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# THE LAMP OF KNOWLEDGE

DEVOTED TO GENERAL LITERATURE ROMANCE & DRAMA

VOLUME III. GEO. E. DESBARATS, { PLACE D'ARMES MONTREAL, SATURDAY, DECEMBER 21, 1872. TERMS, { \$2.00 PER ANNUM. No. 51.

## REPENTANCE.

He kissed me, and I know 'twas wrong,  
For he was neither kith nor kin;  
Need one do penance very long  
For such a tiny little sin?  
He pressed my hand; that wasn't right;  
Why will men have such wicked ways?  
It wasn't for a minute—quite—  
But in it there were days and days.  
There's mischief in the moon, I know;  
I'm positive I saw her wink  
When I requested him to go;  
I meant it, too—I almost think.  
But after all, I'm not to blame;  
He took the kiss, I do think men  
Are quite without a sense of shame.  
I wonder when he'll come again!

## DESMORO; OR, THE RED HAND.

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

### CHAPTER XI.

The playbills on the walls of Braymount announced that Manager Jellico had engaged the celebrated tragedian, Mr. Mackmillerman, who would appear at the Theatre Royal, Braymount, in the course of the ensuing week.

This piece of important intelligence put all the playgoers of the town in a state of great excitement, and people were rushing to secure places and tickets for those evenings when the great "star" was to shine forth and quench every other light with its splendid and dazzling rays.

The first night's performance was to be *Hamlet*, which tragedy was already in rehearsal. Mrs. Polderbrant was to enact the Queen, Desmoro Laertes, and Shavings, at the particular request of the manager himself, had undertaken the part of *Osric*.

Every member of the company was nervous and unhappy, dreading the coming of the eminent actor, who was one who regarded all his professional brothers and sisters—no matter how talented such might chance to be—as mere puppets, which were to move and to talk only according to his expressed directions.

Mr. Mackmillerman was a selfish, tyrannical man, who was heartily detested by almost every actor and actress that came in contact with him. Mrs. Polderbrant knew him of old, and entertained for him a most bitter and implacable hatred—a hatred which she took no pains to conceal, whenever business brought her near him.

This feeling on her part was fully reciprocated by the gentleman himself, who would fume and growl exceedingly at the bare mention of her name.

Mr. Mackmillerman, who with his valet and his baggage had just arrived at Braymount in his own private carriage, was lodged at the Bell Hotel, in an apartment of which he was now sitting with Manager Jellico.

The pair were examining a damp playbill just issued from the printing office of the town.

Mr. Mackmillerman was reading over the cast of the various characters.

Suddenly there was a loud growl from the eminent tragedian, who had flung his head back and plunged his fingers distractedly into his hair.

"Zounds! she here!" he exclaimed, "I was in hopes that she had been consigned to the tomb of the Capulets long ago."

"Of whom are you speaking?" asked Jellico.

"Of Mrs. Polderbrant, of that firebrand in petticoats" returned the tragedian vehemently.

Jellico's face dropped for an instant.

"She is a very clever woman in her own particular line," he observed.

"And what may that line be, Mr. Jellico," drily asked the other.

"She is our heavy lady, you know, Mr. Mackmillerman."

"She's a cat, sir—a cat, and nothing else," was the ireful reply.

The manager shrugged his shoulders, not presuming to differ from the opinion expressed by the great theatrical star.

"Had I known that that woman occupied a prominent position in your theatre, that I should be compelled to touch her hand, I tell you plainly, Mr. Jellico, I should not have condescended to perform in the Theatre Royal, Braymount."

"I am very sorry, really," was the regretful answer.

"Mrs. Polderbrant is a somewhat eccentric woman, I will allow; but notwithstanding that fact, she has, as I said before, considerable talent."

"Talent! In what, I should like to be informed?"

"I am exceedingly distressed that the lady is obnoxious to you, Mr. Mackmillerman."



"Obnoxious!" echoed the star. "My dear sir, she is a dose of ipecacuanha to me."  
"I wish I could alter matters for your convenience and pleasure," was the other's rejoinder.

At rehearsal on the following day, on the evening of which the tragedian was to appear, that startling luminary sent his valet (who was a black man) to rehearse the part of *Hamlet* in his stead.

At the appearance of Mr. Mackmillerman's sable retainer, the whole company refused to proceed with the business of rehearsal. They would none of them have anything to do with the negro, whom Mr. Mackmillerman had lately brought over with him from America.

The man was more than commonly intelligent, else he would never have been able to acquire the words of Shakespeare's characters, and learn to understand the stage business belonging to the different parts.

Of course Jellico felt the affront that had been put upon the members of his company, but interest compelled him to make the best of the matter.

Mrs. Polderbrant, who was perfectly furious, inwardly determined to avenge this insult.

"Wait until to-night!" said she, in significant tones; "I'll warrant that I'll make him remember his engagement at Braymount! I've owed him some grudges for a long while, and now I'll repay him in full!"

Saying which, the "heavy lady" stalked off the stage, the whole of the other actors and actresses following her example, and was no more seen there until night.

Mr. Mackmillerman was highly indignant when his servant repeated to him the manner in which he had been treated by Mrs. Polderbrant and others.

"The idiots!" stormed the tragedian. "But I'll make them suffer for it, never fear!"

Alas! the gentleman little dreamed of what was in store for his own magnificent self.

At length the eventful evening arrived.

Mrs. Polderbrant looked majestic, and malicious as well, as if some mighty wickedness was brooding in her breast.

The house was crowded to overflowing.

The overture, as performed by the violin, trumpet, and drum, had been played; the curtain was up; and the tragedy begun.

Scene the second now introduces the *King*, and *Queen*, and *Hamlet*.

The entrance of the latter was the signal for a perfect burst of enthusiastic applause, in acknowledgment of which the star, touching his heart, bowed profoundly.

Mrs. Polderbrant's eyes seemed to dart sparks of living fire.

She was thinking of the black man with whom she had been required to rehearse the grand words of William Shakespeare.

This scene finished, the heavy lady darted into the flies, exactly over the stage, and over the heads of the performers, where the sky borders, and the roller-scenes are worked.

Here, taking a certain position, she waited for some length of time. She had evidently some task in hand, a task widely different from her usual employment.

She looked down on the heads of those below, and listened to the following dialogue—  
*Hamlet*. It waxes me still.  
Go on. I follow thee.

*Marcellus*. You shall not go, my lord.

*Hamlet*. Hold off your hands.  
(Mrs. Polderbrant, above, was mysteriously busy at this moment.)

*Horatio*. Be ruled, you shall not go.

*Hamlet*. My fate cries out,  
And makes each petty artery in this body  
As hard as the Nemean lion's nerve.  
(Ghost beckons him.)  
Still I am called; unhand me, gentlemen:  
(Breaking from them.)  
By heaven, I'll make a ghost of him that lets me!

I say away!—Go on, I'll follow thee!

Just as the tragedian had uttered these words, a large dead cat, white as the Ghost himself, attached to a string, descended from the flies, and hung before him.

Amazed and horrified, the actor started back, unable to credit his eyes, while the audience first tittered, then laughed, and screamed, and the whole theatre was in a state of absolute confusion and uproar.

For a few moments the great star stood transfixed with amazement, the body of the white cat dangling before him, the shrieks of laughter in his ears.

The actors and the audience were all convulsed, while Mr. Mackmillerman, who was absolutely furious, recovering himself a little, rushed off the stage, crying out, "Drop the curtain, instantly! Drop the curtain! I will not act another scene to-night! Drop the curtain! Mr. Jellico," he continued, rushing to the manager, who was standing at the wing, looking like one quite thunderstruck.

"Mr. Jellico, what is the meaning of this unparalleled insult? what is the meaning of your dead cat? and who am I to thank for its appearance there?"

"Heaven only knows, Mr. Mackmillerman," returned the manager, doing his best to restrain his own laughter, which was struggling to burst forth at the sight of the defunct animal swinging to and fro at the end of a piece of string.

"You do not know, eh? Very well, Mr. Jellico! You'll drop the curtain, if you please!"

"Drop the curtain, Mr. Mackmillerman! It will be the ruin of us to do so."

