunt them with little dogs and shoot them for sport, also they employ ferrets to kill them in their burrows."

"And in towns, M. de Brassy? how do they kill rats in towns?"

"Well, monsieur, you see town rats are very greedy, and court rats are positively gluttons."

"Well; about town rats?"

"Why, they generally die from eating something that disagrees with them."

"And you think, M. de Brassy, that a certain gluttonous court rat that stores up golden corn might eat something that disagreed with him?"

"Truly he might, at all events if it were set before him in such a manner as not to excite suspicion."

"But how, if your court rat was very suspicious—a very old, cautious rat?"

"Then it would be more difficult, but not even then impossible."

"Look you, M. de Brassy, you are from Picardy, and new to Paris; I will tell you something of this court rat."

"That is, his eminence, M. le Cardinal Mazarin."

"Right—his eminence. Do you know, M. de Brassy, that from the time of the late king's death to the present, scarcely a day has passed but a certain lady, of whom you know, has planned and plotted—"

"As Madame la Duchesse de Chevreuse only can plot, I suppose?"

"M. de Brassy! as I said, you are from Picardy. In Paris it is thought dangerous to mention the names of those we talk about. As I was saying, not a day but has had its plot and its failure. The fidelity of his servants has been tested again and again; he has sat at table with the most deadly poisons in his favourite dishes, and has escaped by refusing them. He changes his cooks often; the last died suddenly."

"So I heard."

"I'll tell you why. We—our party that is—had bribed the man; he found it out, but showed no sign of suspicion, and sat down to his dinner, and this was what took place. I had it from one of his own people. His eminence sent for the cook."

"How long have you been in my service?" said his eminence.

"Two months to-morrow, your eminence."

"Good, my friend. Are you satisfied with your place? You have no desire to change?"

"None whatever, your eminence."

"Ah! I am glad that it is so. I like to have men of genius in my service and attached to me, and you, Monsieur—?"

"Coques, your eminence."

"You, Monsieur Coques, are a man of genius. I honour genius. I will to-day show my appreciation of your services by an invitation to dine with me. Sit down, Monsieur Coques, sit down."

"The man tried to decline; excused himself on the score of dress, his humble origin; the honour was too much for him. It was useless; he was obliged to sit down."

"You will, I'm sure, excuse me Monsieur Coques," said his eminence; "but I have made a vow to taste nothing but some eggs and some water for twenty-four hours, and my time does not expire until this evening at midnight; therefore, you will honour me by taking to yourself that dish of lamb, which looks tempting enough to force me from my vow if I were not a cardinal. Also you will excuse me, I'm sure, Monsieur Coques, if I call one of my guards."

"He called one of his guards, and said to him, 'Monsieur de Bazan, you see that chair opposite that dish. If, in half-an-hour, the dish is not empty, fire at whatever is in the chair. Also if, during the half-hour, the chair should appear likely to become vacant, it would perhaps be as well to prevent its becoming so by firing. Do you understand, Monsieur?'"

"The guard was one of those machines of soldiers that his eminence delights in, so you see M. Coques was obliged to accept the invitation, and he dined with his eminence. His own cooking was too rich for him."

"Yes; I heard of it. He died that night. But, at the palace, or elsewhere at his friends' houses?"

"My dear M. de Brassy, his eminence seldom visits, he eats only of the dishes of which his host eats, and invariably retires from the table in less than half-an-hour, after the manner of the ancients, with the difference that they retired to prolong the pleasures of appetite, his eminence to prolong life itself."

"But at the palace?"

"Well, you see, there are those at the palace who might by chance pick up the bait meant for the rat alone; and though France would be grateful to the man by whom she was freed from M. le Cardinal, it is not so clear that she would pardon a mistake that left her queenless or kingless; and the old rat is very cautious, and eats only from the dish of the mistress who seeks his grey fur, and at whose chamber-door he scratches at midnight."

"Then, there is nothing for me to do, M. Campion?"

"Yes; this. The court goes to Ruel to-morrow. His eminence has invited to the palace of the Duchesse d'Aiguillon a certain La Signora Leonora, who is to sing to her majesty. Now, this Signora Leonora is or was, and will be again, a most particular friend of M. le Cardinal, who, though he is a churchman, and has permanently taken the place of Buckingham, is not yet so old as to be insensible to the charms of a sweet voice when heard in solitude and whispers."

"I see; he will meet the signora."

"Yes, but do not mistake: he never goes out except in disguise, and then some guards are following, disguised as peasants or bourgeoisie, or what not, even as women sometimes."

"Then this piece of steel will not prove of much service to me; I had hoped to carve a fortune with it."

"A good weapon, I have no doubt, M. de Brassy, but force is useless now. This is your plan. Follow his eminence wherever, he goes; take this packet of white powder, and whenever, or wherever, he eats or drinks, endeavour to scatter it in the food or mix it in the fluid, for the rest, chance must guide you; and the moment you are certain the powder has been swallowed, stay for nothing, but hasten to me and claim your own reward, for within two hours Mazarin will be dead. Are you agreed?"