"I am, attend me to my dressing-room," spoke the tragedian, disregarding the other's words, and addressing his valet, who was standing close at hand.

"But, Mr. Mackmillerman—" added the distressed manager.

"I'll hear no more!" returned he, stalking off in the direction of his dressing-room, Jellico following him.

"I'll give twenty pounds to any one who will discover the perpetrator of this vile and dastardly trick!" said the star, suddenly turning round to the manager, and foaming at the mouth with rage.

"Nay, I will give fifty! Where is that witch, Mrs. Polderbrant," he abruptly continued, "I'll warrant that she is at the bottom of all this! Bring her before me!"

"Mrs. Polderbrant?" repeated the astonished and now doubly bewildered manager.

"Really, Mr. Mackmillerman, I could not so insult the lady. Continue the performance, I entreat, sir, and in the meantime, I will endeavour to investigate the affair, and do my utmost to find out the offender—and do my utmost to discharge the offender."

"Whom you will discharge on the spot?" interrupted the star. "Promise me that you will discharge her instantly."

"She! We are not certain of the sex of the transgressor."

"I am."

"Well, Mr. Mackmillerman, will you resume your part, and suffer the play to proceed?"

The tragedian fumed, stamped his feet, and then commenced striding up and down from wing to wing, his fingers thrust into his hair, his eyes rolling terrifically.

By-and-by he paused.

"Let the play go on," he commanded.

At this Jellico rushed away, and quiet being once more restored both before and behind the curtain, the play was resumed at that part of it where it had lately been so strangely interrupted.

The whole company knew who the delinquent was; but, notwithstanding Mr. Mackmillerman's proffered reward, not a person belonging to that company would betray her.

As for Jellico himself, he had not the remotest suspicion of the offender, and he did not take much trouble to find her out.

Mr. Mackmillerman had offered a gross insult to the actors and actresses in Jellico's establishment, and those actors and actresses had fully avenged themselves on him.

During the remainder of the evening Mrs. Polderbrant conducted herself in her old manner; and although the star every now and then fixed his eyes upon her in withering glances, he failed to cause her the slightest concern in any way. She was just as self-collected and dignified as ever—nay, perhaps a little more.

Now Shavings was far from feeling perfect in his part, and fearfully nervous into the bargain, wishing with all his heart that he could run away from the task, and bury himself for a few hours.

He was dreading the moment when he should have to stand before the tragic hero; and his knees were knocking against each other, his bosom was loudly palpitating, his throat and mouth parched and hot, and his wits all astray. He was enduring stage-fright and all its host of terrors.

Ready dressed for his part, he was sitting behind the scenes, by the side of Comfort, who had been hearing him rehearse the words of his part for the seventh or eighth time.

The poor little man looked shriveled up, and wholly unlike his wonted, humorous self—and his teeth were actually chattering together from excess of agitation.

"It's truly awful, Comfort! I wish I could overcome it," said Shavings, alluding to his present state of alarm.

"I'm bothered with the g's and the h's, you see, until I can think of nothing else but them and Mr. Mackmillerman! Oh, that there had never been a Shakespeare or a Mr. Mackmillerman! I desay I'm wicked in uttering such a wish, but I can't help it, my dear—I really can't."

"The young girl wound her arm about the speaker's neck, and laid her smooth cheek against his."

"If I'd a thousand pounds, Comfort, I'd give every penny of it to escape standing before that man! I am ill, my child, feeling sick as death at the bare thought of him!"

Comfort felt him tremble all over as he spoke.

"What could she do in order to spare her father from the ordeal he was so dreading?"

"I wish you had not undertaken the part, dear dad," she said.

"So also wish I, my dear; but Jellico was distressed for people, and I was willing to oblige him."

And as he spoke the clown's head drooped on his breast.

"Dad," said Comfort, rousing him, "you'll never get through your part if you thus give way."

"Never mind—never mind, my dear, twelve o'clock must come, you know—that's one of my favourite mottoes, you remember; yes, twelve o'clock must come to all of us!"

And with these words, Shavings literally swooned away in his daughter's arms.

At this instant the act drop fell, and the fiddle, the trumpet and drum, all three burst out as loudly and as musically as they could.

The young girl, who did not want to expose the weak terrors of her beloved father, sat perfectly still and quiet, holding him clasped to her breast, which was throbbing fast and painfully, not knowing what to do.

Presently, Desmoro issued from a doorway close at hand, and spoke to Comfort.

"What are you sitting in that dark corner for?" he asked, as he drew near her. "Is not your father well?" he added, perceiving the clown's drooping form.

"Hush, Desmoro!" returned she, in a low voice. "Is any one in your room?" she inquired eagerly.

"No!" replied he, amazed at her strange question. "What's the matter?"

"He has fainted, I think! Take him in your arms, and carry him in there at once! Do, do, Desmoro, I implore!"

Without uttering another syllable, Desmoro stooped, lifted up the insensible figure, and bore it into his own apartment, whither Comfort followed.

No one had witnessed this little scene, which occurred behind the shade of several flats and wings, and Comfort felt secure.

"They'd all laugh at and ridicule him so," she observed, clasping her father's hands. "He who has been on the stage all these many years, to be in this state of affliction!"

"He's as cold as stone, Comfort!" said Desmoro, quakingly. "Shall we call Mr. Jellico of this, and send for a doctor?"

"No, no!" was the quick reply.

"What shall we do then, Comfort? Who's to play his part, supposing he should not be able to?"

"Who's to play his part, Desmoro? Why, I will!"

"You, Comfort!" he repeated, in amazement.

"I!" she answered, courageously.

"Nonsense—nonsense, Comfort!"

"I know every syllable of the part, and I know also how it should be acted."

"Still it is sheer nonsense for you to think of attempting the part; Mr. Jellico would not suffer you to do so!"

"Mr. Jellico shall know nothing at all about the matter until it is too late to alter it! Sprinkle his face with a little water, and loosen his shirt collar," she continued, assisting Desmoro in endeavouring to recall the clown's fainted senses.

"Is there another suit of clothes in the wardrobe like unto these my father is wearing?" she inquired in quick and resolute accents.

"Comfort, you mustn't think of doing such a thing! Let me dissuade you from this idea."

"No, no; it will be for my poor dad that I shall do it, Desmoro, remember that! What would you not do for a parent, had you one to serve—one like mine, so kind and loving? Don't fear my ability to get through the performance of my self-allotted task; you'll see I shall quite astonish you!"

Desmoro looked at the young girl in perfect wonder, and she went on.

"We shall have to deceive him in some way," said she, fanning Shavings' face. "See, he is recovering! Leave everything to my management," she added, in a lower voice.

"Are you better, dad?" asked she, as the clown opened wide his eyes, and wildly stared about.

No answer.

"Give him a glass of water, Desmoro; then get him to lie down for a while."

The young man did her bidding, and there lay poor Shavings more dead than alive, with his eyes closed, not heeding the presence of any one, but muttering to himself all the while.

Comfort now became alarmed at her father's state, and she was beginning to fear that a doctor would really be required.

Without a word, she dashed out of the room, and sought the worthy manager, to whom she at once communicated the fact of her parent's sudden illness and her own willingness to undertake the character he was to have sustained.

"I have all the words, sir," she pursued, in courageous accents, "and I am taller than dad."

"But Mr. Mackmillerman will be furious at having a female *Osric*," objected the perplexed manager. "Matters have already gone cross enough with him to-night; this fresh trouble will be a terrible annoyance to him. I'm afraid that he will throw up his engagement, and should he do so he will leave me in a painful position with the Braymount people, with whom he is a vast favourite. I really know not what to do! I wish from my heart's depths there had never been a Mr. Mackmillerman or a William Shakespeare. Go and get on the clothes, and let us make the best we can of the affair."

The young girl did not await a second bidding, she was gone to attire herself in male habiliments as one of the Court of Denmark, while Jellico repaired to Desmoro's room to inquire after the poor clown's condition.

*Osric*, although a character of no particular importance, is not one fit for a female to re-

# THE HEARTHSTONE.

present; and Desmoro was thinking as much, as he stood by Shavings' couch, during Comfort's absence from the room.