"M. de Campion, I am; but I require one thing—a safeguard. On the death of the cardinal, the Duc de Beaufort will then be minister of France, let me then have his signature to this promise and this safeguard for myself."

"It would be very inconvenient if such a paper were found on you by the cardinal's people before he died; I would myself sooner trust to the gratitude of our party to remember their promise."

"Well, M. Campion, I will trust you, who are not a prince yet."

"Do; you shall find that in serving the Duchesse de Chevreuse you have not served the most ungrateful of mistresses."

M. de Brassy had left the room in which this conversation had taken place but a few seconds, when he was recalled by M. de Campion.

"By-the-by, M. de Brassy, excuse me for recalling you, but I wanted to ask you a question. How wide do the mouths of the people of Picardy open?"

"Monsieur?"

"Don't be offended; but I ought to tell you that in Paris we do not open our mouths very wide. A person I know was so incautious as to open his mouth the other day in a public place, wide enough for the name of Madame la Duchesse de Chevreuse to escape through his teeth."

"Yes; and then—"

"Oh! nothing—only—as his body was found in the Seine next day with a dagger wound through the heart from the back, it was supposed he had fallen over one of the bridges."

"And the wound in the back?"

"Ah! that we could not account for, but it was suggested that if his mouth had not been so large, or if his teeth had been longer, he would not have fallen over the bridge perhaps."

"Precisely, M. de Campion, I see—but I shall not fall over the bridge, for my teeth are very long indeed, and, as you see, my mouth is very small."

"Just so, Monsieur, you have in that a great advantage over the gentleman who fell over the bridge. You will of course be at Ruel to-morrow?"

CHAPTER II.

"So the court comes to-day, mother. I wish we lived a little nearer to the town."

"Nonsense, child; are you not satisfied with the good word of all the lads about. Do they not call you the Flower of Ruel?"

"They do now, mother; but they will not to-morrow when they have seen the queen and the ladies."

"Bah! the queen is old, and has only ugly women in her train, for fear the court gallants should make comparisons. There will not be in all the court a handsomer lass than yourself. Ah me! if your father would now but attend to the farm instead of sitting and drinking his own wines and cognac all day, I should indeed be happy, instead of giving you away to that good-for-nothing Guitaut, of the Gardes Colonnelle, I might have had the *maire's* son for my son-in-law."

"I am very glad indeed, my mother, that you will give me to Jules, instead of to that little Mazarinist, the *maire's* son."

"Hush, ma fleur! it is not safe to talk like that; poor folk should know nothing of the court or its parties. You must be like your father's house, free to serve all. But get yourself dressed, for there is a traveller coming down the hill—a soldier, too."

The soldier came in, and was waited on by the host in person. After a few questions as to how things were going on in Paris, the traveller asked, "Is your house full?"

"Full, monsieur! we have no one here; all the rooms are to let."

"No; not all, Jacques," said the wife; "the best room is engaged by the foreign lady."

"Foreign lady! what is her name?"

"La Signora Leonora," said Rose; "I remembered it because I thought I had heard it before."

"I dare say you have, my pretty one," said the soldier; "it is the name of the new Italian nightingale that is to sing in the woods of Ruel to please the queen."

"Well, she has engaged the room over this to be kept for her to meet a gentleman in; her uncle, she said."

"Ah, indeed! I should like to see her uncle, for I think he's an old friend of mine."

"But you are from Picardy, monsieur, if I know anything of France."

"True, mine host; I am from Picardy, but why should I not know La Signora's uncle?"

"You are right, sir; but I understood that he came from Italy with her, and was strange to France."

"It may not be the same; still I think, good host, I should like to see him when he comes without his seeing me."

"That is very easy; any one from the branches of the tree yonder can see into this room quite well."

"I'll try it. When do you expect the lady?"

"This afternoon. She is to meet her uncle here."

"Well if you will get me some dinner in another room, and join me in a flask, I'll stay and see the signora's uncle."

The worthy host of the Rose of Ruel provided the dinner, and joined the soldier of Picardy, over his after-dinner flask.

"I suppose now, M. Jacques, that this is not a bad trade of yours—this keeping of inns and farming together ought to make you a rich man. You have been *maire*, of course?"

"*Maire*, of course! Not at all, good monsieur. I am as poor as a church mouse."

"You do not say as a church rat?"

"Monsieur le Capitaine," said the host, in a whisper; "men do not talk out loud in Ruel just now about rats at all, much less about church rats."

"No? and why not?"

"Because some rats have sharp ears and sharp teeth."

"You do not seem to like the rats?"

"No, indeed; the rats are the farmer's enemies in the country, but it is the town rat that has done me most mischief."

"I do not understand, M. Jacques, how you, a farmer, can be hurt by rats in town?"

"I didn't say the town rats; I said the town rat."

"Bah! That is dangerous indeed; that is another thing; but I do not still understand how."

"You see, M. le Capitaine, I have property in the city, and the new edict of Toisé asks me to ruin myself to pay to the queen a tax on my property in Paris that has been mine and my father's these eighty years. The good king Henry II, little thought that his law would be forgotten for a hundred years, and then renewed at the instigation of a creature of Cardinal Mazarin's to ruin and beggar honest men like myself."

"Oh, I see then! his eminence is your rat that eats your Paris corn, eh?"

"Truly so, and my barn at Paris holds more corn than all my barns here put together."

"And what do you do to the rats that eat the corn in the barns of Ruel?"

"We kill them and trap them and—"

"And you poison them," hissed the soldier into the ear of his host, seeing he hesitated.

"Yes, Monsieur le Capitaine, we poison them, that is to say, the country rats."

"And the town rats also?"

"If I had the chance."

"Good. Let us understand each other. What is your barn in Paris?"

"It brings me in five thousand francs a year."

"Well, if you will help me you shall have a pension for life of ten times that sum."

"Agreed—you shall direct, I will execute."

"About your wife?"

"She will know nothing."

"And the girl?"

"Nothing—she will do whatever she is told, she is only a large child, suspecting nothing. I must go; there are travellers arrived."

The new-comer was a man past the prime of life, with keen, piercing eyes, a grey beard and curled moustache, a soldier evidently by his dress. Speaking with a slightly foreign accent, he asked—

"You have a young lady here?"

"No, monsieur, she came, and is gone on to the palace at Ruel. She said if her uncle came she was to be sent for; I will send on one of the lads for her."

"No, my own servant will go; I will rest."

"Enter, M. le Capitaine," and the landlord, remembering his promise, showed his guest into the room overshadowed by the tree. The soldier and his servant entered.

"Well, Motterville, have you seen anything suspicious?"

"I have, indeed, your eminence."

"Silence, fool; speak louder, and say capitaine."

"I have seen that gentleman we were to have met in Paris on the *quai* near the Palais Royal, that night in September."

"Oh, indeed—which of them?"

"The one from Picardy, my capitaine."

The soldier rose suddenly and opened the door of the room, and finding no one listening, said in a low voice—

"You mean the bravo De Brassy?"

"I do. I thought I knew the horse in the stable, and I managed to see him in the next room."

"The next room!" said the soldier, in alarm. "Are we guarded?"

"There are four, your eminence; two labourers drinking under the trees in front, the carpenter who is putting up the door of the opposite shed, and the supposed woman who is gathering simples in the hedge."

"And you forget to add yourself?"

"I did not forget, for I am going to fetch la Signora Leonora."

"True; tell her to make haste, for I like not the near neighbourhood of this Picardy gentleman, now that, by accursed misfortune, I am without my mail."

The servant mounted and left, and the soldier was left alone.

The soldier in the next room had meanwhile climbed the low tree looking into the room.

He came in by the back of the house, and calling the host, said to him in a voice hoarse with emotion,—

"So that is the uncle of la signora?"

"I suppose so, as he has sent by his servant to fetch her."

"Shall I tell you something?"

"If you will. Anything you like."

"The soldier uncle is the court rat."

"His eminence?"

"Yes, without a doubt."

"Do you know, I caught a rat in a trap the other day, and I stuck a skewer right through him. Now, you wear something like a skewer?"

"That may be; but yours was a very long skewer, and you stood outside the trap and put it in between the wires. If you had had to go into the trap to put a skewer into a rat as big as yourself, with another skewer and a coat of mail under his fur, I think you would not have killed the rat, mine host."

"Very true, M. le Capitaine, I forgot these facts. But if two went into the trap, with two skewers?"

"Do you see those two men drinking some wine out there?"

"I do; and good wine it is for such as they are."

"Such as they!" Those peasants are two of the best dagger men in France. They have pistols under their belts, and can hit the ace at twenty paces. Do you see that man at work at your neighbour's opposite? That is another. His basket contains besides a set of carpenter's tools, a carbine that will kill at one hundred paces certain. That, you see, is four to two. Now look at that woman gathering simples. She seems a large woman."

"She does—almost a man."

"No wonder; it is a man. No less a one than the lieutenant of the cardinal's *gardes*: so you see, though we should enter the room two to one, a single whistle would make us two to five, and those are odds, I fear, M. Jacques. you have not trained for lately."

"What is to be done?"

"This—send your daughter to ask him to have something; the day is warm; he may like her looks—That is our chance."

"I see! the powder—"

"Yes, the powder first—and failing that, the steel."

The girl came in, and asked his eminence what she could serve him with.

"Some wine—some fruit—some wine, girl."

"Of what kind, monsieur?"

"Such as the peasants drink."

"It is not good enough. There is the better kind, that we drink in the house on feast days."

"Bring that, then."