"Women," he thoughtfully repeated within himself,—"women are never so truly beautiful as when they look and act as it befits such to look and act. In the clothes of a man, a woman loses all her grace and all her modesty as well. I wish Comfort would abandon her present intention; I should feel more happy if she would."

But Comfort was regarding the matter before her only in a business point of view; she was bestowing no single thought on its indelicacy.

Jellico sent for a doctor, who at once recommended Shavings to be removed to his lodgings, where he could have proper attention, and where there would be quiet. The clown had an attack of brain fever, brought on by his late over-excitement, and he was in considerable danger.

Comfort heard this intelligence with a fading cheek and quivering lips; but she went through her business calmly and courageously, and received much applause for the clever manner in which she enacted her part.

And the great starudent himself towards the beautiful girl, and actually paid her a handsome compliment on her able performance of a character so utterly unsuited to her youth and her sex.

At the end of the tragedy poor Comfort's nerves gave way. She was not one to much indulge in tears, and she would fain have kept them back on this occasion, but her feelings were utterly beyond her control, and the salty drops flowed on.

In vain the delighted audience called for the actor; that gentleman was now bending over Comfort, whispering pretty nothings into the girl's heedless ears.

Desmoro was looking on, consumed with jealousy. He could not bear to see this man so close to Comfort, his arm half clasping her waist, his breath stirring the tresses on her brow.

Still attired in her queenly robes, and looking majestically grim, Mrs. Polderbrant at this moment darted from behind a wing, and laid her bony hand upon Comfort's shoulder.

At the appearance of the heavy lady, Mr. Mackmillerman uttered a characteristic growl, and started back a few paces, his arm still loosely hung around the young girl's form.

Had some fiend from the realms below suddenly started up before him, he could not have been more horrified than he was now at the sight of the old actress, standing close at his elbow, with her eagle-like eyes fixed upon him.

She did not utter a single word, but drawing Comfort away, led her to her dressing-room.

Desmoro inwardly blest Mrs. Polderbrant, for whom he was beginning to entertain a certain amount of affection; and feeling more contented in his mind at seeing Comfort thus carried out of the immediate reach of Mr. Mackmillerman, he at once sought his own apartment, and commenced dressing himself.

It had been a night of more than common excitement to our hero, and his spirit was oppressed and strangely troubled. A vague dread of some approaching evil was filling his mind, a dread that seemed to increase the more he tried to shake it off.

In this state of mental uneasiness, Desmoro's thoughts wandered back to his grandfather, the village schoolmaster. Had the old man much regretted his absence, would he be glad to see him again?

Desmoro loved his kinsman dearly, but a new affection had taken root in his heart, an affection which was daily growing stronger and stronger, which was binding him to his present mode of life, more firmly than any iron bonds could have held him.

Desmoro accompanied Comfort home that night, and stepped into the house in order to make inquiries concerning Shavings' state.

The clown had been violently delirious, but the proxym was past, and he was now lying under the effects of a strong narcotic, which the doctor had just administered to him.

The landlady of the house, who appeared to be a very kind-hearted person, was in attendance upon the sick man, and promised that he should not want for any attention that she could render him.

Thus assured that his friend would receive every necessary care and comfort, Desmoro quitted the clown's lodgings, and made his way back to the theatre, which was now closed in every part.

Desmoro knocked at the stage-portal once, twice, and thrice, before he was able to arouse its keeper, who growlingly demanded the name of his disturber.

"It is I!" answered Desmoro, somewhat impatiently. "You know well enough that I was out!"

The lock was turned, and the door was opened by Pldgers.

"I knowed nothin' o' the soort!" grumbled he in reply. "Do you fancy that I've got nout to do but to think about yo? I wought be the Emperor of all Rossher to hear yo talk!"

Desmoro looked at the man in undisguised surprise.

"You might use less impertinent language, I'm sure," he observed.

"To yo?"

"Yes, to me?"

"Ho, ho! I sees mysel' a-doin' o' that, don't I?"

"Have you been drinking?" asked Desmoro, staring at the speaker in increasing astonishment.

"Yo'd better go an' tell Maister Jellico as much!" returned Pldgers, insolently. "It would ouy be loike yer sneakin' ways to do so."

Desmoro writhed; but he controlled his rising anger.

"Give me a light, and hold your saucy tongue," he said, as calmly as he could.

"My saucy tongue!" echoed Pldgers. "An' what may yors be, I should like to know?"

"Mr. Jellico shall be informed of this, never fear!"

"Oh, I said so, didn't I?" blustered the Cerberus. "I knows what yo are, I do; an' may be somebody else will be soon a findin' of yo out, yo red-handed cur, yo!"

Desmoro actually reeled backwards, as if a blow had just descended on him; his back against the wall, his mouth and eyes agape, and his fingers all tightly clenched together.

"Yo ain't gotten that red hand o' yours fur nothin', yo—"

But the speaker was here interrupted by

Desmoro, who suddenly seized him by the throat.

"Another word, dog, about my red hand," he cried, between his set teeth, his wrath fully aroused,—"another syllable about it, and you shall never breathe again!"

Pldgers was now plumed against the wall, Desmoro's superior strength holding him there, despite the vigorous struggles he was making in order to free himself.

"I'll pur (kick) thee to death some day!" grasped the Cerberus—his face of a purple hue, his language according to his own county.

"Yes, and that you shall, when you can get a chance of so doing," answered Desmoro.

"There you hound, I disdain to further soil my hands with you! Give me a light," added the young man, as he spoke, hurling Pldgers across the room. "Come, be quick!"

The man dropped into a chair, his head on his breast—his features now blanched and convulsed.

"I ain't finished with yo just yet," gasped he. "Wait awhile, an' yo shall see!"

"Give me a light, dog!" repeated Desmoro, haughtily.

"Ise not! Get a light for yorsel'!" answered Pldgers, sullenly, his face now dark as a thunder-cloud. "An' tell Maister Jellico wiaten yo please."

"That I shall do without yo'r permission," rejoined our hero, in disdainful syllables.

Here Pldgers reluctantly ignited an oil lamp, and laid it on the table.

He spoke not, but he had bitter feelings in his breast.

Desmoro took up the lamp, and, without condescending to utter another word, sought the way to his own apartment; at which arrived, he threw himself on a seat, laid his face on his folded arms, and sobbed aloud.

"Oh, if I were not so sensitive!" he exclaimed, within himself. "If I could but close my ears to the rude speeches of the vulgar and the heartless! *Red Hand!*" he continued, gazing at his stained palm.

"Great heaven! how that name pursued me, and how I dread to hear it repeated! 'I'd like to lose sight of the horrid disfigurement—to lop off the limb as I would the rotten branch from a tree! Oh, my dead mother! from your home above the skies, look down upon your poor boy—look down upon and protect him!"

## CHAPTER XII.

"MAYBE, I'll not forget bein' throttled by yo!" uttered Pldgers, as Desmoro disappeared. "I'll be hanged rather than not hev my revenge on yo," he added, shaking his clenched hands threateningly in the air, and hissing out his words rather than speaking them.

"But I won't be in no hurry, my foinc feller; I'll wait until I can get a strong pull at yo, and then look out, that's all, I says to yo at present, my Jack-o'-dandy!"

So saying, the Cerberus crept under his blankets, and composed himself to rest.

But the man's dark thoughts banished all rest from his pillow.

He was thinking of Comfort, of beautiful Comfort Shavings, whose fresh feminine charms were daily bursting into view, and sleep refused to visit his eyelids. He hated Desmoro, and he was meditating upon the means he could devise in order to crush him. Pldgers had no religious faith; he acknowledged no creed whatever, and therefore owned neither honesty of principles nor compunction. He was a man who, seeing an obstacle to his wishes, would heed but little the means by which he could remove that obstacle. A human being in his way would be no more regarded by him than a straw. His heart was hard as adamant, his passions fierce and uncontrollable as the storm-lashed ocean.

Brood, brood, brood, until at last sleep overpowered him, and wrapped his senses in forgetfulness of all around him.

Mrs. Symure had withdrawn from the dining-room, and Colonel Symure was left alone with his brother, who had only arrived at Braymount a few hours ago.

Percy Symure was now a grey-haired man, bulky in person, with a florid face, and a slightly husky voice. He was an indolent man, loving good eating and drinking, and living for little else; and for his principles, they were just as lax as ever they had been.

Colonel Symure, whose heart was filled with one particular object, had prepared himself to speak to his brother of Desmoro Desmoro. Caroline had quitted the room: now was his time to speak without any fear of being interrupted.

Percy was sipping his wine, and the Colonel was absently toying with his empty glass.

"I don't think the air of Braymount agrees with yo, Des," the elder gentleman remarked. "You are not looking so well as I expected to see yo looking. I wish yo'd quit the army, and live a free life in London, or Paris; I, myself, prefer the latter place—the French cuisine is so deuced fine!"

Colonel Symure hummed twice, but his voice proceeded no further. He was fearful that his brother would not understand his feelings—that he would not assist him in carrying out his intentions as regarded Desmoro Desmoro, hence his present hesitation and embarrassment.

"Why don't yo do as I advise, Des?" pursued Percy. "Caroline says she hates a military life, and I am sure yo yourself don't care much about it. Why do yo so cling to it?"

"Because my soul recoils at the bare idea of being wholly dependent on a rich wife. My profession prevents me from being so far humiliated as that."

"Humiliated!" echoed the elder brother, with a light laugh. "What a queer fellow yo are, Des; yo're not a whit wiser than yo were nearly seventeen years ago. Jove! what scrapes yo did contrive to get yo'rself into in those bygone days! Do yo remember that Nole—Nole—confound the name of the place, I have it on the very tip of my tongue—Nole—"

"Noleman's Hill," flushed the Colonel. "Ah, that's it! Do yo remember that Noleman's Hill business, Des? And how fortunately I was spared a journey from London to that out-of-the-way place?"

"Yes, Percy, I recollect all about it, and it is concerning that particular business that I wish to speak to yo now."

"Eh!" exclaimed Percy, suddenly putting down his upraised glass.

"You can call to mind the fact of my

having a son born to me, I suppose?" said the Colonel, gaining fresh courage as he proceeded.

"A son, Des! Yo? Oh, ah, to be sure I can! What a predicament yo were in at that time, weren't yo? Well, well, yo got out of it capitally, didn't yo?"

"No, Percy, not capitally, but disgracefully, heartlessly, and wickedly."

"Eh! what on earth do yo mean?" was the alarmed question. "Really, Des, yo have become a very strange fellow!"

"I have I?" returned the Colonel, with a wan smile and a sigh. "I only wish that I had always felt as I feel now."

"Pon honor, if I can comprehend yo!"

"Listen, Percy. I am no longer a young man; I am arrived at an age when my soul yearns for something more solid and enduring than the mere frivolities of fashionable life. I have an empty heart—for Caroline, although my wife, occupies no single atom of it. Well, can yo wonder when I tell yo I am longing for that son of mine, born in lawful wedlock at Noleman's Hill, where it was left, utterly parentless, to struggle through the world, even as chance might have it?"

"Des!"

"Don't interrupt me, Percy," cried the Colonel, excitedly,—"hear me out. I have found my deserted son!"

"Bless me!"

"Found him amongst a set of strolling actors and—"

"Stop, stop! yo are confounding me, Des," Percy exclaimed, his face becoming ruddier than usual, but his outward manner remaining perfectly undisturbed. "Found yo'r son amongst a set of strolling actors! The duce! Explain, my dear fellow; but do so in a calm, rational manner, I beg; don't ruffle my nerves with any startling announcement, or a fit of the goat may be the consequence to me. I hope to heaven yo have not told Caroline anything about this business. I fancied she was looking vexed and worried about something or other; yo've not been making a dot of yo'rself, have yo? Women, yo know, have no need to be informed about all things. I never tell Lucy a word about my doings, and she never expects me to do so. Goodness knows, she tenses me enough as it is; then what would she do were she to be made the repository of all my shortcomings and peccadilloes! And Percy chuckled, and drained his wine-glass.

"Well, go on, Des," he said, preparing himself to listen.

"Well, having found my son, Percy, I have a wish to claim him."

"Claim him, Des?" burst forth the listener.

"Are yo going mad?"

"On the contrary, quite; I am just coming to my senses."

"Yo are wanting to acknowledge that Noleman's Hill brat?"

"Who is my legitimate and only child—yes!"

"Dear, dear!" returned Percy, fretfully, "I came down here for peace and quietness, Des—for Lucy was wearing the life out of me at home—and it appears that I have only escaped from one evil to encounter another—another of greater magnitude. How on earth did yo manage to recognise yo'r offspring? I trust yo've not been imposed upon in any way! Yo were always a most credulous fellow, whom I had the greatest possible difficulty in keeping out of all sorts of mischief. Acknowledge a son!—the son of a schoolmaster's daughter! Yo, a Symure! Whatever will Caroline say to all this? I know what Lucy would say to me in such a case! By Jove, Des, do reflect a little upon what yo are about to do! If yo claim this boy, and introduce him to the world as yo'r own, yo may depend on't that yo will have no more domestic happiness."

"Domestic happiness, Percy! Pshaw! Where Caroline is, there never will be any true happiness for me!"

"The elder brother shrugged his shoulders.

"This son of mine is a splendid young fellow—a credit to the name of Symure," pursued the Colonel, very warmly. "We, in our youth, had more than a common share of personal pretensions, but we had not a tithe of his good looks, for he has all his dead mother's sweetness of expression, and an inborn dignity which springs from a pure and noble mind. I've only seen him once, Percy, but that once has worked a perfect reformation in all my thoughts and feelings, and I love this lad as though he had been reared by my side, and had grown into my heart for years and years, and I am ready to risk everything in order to gather him to my breast, and hear him call me father."

Percy Symure stared at the speaker for a few seconds, as if unable to credit the evidence of his ears.

"Yo are mad, surely, Des," breathed he, his eyes still fixed on his brother's face. "By what unlucky clue did yo discover this branch of yo'r family tree?"

"Yo remember that he was born with a red hand?"

"No, I remember nothing of the sort. How should I do so, since it was so advisable for us to forget all about him?"

"Well, I had not lost the memory of that mother's mark which he bears, and which led me to recognise him at a single glance."

"And what are yo going to do, Des?" asked his brother. "Yo have not compromised yo'rself in any way with the lad—yo have not spoken to him?"

"Not yet; but I have written to him, telling him that a friend of his father wishes to see him."

"Des, yo are going the way to ruin—to absolute ruin!" said Percy Symure, in an emphatic manner. "For heaven's sake desist in this frantic-brained business while yet there is time to desist in it! If yo are determined to persevere in yo'r folly, I must leave yo at once, else I shall have a fit of the gout on me; and—"

"Percy, have some honesty; and for yo'r manhood's sake, be less selfish. By yo'r advice, I plunged myself into a heinous sin; I deserted my own child; help—help me now to repair the wrong I did!"

"Help yo to make a simpleton of yo'rself, Colonel Symure!" he returned, his countenance of a purple hue; "not I, indeed! I'm in hot water enough at home with Lucy; I'm not going to get into any hero with yo'r peppery Caroline. Jove! if I had but known of all this, Braymount would never have seen me—never!"

"Yo refuse to give me either yo'r advice or yo'r aid in this business, Percy?"

"Distinctly and decidedly I do. I'll have

nothing at all to do or say in the matter; and I shall I off to London to-morrow. Mind, if Caroline sets to hear of this affair, yo are a wretched nna for life."

And with these words, Percy Symure started up from the table, and the brothers, together with the way to the drawing-room.

Colonel Symure was very silent all the remainder of that evening, and sadder than even he had been before. He was deeming himself of the most irascible men alive, and was inwardly gnawing over the troubles which had befallen him.

He would not, if he could help it, talk any more with his brother on the subject of Desmoro; he would not allow his all to that subject again. No, he would allow the impulses of his own newly-awakened feelings, and seek counsel from none. His other Percy was more selfish now than ever, and he had nothing to hope for from him in any way.

Well, Mr. Symure, being left at rest, did not return to London as he had threatened to do, but remained to saunter about Braymount and its neighborhood, to waste his time in looking under every bonnet he met, and in writing long and affectionately-worded letters to Lucy, concerning whom he did not care a single dot.