She brought the wine, and placed the jug on the table, then left the room and fetched some fruit. Taking the cup in his hand he poured out the wine and tasted it. At the instant of tasting it he noticed that the mottled shadow of the leaves of the trees that fell on the floor became in part solidified. If the form had any shape, it was that of a man. He was evidently watched; he waited till the girl came in, unconscious that she was watched by both father and mother, but the quick ear of the Cardinal told him that he door had not shut, and he at once sent the girl to shut it, and with the jug in his hand, and once more tasting it, detected the presence of a fine powder, traces of which were apparent, on close inspection, on the rim of the wine jug.

"And this is the wine you drink on festival days?" said the soldier, when the girl returned with some fruit.

"Yes, M. le Capitaine; the other, that our people drink, we call our vintage de Mazarin."

"Why so?"

"Oh, because since the revival of the law for taxing houses in Paris, we have had to put so much more water in it to make more profit."

"Then you do not love the cardinal here?"

"Not at all; my father didn't like him before, and now—"

"Yes, now?"

"He hates him."

"Why?"

"I do not know much—but chiefly because of the tax."

"Is he at home?"

"Yes, that was he you saw, and he has been drinking this same wine in the next room with a soldier like yourself, from Picardy."

"And you? Do you like this Mazarin?"

"I do not know; I have heard he is the good queen's husband, and does not treat her well; and they do say that he takes the money from the poor for himself. That is mean, and I hate mean things, yet I have heard that he is very kind to his people. I know the servant of one of his *garde*."

"You blush my pretty one; is that your lover who is a servant?"

"He says he loves me," said the girl, "but my father and mother say he is not rich enough, though I could be content with little for myself."

"But of this Mazarin—They want to kill him in Paris, I have heard."

"So have we here. But if he would go away to his own country, and leave us French to go alone, they would be content. As it is, even my father said the other day, when he caught a rat in the trap and killed it, that he wished it was the cardinal."

"That was rash of him to say, and you to repeat."

"Oh! as for that, it was a joke; and we never mind what we say to soldiers, for they all hate him too much themselves."

"Well, mademoiselle, what and if I tell you something more about this man, the cardinal?"

"I will hear."

"Let me tell you, then, that I know him—I know that he is the only man who can save France—that he is the only man who can save the queen or king from the rapacity and greed of the great nobles; that in all the court he is the only one who has head enough to carry on the plans that Richelieu began, and that must be carried on if France is to remain a great nation, that his death now would be the ruin of king, queen, and nation. This I know, that though a foreigner, he is more French than the French themselves; though a churchman, more a true soldier than the soldiers; though a subject, he is more to the queen than all her subjects; and, let me tell you, girl, that this Mazarin, whom your father would kill like a rat, is in this house—is here—is now talking to you."

"Good God! is it possible, Monsieur le Capitaine, that you are—"

"I am Cardinal Mazarin, the queen's husband, the destined saviour of France!"

"Great Heaven! I have spoken to you as if you were only a soldier."

"Look, girl, do you see that shadow of a man in the tree?—don't move—That is a bravo hired to assassinate me! Do you see this wine? It is poisoned!"

"No, no! I drew it myself from the cask."

"And never left?"

"Yes, for one minute, for a cloth."

"And in that one minute your father, or the Capitaine, who is now in the tree, put in this white powder you may see hanging round the top—that is a deadly poison."

"You do not believe that I am guilty, Monseigneur?"

"Not for a moment; but poisoned it is. You have heard of Joan of Arc?"

"Oh, yes, often and often. She was once like me, the maid at an inn."

"Yes; you must be like her in something else."

"I should like to be quite like her."

"She died for France, and so must you. Your father and this bravo must believe that I have drunk this poisoned wine; if it goes away as it came in, they will know that their plan has failed, and will kill me at the risk of their own lives. If I, a feeble old man, drink it I shall be dead in less than an hour: therefore, you must drink it, it will take longer to kill you than me; in that time I shall have sent for the queen's

own physician, who may save you. You see you must drink it."

"But I am so young to die so horribly! I have not confessed—"

"Very well, I will die; and with me will die king, queen, and France!" and the cardinal lifted the cup to his lips.

"No, monsieur, no; give me absolution, and I will die for you. Give me the cup."

He gave her the cup and pronounced the absolution over her.

"Is there anything which I can do for you?"

"Yes. Pardon my wretched father and take care of my Jules."

"Your father shall be sent abroad, and I will attach Jules to my own person. Are you ready?" She nodded.

"Let us drink, then, to France."

"For France, then!" said the girl, and drank the cup.

"Now, go. Take these things away; tell them I have drunk the wine, and in less than two hours I will send the physician. Meantime, eat half-a-dozen raw eggs and drink all the milk you can find in the house. Go, and God be with you!"

The girl left the room, and in less than ten minutes he heard the clatter of a horse's hoofs in full gallop towards Paris.

There was an anxious look on the faces of all the court at Ruel that evening when, hour after hour passed, and the minister had not made his appearance. Presently it began to be rumoured about that the cardinal was ill—then that he was dead; then, in a short time, how he died poisoned, and where—near Ruel. M. Voiture, the poet, made some funny verses, of which the poisoning of rats was the principal theme.