Meanwhile, Caroline, full of mean and unworthy doubts, kept a close watch upon all her husband's looks, words and actions.

He could scarcely stir but she was at his heels, dogging his steps hither and thither, with inquiring and angry looks. He had few chances of quitting home, save on a pretence of attending to his military duties, and as he was afraid of his wife following him, he remained in-doors, fretting and fuming the weary time away in longing for that which he could not get an opportunity of reaching.

And thus day succeeded day without his being able to invent any plan by which he might gain an interview with Desmoro, or learn whether or not he had received his communication.

Sometimes the Colonel was on the brink of making a confidant to his wife; but further reflection always checked his tongue, and kept it still. Yet he feared that she must one day be informed of all, for he could not, would not, keep this aching secret thus for ever in his own breast, there to gnaw his very life away. Oh! if he had but the courage to openly avow to her his past weaknesses, his past wrong-doings! But, no, he had not the fortitude to do so just yet; he would wait a little longer, and see how chance would aid him.

Thus, withheld by his coward-fears, he still continued in his reticence, and in his mental anguish also; his state unaltered for and unnoticed by his careless and selfish brother.

Round Pldgers' throat the next morning there were certain purple marks—the marks of Desmoro's fingers. These discolored streaks Pldgers saw when he looked in the piece of looking-glass he had.

"I'll make him pay me for these," he said, within himself, as he examined his neck all round about. "I've gotten a scheme in my head that'll floor yo'r foinc gentleman completely! I'll let him see that I ain't a-go'in' to be twisted and throttled by him fur nothin'! Perhaps he thinks that I ain't made of the same soort o' stuff loike as hissel', an' that he can knock me chisuns an' thateens, jist for his own partic'lar pleasure! Wait awhile—that's all!"

Then the Cerberus seated himself before his fire and proceeded with his dark thoughts; weaving a subtle plan whereby he hoped to crush the unsuspecting and innocent Desmoro.

## CHAPTER XIII.

Well, Shavings still continued in the same delirious state, and there appeared to be but little hope of his amendment.

Comfort's anxious eye questioned the doctor every time he came to visit her father; but the medicine made her no verbal reply, but ever sadly shook his head.

The young girl was full of sorrow and terror. She believed that she had no living creature in the world save her father—who had been everything to her that parent could be to a child—and she was dreading being left without either protector or friends.

To be sure, Mr. Jellico was always very kind to her, and so also was Mrs. Polderbrant, but their kindness could never repay her for the loss of her good parents' caressing love—oh, never, never!

Then Comfort thought of Desmoro, and a soft thrill pervaded her frame, as her mental eye presented the young man's handsome visage to her, and her ears recalled the tones of his musical voice.

In many respects Comfort was older than her years, but her mind knew no guile, and her nature full of feminine softness, simplicity, and goodness. "This true that her life had been replete with hardships of one sort or other—for her father and her had not been long attached to Samuel Jellico's company—but needy, coarse, and worthless as her associations had frequently been, there was no tinge of vulgarity about herself—she had escaped without one impure taint, without a speck that could sully the loveliness of her face and form.

Her recent intercourse with Desmoro had done much towards developing her mind, which, as yo may imagine, had been overrun with crude matter, with many weeds and brambles. All the lessons that had been taught, and the learning he had acquired from the perusal of useful books, he had instructed her in. And Comfort, understanding the full value of her lessons, was careful not to forget them.

During the term of Mr. Mackmillerman's engagement at the Braymount Theatre, Desmoro had but little time to call his own. The excellent manner in which he had lately acquitted himself in the character of *Romeo*, had induced the manager to entrust many other important parts to his hands, hence his hours were all fully employed with tasks—with tasks which he could not neglect. However, when he could snatch a few moments from business, he would fly to the clown's lodgings in order to ascertain his state, and to get a peep at the fair face of Comfort Shavings, in whom Mr. Mackmillerman had become greatly interested.

Yes, the actor saw the precious jewel, and, seeing it, coveted it as he would have coveted a mine of wealth, with longing, greedy eyes. He marked her talents, and her rare beauty, and he said unto himself, "Some day this pure gem must be mine."

Mr. Mackmillerman was a fine man, and he was tolerably wealthy as well; and, what was still more, he was proud of his looks and his gold; vain of his stalwart figure, arrogant and pompous likewise.

The night was a tempestuous one. The wind blew a perfect hurricane, and the rain came down in dashing torrents.

Pldgers was crouching over the fire, listening to the storm-blast as it roared down the chimney, when Desmoro and Comfort, attired for walking, appeared, ready to start forth.

Pldgers turned round at the sound of Comfort's voice.

Desmoro and she were standing at the door together, looking out into the darkness, almost dreading to face the pelting rain.

"What a night it is, Desmoro!" shuddered she, drawing her hooded cloak closer about her. "I am so sorry to take yo out into the wet; let me go home by myself for this once; no one will harm me, I am sure, and I'll run every step of the way."

"Let yo go home by yo'rself, Comfort?" repeated he. "Indeed, I shall do no such thing! I'm not afraid of a litt' water, I am only vexed that yo are compelled to face this storm. I don't care for myself, I ought not to do so, yo know, when yo are in the case," he added, with an air of youthful gallantry, and lowering the tones of his voice—of that voice whose accents the girl was so learning to love above all other earthly sounds.

Pray do not mistake my meaning, Comfort's affection for Desmoro was such as she might have felt for her own brother—a pure attachment, which, with her advancing years, might be likely to ripen into a different and more ardent feeling.

Yet I will not say, young as she was, that Comfort was utterly devoid of the natural coquetry of her sex. She like a natural dress, or a becoming hat, as well as any woman, and, as far as she could be, she was always especially neat in her attire, both on the stage and off it.

While the young couple were thus standing at the door, about to issue forth, Mr. Mackmillerman's private vehicle drove up, and, at the same instant, that gentleman himself, wrapped in his cloak, emerged from the passage communicating with the inner portion of the theatre, and seeing Comfort, address'd her.

"Yo are surely not going home in this storm, and on foot?" said he, paying no attention to the presence of Desmoro, who kept his place by the young girl's side.

"Oh, yes, I am, Mr. Mackmillerman," she answered, turning her smiling face upon him.

"Nonsense, nonsense!" he added, in quite a grand manner; "I must not permit yo to do anything of the kind. Here is my carriage—step into it, and I will see yo safely home."

"No, thank yo, sir," she replied, modestly, as her arm linked itself through that of Desmoro, where it was firmly held, as in a vice.

"How absurd!" laughed he. "Yo played *Arcturion* little angel to-night; and I must not have yo catch cold by following one of yo'r own coy whims. Come!"

At this instant, Mrs. Polderbrant, in her outens, a huge beaver bonnet on her head, and an immense gingham umbrella in her hand, issued from the passage, and stood behind the trio.

She paused on hearing the star's voice—paused and listened.

"I am much obliged to yo for yo'r kind offer, Mr. Mackmillerman," said Comfort, very resolutely, "but I must beg to decline it. I do not live many hundred yards from here—I shall get home almost directly."

The great tragedian bit his lips at this; while Desmoro's heart beat fast and gratefully under the girl's arm that was being pressed so closely and so coquishly to his side.

The wind just now swept down the alley in a sudden gust, and the rain fell in even greater torrents than before.

It was, indeed, a night of fearful storm; yet Comfort was willing to confront the fury of the elements, rather than accept Mr. Mackmillerman's offer.

But that gentleman's intentions were not to be opposed without his showing some resistance against those who opposed them. He could not suffer himself to be balked by this young girl—oh, no, certainly not!

"Yo shy, pretty creature!" he cried, suddenly encircling her waist.

And, before Desmoro could regain his hold of the arm he had permitted to slip through his own, Comfort was lifted up, carried to the vehicle, and placed inside it.

"No, no! if yo please, Mr. Mackmillerman!" cried she, struggling to get out of the conveyance. "I beg yo will not insist upon taking me against my will! Desmoro!"

"Make yo'rself quite easy, my dear," replied a well-known female voice. "I shall accompany yo!"

"Oh, Mrs. Polderbrant, it's yo!" exclaimed the young girl, in relieved accents.

"Mrs. Polderbrant!" uttered Mr. Mackmillerman, in great disgust.

"Here I am, close at yo'r elbow, my very good sir, ready to accept of yo'r gallant escort home on this awfully tempestuous night."

The gentleman looked agast as Mrs. Polderbrant, patens, poke bonnet, umbrella and all, thrust herself before him, and entered the equipage.

"Miss Comfort lives at No. 2, Crossby Cottages, Spring Green," added she, addressing the owner of the conveyance. "Please to tell the driver the address, Mr. Mackmillerman!" she added, in the coolest manner imaginable; "and don't stand any longer in the rain, but come into this dear cosy nest, and make yo'rself comfortable!"

The gentleman fumed and gnashed his teeth in impotent fury

any further for the present. We shall get home without a wetting, thank goodness, which is a felicity quite unexpected by me."

The equipage was now rolling along the public road. Comfort was sitting as in a dream, and Mrs. Polderbrant was laughing heartily.

"Nicely tricked, nicely tricked," Mr. Mackmillerman said, triumphantly; "tricked by Patience Polderbrant!"

As the carriage rolled away, Mr. Mackmillerman, fuming with disappointment and rage, turned aside and trudged homeward on foot; while Desmoro, inwardly pleased with Mrs. Polderbrant's late conduct, went back into the theatre; where the performance being over, the lights all extinguished, he sought his homely little couch.

Pidgers looked out into the night—which was pitch dark—then he closed the outer door, and drawing near the table, on which a small lantern was burning, he produced several articles, and placed them before him.

"The man had on a suit of new garments, and his hair had been recently cut and oiled. Altogether, he presented a different appearance from his former ragged, dirty self."

But, notwithstanding that fact, he remembered that he had failed to draw Comfort's attention to himself—she had never once looked at him; and, consequently, his improved looks had not been noticed by her for whose sake they had been so much improved.

"It aren't of any use thinkin' of her while I hev' empty pockets," mumbled he, under his breath. "I must hev' a sight of munny, an' then, I'll maybe be able to get her to listen to me, fur I shall be as bold as brass to her an' everybody else, when I've got the cash to finger. I wonder how many of those five-pun notes the ould witch hev' got, an' wheer she do keep 'em? Under her pillow, I'll lay a wager!"

He added, examining a black mask, which he had abstracted from the property-room of the theatre, and a lump of red paint.

Pidgers glanced around the room, at the closed door communicating with the stage, and listened to the splashing rain without.

"That Desmoro chap 'ill not come down here agin; I'm safe enough so fur as that goes. Now fur it! If I don't git her pun-notes, I'll work out my spite on him, the varmint!"

Then the man took the lump of red paint, and mixing it with a little water, commenced smearing the inside of his hand with it, until his palm was very nearly the colour of that of Desmoro.

"My! that'll do!" he exclaimed, regarding his infamous work with wicked satisfaction.

Thrusting his mask under his jacket, he put on his hat, took up the lantern, covered its eye, and stole out into the night, fastening the stage-door behind him.

The wind was still blustering loudly, and the rain was falling in a drizzling flood. But Pidgers cared nothing for the storm—he rather liked it at this moment.

He entered from the alley, and reached the street, which was quite deserted now. From a neighbouring church clock, the hour of one was tolled. Buttoning up his jacket, and pulling up its collar, which served to half conceal his ugly face, Pidgers limped along as quickly as he could. Presently he turned down a dark and miry, where there were only a few scattered, humble cottages. It was a lonely spot; Pidgers was well acquainted with it, and could have found his way along it blindfold. Mrs. Polderbrant lodged in one of these lonely cots, and her landlady was an old widow, who was almost stone-deaf.

On one occasion, recently, this crafty knave, having been sent on a message to the actress, he had slyly learned where she slept, and all he wished to know. Thus the dishonest task he had in hand presented but few difficulties to him.

Mrs. Polderbrant occupied the ground floor of the dwelling; she had always a great fear of fire breaking out in the night, and she preferred to sleep in an apartment from which—in case of danger—she might be able to effect an easy escape.

The man now paused before a lone little house; and, after putting on his mask, produced a bunch of keys, one of which fitting the common lock of the house-door, he quietly made his entrance. All was still within; he could hear only the blustering wind shaking the casements of the cottage, and the heavily-falling rain.

He now let the light of his lantern shine on everything around. A door was in front of him—the door of Mrs. Polderbrant's bedroom. Laying his fingers on the entrance-latch, he noiselessly lifted it, and passed into the apartment, about which he cast an inquiring glance. On a narrow couch lay the actress fast asleep. Her face was turned to the wall, but her regular and heavy breathing proclaimed her state of deep repose.

Pidgers put down his lantern, and drew near the bed; nearer and nearer he drew towards it; still she slumbered on, wholly undisturbed, not dreaming that the midnight robber was by her side.

Stealthily he introduced his hand under her pillow. Ha! He had guessed aright; his fingers were grasping a purse, a leather purse with crisp bank-notes within it.

At this instant, the sleeper turned suddenly, uttered a scream, and started up in bed in a bewildered manner.

"Thieves, thieves!" she shrieked out, with all her might, her hands at the same time grasping the man's shoulder.

But Pidgers, who had the purse in his safe possession, was now prepared to struggle with her—to struggle with her to the death, for might he cared. His frame, although ungainly in the extreme, was of great muscular strength. Her twining arms and clutched fingers he but little regarded; and, as for her cries, he knew that there was no one near to hear them.

Presently she fastened her fingers in, and grappled with his hair, which act giving the man much pain, he dealt her a violent blow in the chest, whereat she loosed her hold of him, and fell back upon her pillow in an almost insensible condition.

Pidgers uttered not a sound, but taking up his lantern he lifted up his reddened palm before the open eyes of the helpless woman in the next moment he had extinguished the light, and the place was in total darkness.

"Good heaven!" she gasped confusedly; "that red hand! Desmoro Desmoro!" and then she swooned, and all was still.

Pidgers chuckled inwardly; his base purpose had been effected, and he was triumphant. Heedless whether his victim were alive or dead, he quitted the house, and, regaining the street, made his way back to the theatre, where, having washed the paint from his hand, and burned the mask, he proceeded to examine

his booty, the contents of the purse he had just stolen from Mrs. Polderbrant.

Three-five pound notes and some gold! Pidgers was a rich man! How his bleared eyes glistened over his ill-got gains, and how his evil spirit rejoiced at what he had done!

"Won't the ould witch mak' a rare fuss over this job?" he said, within himself. "Weel, let her! She'll double up that proud clasp, Maister Desmoro, an' that'll be capital fun for me. Oh, I ha' gotten a 'ced on my shoulders, not a turrip as they may be think it! Wait until to-morrow! I see fairly hungry a wishin' fur that morrow to come!"

And the ruffian rubbed his knotted hands together, and laughed aloud quite gleefully.

Then he approached the fire-place, and putting his arm up the chimney, removed a loose brick. This done, Pidgers secreted, in the vacant space, the stolen purse with the money inside it, and replaced the brick as before.

"Now, I deliee them!" he exclaimed, in an undertone, "an' I shall look the ould witch in the face as bold as brass. Yes, yes, I be all safe, all safe, an' I've gotten my spite on him besides!"

So saying, the detestable creature quickly undressed himself, and letting down a narrow press bedstead tumbled into it, and soon fell fast asleep, out of which sleep he did not wake until broad daylight.

He rose as usual, without fear of any kind. He felt no remorse for what he had done—not he! his base heart was still throbbing with vengeful anticipations. He was thinking of how soon he should see Desmoro accused, and dragged off to prison, and of how he should enjoy the sight of his undesired degradation.

Mrs. Polderbrant long lay motionless and cold, as one from whom the life had fled. When she recovered her recollection she found that she was stiff and sore, and unable to rise. She could remember everything that had occurred: the masked robber and his red hand.

She shuddered, uttered a mournful cry, and covered her face with the bedclothes.

Merciful powers! how she had been deceived! She had deemed him one of heaven's purest sons, and loved him almost like her own! But she had done with him for ever, now: the midnight thief that he was!

By-and-by, she rose, and dressed herself. She was enduring great bodily pain, and her thoughts were full of aching trouble.