At last the whisper reached the ear of majesty itself, and inquiries were made for some persons who could furnish the details. No one knew anything but that it was rumoured at Paris that the cardinal was dead, and it was certain that the party of the Duchesse de Chevreuse was in the highest possible state of triumph. About eleven, as the continued absence of the cardinal gave some ground for the rumour, her majesty impatiently inquired for further information. There was, for an instant a dead silence, as the door opened, to admit M. le Cardinal, who, advancing, said, "I hear your majesty has made inquiries for me."

"The absence of your eminence has been attributed to your death by poison here in Ruel."

"Yes, I heard so, your majesty, in the ante-chamber, but it is not quite true. It is not I that am poisoned, it is only a young woman who was attendant at a cabaret at which I stopped today. The mistake is natural with those who wished it might be me;" and then he told his mistress the story as he thought fit.

"But why make the poor child drink the cup? she at least was innocent by her willingness to drink it," said his questioner.

"Very true," replied his eminence: "but you will see that had I sent out the same quantity of wine that came in they would have known I had taken none, and the plot had failed, and desperate men do desperate deeds. The wine then had to be got rid of; it was unfortunate for her, but I thought I consulted the interests of her majesty and of France by not taking it myself, though I am aware some here hold different opinions."

"Did you send the physician?"

"I did not."

"And, for the love of heaven, why not?"

"Because—because," said the cardinal, "it is possible that a man may be so situated that his gratitude to a beautiful young woman may be inconvenient to him."

Tradition says that there was in the churchyard of Ruel a tomb of white marble, of Italian design, on which, on a certain day in every year, a fresh wreath of immortelles was laid, only ceasing to be placed there in 1661, which was the date of the cardinal's death.

The tomb bore this inscription.

A LA MEMOIRE DE ROSE,
LA FLEUR DE RUEL.
MORTE POUR LA FRANCE.
A.D. 1647.

PASTIMES.

ARITHMOREM.

- 500 and Shake nt (a town of Turkistan)
- 50 " Ojar, ee (a town of Guatemala).
- 1002 " Sh (a river in the north of Asia).
- 12 " Ana (an island of Greece).
- 502 " Nan (an ocean).
- 551 " Ho (a province of India).
- 151 " Natak (an ocean).
- 551 " Amata (an Austrian state).

The initials and finals of the above words name two islands in the Atlantic. W. H. WOOL.

ENIGMA.

When a native of France, I (a paradox rare)
Am composed of six quarters, wiseacres declare
Transported to England if there I should thrive.
I feduced nro my quarters, but still I have five;
Should I to Flanders now transported be,
They again are reduced; I possess now but three.
A strangely formed creature I am, to be sure,
With three, five, or six quarters; but never with four;
Behold me, and see what a comical elf,
What now remains of me just doubles myself:
Behold me, again, and pray don't think me droll,
When I say that I now am the same as my whole.

POETICAL ARITHMOREM.

EMINENT POETS.

A.D. 1667—1567

1. 1000 and No Henry J.
2. 1000 " A neat hut.
3. 251 " Rebel boy.
4. 1000 " Wash that or No.
5. 550 " Roo sent Fanny. B. N. C.

DECAPITATIONS.

1. Whole, I'm a multitude; beheaded, I'm furious; again beheaded, I'm a branch; transposed, I'm to damage; curtailed, I'm a parent; and beheaded, I'm an article.
2. Whole, I'm a book; beheaded, I'm a dish; curtailed and transposed, I'm juice; and twice beheaded, I'm a number.

CHARADES.

1. My 6, 7, 8, is a boy's plaything; my 9, 10, 11, is a pronoun, my 6, 7, 8, is something steeped in liquor; my 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, is an exclamation; my 1, 7, 8, is the top of anything; my 1, 7, 8, 10, is a priest's cloak; my 5, 6, 7, 8, is a point in writing; my 1, 2, 4, 8, is a fragment; my 1, 3, 4, 5, 8, is brittle, my 2, 4, 8, is part of the body, my 3, 4, 5, 10, is to ascend; my 3, 4, 8, 10, is complete, finished; my 3, 4, 8, is to tear; my 2, 4, 6, is a stroke; my 1, 7, is a Latin prefix; my 6, 7, 10, is a part of the foot, my 3, 4, 6, 10, is a solemn act of religion, my 6, 7, 8, 10, is to drink to excess, my 6, 9, 10, is an article, my whole is a Christian name.

2. I am composed of 9 letters.
My 6, 4, 5, is a colour.
My 1, 2, 5, 6, 2, 7, is a bird.
My 9, 8, 9, is to be silent.
My 4, 3, is a French Article.

BERICUS.

DOUBLE ACROSTIC.

He rot prigs vot isn't his'n.
Can't take me with him to pris'n.