Desmoro was an ungrateful, wicked young man, and deserved to suffer for what he had just done—for the crime he had lately committed. She would have no mercy whatever on him; she would deliver him into the hands of the law, and let him pay the penalty of his sinful deed. She felt strangely ill, and she thought it possible that she had received her death-blow.

She said nothing to her landlady of the past night's event, but sat over her breakfast in tearful silence. She was a woman full of integrity and high principle, one who would not hesitate to sacrifice even her own child, if that child had done anything unworthy or wrong. The money that had been stolen from her was not her own! It had been entrusted to her care by Ralph Thetford, to be used for the benefit of Desmoro, should he ever require its use.

Well, he had not waited until the proper time when he might have received his friend's generous help, but like a villain he had seized upon, and possessed himself of, it by unlawful force—possessed himself of it just when she was planning to surprise him with a new suit of clothes.

What would Mr. Thetford say when he came to hear of Desmoro's ingratitude and wickedness? Oh! surely he would be as amazed and hurt at it as she was!

She could not cut a morsel of breakfast, she felt too ill to swallow a single mouthful of anything. She loved this young thief, this heartless Desmoro, and her bosom was filled with contending and agonizing feelings.

But no matter what she felt, his sin merited punishment; and what he merited, she would give.

Such were Mrs. Polderbrant's reflections as she sat over her untasted meal.

Mrs. Polderbrant now prepared herself to go out. The morning was calm and sunny, and the birds were twittering gaily after the late storm. She was looking dreadfully haggard, and years older than she looked the day before, and every onward step she took was causing her excruciating pain. But duty was duty, and she thought that she was performing hers.

She did not direct her steps to the theatre, as she had at first thought of doing, but towards the lodging of Samuel Jellico who was much astonished at her early and unexpected call.

"Are you ill?" he asked, as she entered the room where he was sitting breakfasting.

"Ill!—yes! Almost dead!" she answered, gaspingly.

He pointed to a chair, upon which she sank, in breathless agitation.

"Bless me! What on earth is the matter with you, Mrs. Polderbrant?"

"I've been robbed, Jellico!" returned she, as soon as she could speak again. "Robbed, and nearly murdered as well!"

"Good heavens!"

"I do not think I have many hours to live; I am feeling sick unto death."

"Can I get you anything—my assistance—you really alarm me!" said the manager, in confused syllables. "When were you robbed, and how?"

She did not answer him on the moment. She was unable to do so.

"Come with me!" she uttered, at length, her hand pressed upon her bosom; "come with me, I charge you. I have a piece of justice to perform, or I die!"

"I cannot understand, my dear Mrs. Polderbrant, I am in the dark, quite! Will you not explain yourself to me?"

She shook her head, while her face assumed quite a leaden hue.

Jellico rose and put on his hat. He looked much perplexed, and as if he would have liked matters to be explained to him.

"Thank you," she said; "I want you to accompany me to the theatre."

"To the theatre?" he echoed.

"Yes."

"But wherefore there?"

"Ask no questions, I entreat!"

"You do not appear to be able to walk so far," he observed, seeing her stagger to her feet.

"I'll manage to do so," she replied, hollowly.

"Come!"

The manager's lodgings were not at any considerable distance of the theatre, else he would

have hesitated at allowing her to go thither in her present state.

Mrs. Polderbrant did not speak a single word more until she had reached the stage-entrance, where, thoroughly exhausted, she sank upon a seat and panted for breath.

Pidgers was present at this moment, looking perfectly unconcerned. He knew well the object of her visit there, and his fiend-like spirit was all exultation.

Recovering herself a little, she addressed the doorkeeper.

"Where's Mr. Desmoro?"

"In the house, marm," he answered, nodding his head towards the passage leading to the stage.

"At what hour did he come home this morning?" she further inquired.

"Let's see, did he go out last night?" returned the man, pretending to reflect upon the question. "I truly dunno whether he did or not. I can't recollect nothin' about it, if he did."

"Think a moment or two," said Jellico, his senses all in a state of wonderment, and longing to have things explained to him.

"I fancy he went out—but I aren't surin' of it at all, m'd ye, sur—'an' that when I let him in I was so sleepy as not to remember nout about it."

Your explanation is wondrously clear, Pidgers," rejoined Jellico, somewhat severely. "If you do not sharpen your wits a little, I shall have to provide myself with a fresh doorkeeper!"

"I beg your pardon, sur," said the man, humbly; "but you see I war tired last neet, and had in my 'ed besides; and if you war to kill me I couldn't tell yo whether I let Maister Desmoro in or out. I couldn't, believe me, fur the rheumatiz in the 'ed puts everything else out of it."

Mrs. Polderbrant had risen from her seat. "Ask him no more questions—he's a dolt!" she uttered, with characteristic brusqueness, her accents hoarse, her eyes glassy, and her whole frame quivering. "Send some one for a constable!" she added, looking about in a vacant manner.

"A constable?" repeated the manager.

"A constable?" was her emphatic rejoinder.

"Shall I go for one?" asked the man, eagerly.

"Send him—send him!" breathed she, her hand laid on Jellico's arm.

"I'd fitter send for a doctor, I think," he answered, noting her altered manners, and the deadly pallor of her countenance.

"Let him fetch the constable!" she repeated.

"I charge you to do this much for me, Samuel Jellico!"

Pidgers had his hat on, and was ready for his errand.

"Go!" said the manager, looking greatly amazed.

The man needed no further bidding—he was gone.

"Now, for Desmoro!" panted Mrs. Polderbrant, staggering along into the passage, and pursuing her way to the room occupied by our hero, who was sitting over his morning meal, little anticipating such an interruption.

He started up on the entrance of Jellico and his companion.

There was neither guilt nor fear expressed in the youth's features; he looked surprised to receive such early visitors, nothing more.

"Robber!" cried Mrs. Polderbrant, abruptly, and in withering syllables, her arms stretched out towards Desmoro who was standing with eyes and mouth agape. "Robber and assassin both!" she added, sinking into a chair.

"Mrs. Polderbrant!—Mr. Jellico!" exclaimed Desmoro, looking from one to the other in utter amazement. "What does this mean, m'ann—sir? Why—?"

The manager raised his hands and his shoulders together.

"What does it mean?" echoed she, through her white, quivering lips. "It means that you are a villain—a mean, dastardly thief! Where is my purse—the purse you stole from me last night? Bear witness to my words, Samuel Jellico!" she broke off to say to him: "they are true words—the words of a dying woman! This young villain, his face concealed by a mask, broke in upon me last night, and robbed me; but despite his concealed features, I knew him by his red hand!"

"Mrs. Polderbrant!" shrieked Desmoro, agitated with terror, big drops starting out, and standing on his brow.

"Bear witness still further—he struck me violently; and I am dying from a blow inflicted by his hand!"

And so saying, she leaned back, and closed her eyes.

Desmoro was speechless, and standing perfectly motionless. Manager Jellico was looking at him, perplexed and horrified. At one moment he thought that Mrs. Polderbrant had taken leave of her senses; at another time that he was under the influence of some dreadful nightmare.

"What have you to say to this terrible accusation, young man?" he asked, addressing Desmoro, and speaking in severe accents.

"I am wholly bewildered, sir, and scarcely know whether I am asleep or awake," was the reply. "I do not comprehend one syllable Mrs. Polderbrant has said; and how should I, sir, seeing that I am innocent of ever having done her wrong in any way?"

"Innocent?" repeated she. "Oh, wicked young man! How have you deceived me? I loved you dearly, and you have repaid my love with treachery and violence. But you shall suffer for the evil you have done. I will struggle against the dark messenger until I have given my testimony against you, then Patience Polderbrant will close her eyes and take her eternal rest."

She had spoken this bitterly. She felt firmly convinced of Desmoro's guilt, and she believed that she would be only fulfilling her duty in giving him into the hands of justice, when he would be punished according to his well-merited deservings. She knew that she was dying, yet, even in her last moments, her sternness of character did not soften a single jot.

But it was with pain that she now obeyed the harsh dictates of her honourable nature. She had no revengeful feelings to gratify in this affair; she was simply following the course which she imagined to be the straight and honest course.