1. Diogenes in it did dwell,
For morning bath it answers well.
2. True heart of oak, all honour him,
She held a light while one did swim.
3. Thus maids deceive Duenna's eyes,
Thus walked Haroun Alraschid;
Thus Falstaff when in pago's guise,
His form completely was hid.
4. Plain as a pike-staff, clear as day,
None can mistake if thus you say.
5. I am a lot of little fish,
I make of peas a Lenten dish.

ARITHMETICAL QUESTION.

A reservoir to contain 600,000 gallons of water is to be filled by a pumping apparatus which pumps 1,600 gallons per hour, and it has to give an unceasing supply of 500 gallons per hour to a town. How long will it take to fill the reservoir, the pumps working twelve hours per day. H. F.

ANSWERS TO ARITHMOREM, &c. No. 99.

Arithmorem.—Lord Clyde.—Leicester, Odessa, Richmond, Dnceiper, Cornwall, Limerick, Yarmouth, Denmark, Edinburgh.

Anagrams.—1. Loves, Labour, Lost; 2. Anthony and Cleopatra; 3. The Winter's Tale; 4. Timon of Athens.

Square Words.—1. FIAT 2. BOWL
INKY OBEY
AKIN WEIR
TYNE LYRE

Cross Word Enigma.—Burns.

Enigma.—1. Key; 2. Smoke.

Charade.—1. Sunday; 2. Chairman; 3. Waterloo.

Floral Anagrams.—1. Cicmatis; 2. Daffodil; 3. Anemone.

Arithmetical Question—32 years.

ANSWERS RECEIVED.

Arithmorem.—Bericus, Lily, David H., H. C., Violet, Mona, Geo. B.

Anagrams.—Bericus, David H., Mona, Niagara, A. R. T., E. J., Geo. B.

Square Words.—B. N. C., Geo. B., E. J., A. R. T., Niagara, W. W., X. Y.

Enigmas.—Bericus, B. N. C., E. J., A. R. T., Geo. B., Lily, Mona, W. W., H. H. V.

Charade.—Bericus, Geo. B., E. J., Lily, B. N. C., W. W., Violet, Mona.

Floral Anagrams.—B. N. C., W. W., Mona, Niagara, W. W., Lily, Geo. B.

Arithmetical Questions.—Bericus, B. N. C., Geo. B. Niagara.

MISCELLANEA.

ANOMALY.—That matrimony, when a matter of money, should also be a suggestion of Cupidity.

CAMEL RIDING.—A traveller describes a camel-ride thus:—"Take a music-stool, and, having wound it up as high as it will go, put it in a cart without springs, get on the top, and drive the cart transversely across a ploughed field, and you will then form some notion of the terror and uncertainty you would experience the first time you mounted a camel."

WATERPROOF PACKING PAPER.—The following is a German recipe:—Dissolve 680·4 grammes (about 1·32 lb.) of white soap in a quart of water. In another quart of water dissolve 1·82 oz. of gum arabic, and 5·5 oz. glue. Mix the two solutions, warm them, and soak the paper in the liquid. Pass it between rollers, or simply hang it up to drip, and then only at a gentle temperature.

HOW THEY MANAGE THINGS IN PRUSSIA.—At the Royal palace at Berlin, 40,000 wax candles are instantaneously lighted by a single match. The mode of proceeding is simple enough, the wicks being previously all connected by a thread spun out of gun-cotton, on lighting one end of which all the candles are lighted simultaneously, and thus the whole of the 700 apartments are illuminated at once. In Russia the same method is employed for lighting up the churches on grand occasions.

A BIRD THE PRELUDE OF DEATH.—Howell, in his "Familiar Epistles," observes, July 3, 1632:—"I can tell you of a strange thing I saw lately here, and I believe tis true. As I passed by St. Dunstan's in Fleet Street the last Saturday, I stepped into a lapidary or stone-cutter's shop to treat with the master for a stone to put upon my father's tomb: and casting my eyes up and down, I might spie a huge marble with a large inscription upon't, which was thus, to my best remembrance:—'Here lies John Oxenham, a goodly young man, in whose chamber as he was struggling with the pangs of death, a bird with a white breast was seen fluttering about his bed, and so vanish'd. Here lies also Mary Oxenham, the sister of the said John, who died the next day, and the same apparition was seen in the room. Here lies hard by, James Oxenham, the son of the said John, who died a child in his cradle a little after, and such a bird was seen fluttering about his head a little before he expir'd, which vanished afterwards."

"NEVER," said Theodore Hook, "let man and wife play together at whist. There are always telegraphs; and if they fancy their looks are watched, they can always communicate by words. I found out that I could never win of Smigsmag and his wife. I mentioned this one day, and was answered: 'No, you never can win of them.'—'Why?' said I. 'Because,' said my friend, 'they have established a code.'—'Dear me!' said I, 'signals by looks?'—'No,' said he, 'by words. If Mrs. Smigsmag is to lead, Smigsmag says: 'Dear, begin.' Dear begins with "d," so does diamonds, and out comes one from the lady. If he has to lead, and she says, "S, my love," she wants a spade. "Harriet, my dear, how long you are sorting your cards." Mrs. Smigsmag stumps down a heart, and a gentle "Come, my love," on either side, produces clubs."

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

HENRY S.—The mistresses of manor houses in former times served out to the poor, weekly, with their own hands, certain quantities of bread, and were therefore called *Lef-days*—two Saxon words signifying *bread-giver*—these words were at length corrupted into *Lady*. As we stated in a former number, the title of *Lady*, as a title of honour, properly belongs only to the daughters of earls and all of higher rank, but custom has made it a term of complaisance for the wives of knights and all women of eminence or gentility.

M. A.—The following is an attempt to show the sound of "ough" final:

'Tis not an easy task to show,
How O. U. G. H. sound; since THOUGH
An Irish LOUGH, and English SLOUGH,
And COUGH and hie-COUGH all allow
Differ as much as TROUGH and THROUGH
There seems no reason why they do.

WILLIAM H.—Asks why is English money called sterling? Because in the time of Richard I, money coined in the Eastern part of Germany became on account of its purity in especial request in England, and was called *Easterling* money, as all the inhabitants of that part of Germany were called *Easterlings*. Soon after some of these people skilled in coining were sent for to London to bring the English coin to perfection, and hence the adoption of the name of *sterling* to designate it.

E. T. B.—The phrase "mind your P's and Q's" undoubtedly originated in the tavern practice of scoring debts by customers, the P's signifying pints and the Q's quarts.

A SUBSCRIBER.—The order of Odd Fellows originated in Great Britain about the beginning of the nineteenth century. It is a benefit society, having all the characteristics of the class of societies known as friendly societies, with some of the features, secrets, and ceremonies of freemasonry grafted upon them.

DELTA.—If our correspondent is desirous of amusing himself in a witless manner, we can have no objection. We think he will tire of writing sooner than we shall of casting his letters unread into the waste basket.

EFFIE.—The hours of sleep must be regulated by the constitution. Some old rhyme says.

"Nature requires five.
Custom gives seven;
Laziness takes nine,
And wickedness eleven.

SCIENTIFIC AND USEFUL.

Dr. Richardson considers iodine as the best chemical agent for destroying organic poisons. Iodine placed in a box covered with muslin will diffuse itself at a temperature of 70 deg. at the rate of a drachm in twenty-four hours. Heat and light favour the destruction of the poisons.

Some interesting experiments were made by Dr. Hales on the evaporating power of plants. He found that a sunflower plant weighing 31b. perspired about 30 oz. of water in twelve hours during a day in the month of July, but in a warm night it perspired only 3 oz., and lost nothing in a cold night; on the contrary, it gained weight by imbibing dew.

A safety smoke-stack for locomotives has been invented by a Nashville mechanic, who has applied for a patent. His smoke-stack is so constructed that no sparks are emitted from the top of the stack, a shoot being fixed to carry them downward, and they fall harmless upon the earth beneath the locomotive, thus ensuring safety to articles of a combustible nature on the train or in its immediate vicinity.

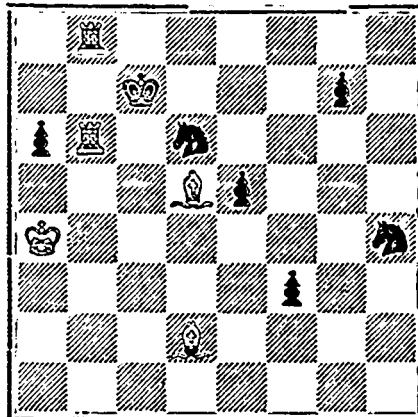
GLYCERINE GLUE.—A peculiar glue, consisting of glue or gelatine, with about a quarter of its own weight of glycerine, has just been discovered, by Mr. Fischer, a German chemist. The addition of the glycerine makes the glue lose its brittleness, so that it becomes applicable for many purposes for which it was previously unfit. Mixtures of this kind are used for dressing leather in bookbinding, &c. A mixture of

starch, glycerine, and sulphate of lime is said to remain plastic and adhesive, and is recommended for luting philosophical apparatus and similar purposes. It is stated that the glycerine glue possesses many of the qualities of India-rubber; and, among them, the singular one of removing and erasing the marks of a black lead pencil.—P.

SLEEPING ROOMS.—The rooms we sleep in should never shut out the fresh, pure air. A sleeping person consumes two hogsheds of air in an hour, that is, deprives it of all its oxygen, and replaces it with carbonic acid gas, which is a negative poison; leaving it so destitute of life-giving property that the person breathing it will die in a short time, in an hour sometimes. It follows, therefore, that unless the room be larger than most of those found in dwelling-houses and hotels, there should be thorough ventilation. Currents of air, says the correspondent of an American paper, must be avoided. Hence the bed should be so located in the room that they may not pass over the sleeper. If there be a single window, it is often well to raise the lower sash a few inches, and lower a little the upper sash. In this way the current is confined to the window, while it keeps the air fresh.

CHESS.

PROBLEM, No. 50.
BY THE LATE I. B.; OF BRIDPORT.
BLACK.



WHITE.

White to play and Mate in three moves.

SOLUTION OF PROBLEM, No. 75.

WHITE	BLACK.
1 Q to K Kt 7.	K takes R or (a. b.)
2 Q to Q 4 (ch.)	K to B 4.
3 Q to B 4 Mate.	
(a) 1 Kt to K 6 (ch.)	K takes B.
2 Q to Q Kt 7 Mate.	K moves.
(b) 1 Q to Q Kt 7 (ch.)	P takes B.
2 K to K 6 Mate..	K to Q 3.

WITTY AND WHIMSICAL.

A LAWN "PARTY."—A Bishop.

"CASH ADVANCES."—Courting a rich widow.

STEPS TO KNOWLEDGE.—Library steps.—

CHEAP PASTRY FOR KITCHEN DINNERS.—Puffs of smoke.

WHEN IS A CANDLE IN A BAD TEMPER?—When it's put out.

Why it is permissible to use ostlers' slang at dinner?—Because it's (s) table talk.—

Sailors, though not generally a musical class of men, are always able to sound the C correctly.

NARROW ACCOMMODATION.—Is it hospitable when you ask a stout friend to come and see you, to tell him that you will give him a spare bed?—Punch.

VERY SEVERE FOR A TAILOR.—"Here I am between two tailors," said a dandy at a public table, where a couple of young tailors were seated. "Very true," said one of them; "we are but beginners, and can only afford to keep one goose between us."

We think this extract from a medical advertisement is entirely correct, "Consumptives, cough while you can, for after you have taken one bottle of my mixture you can't."

STRIKING.—"I will not strike thee, bad man," said a Quaker one day, but I will let this billet of wood fall on thee, and at that precise moment the bad man was floored by the weight of the walking-stick that the Quaker was known to carry.

An elderly maiden, who had suffered some disappointments, thus defines the human race:—Man: a conglomerate mass of hair, tobacco smoke, confusion, conceit, and boots. Woman: the waiter, perforce, on the aforesaid animal.

BOTTLE AND GLASS.—Sir John Irwin was a favourite of George III, who once observed to him, "They tell me, Sir John, that you love a glass of wine."—"Those," replied Irwin, "who so informed your majesty have done me a great injustice—they should have said a bottle."

FEW PRIVILEGES.—A gentleman, being asked by a clergyman why he did not attend the evening prayer meetings, said he could not leave the children.—"What, have you no servants?" "Yes," he replied, "we have two servants, who keep the house and board us, but we are allowed few privileges."

DARKNESS VISIBLE.—One night in a thunder storm we thought the little ones all asleep, when a little voice from the "trundle-bed" called out, "Oh, mother, the darkness is winking! First it shuts up, and then it shuts down."

"Mary, why did you kiss your hand to the gentleman opposite, this morning?" said a careful mother to her blooming daughter.—"Why, the gentleman had the impudence to throw a kiss clear across the street, and of course I threw it back indignantly. You would not have me encourage him by keeping it, would you?"

THE SMITH FAMILY.—"Gentlemen," said a candidate for Congress, "my name is Smith, I am proud to say I am not ashamed of it. It may be that no person in this crowd owns that very uncommon name. If, however, there be one such, let him hold up his head, pull up his dickey, turn out his toes, take courage, and thank his stars that there are a few more left of the same sort."

Bannister use to tell a story of his having been introduced, with Mrs. Bannister, to an elderly lady of exceedingly "high notions." After the presentation had taken place, the lady asked a wit of the day who was present, "Who are the Bannisters? are they of good family?" "Yes," said the wit, they are closely allied to the stairs.—"Oh," said Lady Lucretia, "a very ancient family from Ayrshire, dates back to 1640. I am delighted to see your friends."

During the long French war, as two old ladies in Stranraer were going to the kirk, the one said to the other, "Was it no a wonderfu' thing that the Breetish were aye victorious ower the French in battle?"—"Not a bit," said the other old lady; "dinna ye ken the Breetish aye say their prayers before ga'in into battle?" The other replied, "But canna the French say their prayers as weel?" The reply was most characteristic, "Hoot! jabbering bodies, wha could understand them?"

A good story is told of Baron Platt, who, when once visiting a penal institution, inspected the treadmill with the rest, and being practically disposed, the learned judge philanthropically trusted himself on the treadmill, desiring the warden to set it in motion. The machine was accordingly adjusted and his lordship began to lift his feet. In a few minutes, however, he had had quite enough of it, and called to be released, but this was not so easy. "Please my lord," said the man, "you can't get off. It's set for twenty minutes, that's the shortest time we can make it go." So the judge was in durance until his "term" expired.