While she was lying back in her seat, waiting the coming of the constable, her bosom was assuaged by a score of contending feelings. She did not trust herself to look at Desmoro; for she could not help remembering his par-

entless state, and likewise the solemn promises she had made to Ralph Thetford.

Once, twice, and thrice had Desmoro attempted to speak; but each time that he had done so he had been silenced by a wave of Mrs. Polderbrant's hand, and a sharp request that he would hold his false tongue, and burden his soul with no more sin.

Poor Desmoro wrung his hands in utter despair, confused and terror-stricken. His heart was palpitating wildly, and his breast was filled with many vague apprehensions.

"He a dolt!" Oh, heaven! when, were, and how? How dazed his brain felt, as he thus questioned himself! He looked at Samuel Jellico, then at Mrs. Polderbrant, his accuser; and again he spoke, begging the latter to explain herself to him.

But she was ill—too ill to reply to him; and she took no notice of his appeal, but remained quite silent, with her eyes closed, and her white lips tightly compressed together.

Jellico looked very unhappy. He had conceived a sincere liking for the friendless young man whom fate had thrown across his path, and he was grieved beyond measure to see him standing in his present fearful position. Of course he could not doubt Mrs. Polderbrant's statement. Some who knew her thoroughly could ever question her integrity in either word or deed.

He was sitting biting his lips, dreading the arrival of the constable, and wondering within himself how the affair would end—whether Desmoro would be able to clear himself of the foul charge preferred against him, or whether he would be found guilty?

Jellico could not readily bring himself to credit aught of ill against one who had always conducted himself so praiseworthy as Desmoro; who, in all respects, had ever acted in an upright manner, his every act being open as the day itself. The worthy manager was both perplexed and distressed. He was thinking of the disgrace which the affair would be likely to pull upon all the members of his company, and that thought gave him inexpressible pain.

Desmoro who was leaning against the fire-place, his face blanched, his white lips twitching convulsively. A heavy, dull torpor seemed to have fallen upon him. This false and terrible accusation had almost paralysed his faculties, and his eyes were filled with a wild yet vacant expression, which struck Jellico's kindly breast with compassion for the youth's friendless and helpless state.

Steadily, unused the manager there was some mistake in all this! Mrs. Polderbrant had always been a woman of eccentric manners—so much so, indeed, that people had sometimes doubted her entire sanity. She might, then, be suffering from some sort of delusion at this moment, and under the influence of a disturbed brain, be doing a great and cruel injustice. Of course, she was wholly unconscious of her condition; she was acting according to her own impressions, and with an idea that she was acting rightly.

Of what sum of money sufficient to tempt a thief could Mrs. Polderbrant possibly have been possessed?

Knowing her salary, and the way in which she lived, Jellico concluded that she could not have saved anything.

Then what did she mean by thus ravaging about her purse?

Assuredly, there was some mystery in all this, he thought.

But that red hand!

Could Mrs. Polderbrant have fancied that she saw that?

Jellico was becoming more confused, as these mental queries, one after another, presented themselves to him.

At length, Pidgers returned with a constable, to whom Mrs. Polderbrant gave Desmoro in charge.

She told the constable that she was a dying woman, and she made him take down her declaration, which she made in a clear and connected manner, which left no doubt on his mind of the truth of her story.

All this while Desmoro offered no single syllable in his own defence. He stood rigid as a pillar of stone. He did not appear to be listening to what was being said by Mrs. Polderbrant; he was apparently quite uninterested in the scene passing around him.

But when the officer of the law produced a pair of handcuffs, and approached to put them on the accused, a sudden change came over him. The sight of those hideous fetters had aroused Desmoro to a sense of his dangerous position, and a thrill of horror pervaded his entire frame.

And now he could speak—now his speech came in a torrent of frenzied words, while his clasped hands were lifted high above his head, in order to avoid the imprisonment of those frightful iron rings.

"I am innocent. I am innocent of all knowledge of the act of which I am accused!" he cried, gazing first at one and then at another. Mrs. Polderbrant! Mr. Jellico! I was not out of the theatre after the performance was over, last night; the stage doorkeeper can prove that fact, prove it fully! Pidgers," he added, turning to that individual, who had not yet withdrawn,—"Pidgers, you can say whether I am speaking the truth or otherwise! Speak!"

The man shook his head, and limped a pace or two nearer the door, as if disinclined to reply.

"Do you hear, Pidgers?" proceeded Desmoro, with frantic earnestness. "Speak—speak, in the name of heaven, and disprove this crushing impeachment which they prefer against me!"

"No, they'll mak' me sweeter to my words; and as I see not sartin whether you war in or out of the theatre last neet, I see hold my tongue between my teeth an' say nothin'."

Desmoro uttered a cry of despair, and Pidgers, with a virtuous look upon his repulsive countenance, halted out of the room, and disappeared entirely.

It was of no use; the only person who could establish Desmoro's innocence, refused to do so.

"Here," he said, addressing the constable, and presenting his wrists with a reckless air; "here; do with me as you please, I cannot avert my fate!"

The agent of the law answered not a word, but placed his manacles upon the young man's wrists.

As he did so, the iron seemed to enter into Desmoro's very soul.

"For the second time," he inwardly uttered, glancing at his imprisoned limbs, and shuddering violently; "and on both occasions unjustly," he continued with bitter emphasis. "Well, maybe it will not be always thus," he went on,

laughing aloud. "One's heart may be warped and wrung until it becomes harder than stone itself. Misfortune pursues me. Well, let it crush me at once, and make an end of the persecuted Desmoro Desmoro!"

Then a gush of unbidden tears started into his eyes, for the form of a fair girl had risen before his mental vision, and the tones of Comfort's soft voice seemed to be thrilling his ears.

"Lost—lost to me for ever!" he exclaimed wildly, the nails of his clenched fingers cutting his flesh. "Oh, my dead mother! from your home in heaven, look down upon your poor, persecuted son! Look down upon, and help him in this his hour of dark need!"

Well, Desmoro was hurried off to prison, and Mrs. Polderbrant, to whom a doctor had been summoned, was placed on a litter, and conveyed home.

She was aware that she was in an expiring condition, and had insisted on being carried back to her own residence to die. She said that she was quite resigned to depart from the world, since the only tie that had attached her to it was now entirely broken. She believed that she was upon the point of death, and that Desmoro was the cause of it. But she reflected that he was in the hands of justice, and that he would be made to suffer for the deed he had done. Yes—yes, her death would be amply avenged.

Meanwhile, Pidgers was rubbing his wicked hands in fiend-like gladness. Desmoro he reflected, was removed out of the way, and covered with everlasting degradation. Nay, his very life was in jeopardy; for should Mrs. Polderbrant not survive, her death would assuredly be laid at Desmoro's door, and he would then be condemned to suffer for that crime, for a crime he had not committed.

"Ay, maybe, they'll hang him," cogitated Pidgers; "an' a good job if they do, I say! A proud streak-up, as he is! I said I'd hev my revenge on him, an' I see I've got my word— I've kep' my word! I'll go an' see him tried, see if I don't, an' I see grin in his face, an' wink my eye at him, an' show him how I hates the very sight on his face, smooth mug. I dar' say that they'll be fur bringin' of me up as a sort of witness in th' case; but I know how to hold my tongue, and when to let it loose agin! I wasn't born yesterday! No, I aren't no fool, what's yer I look like! I aren't a bit frightened neither! I've got the ould witch's bag, an' this Desmoro Desmoro into a bubble, an' avers, fur no more, only Miss Comfort Shavins, who'll hev to speak gentle to me afore afore I see begin my case, but I see not yet finished it! Wait awhile, says I; things is a' out on us pratty as pratty can be, an' by-and-by, they'll p'haps go on better still. Eh, my! if I hadn't got legs I'd done for joy to think how I've worked my end on Maister Desmoro Desmoro!"

When Mrs. Polderbrant reached her home, and they had laid her on her bed, she sent for the local magistrate, desiring him to come to her, in order to take down her dying deposition, saying that she was not quite satisfied to leave this matter in a common constable's hands.

And the magistrate's clerk waited upon the stern, inflexible woman, and wrote down her statement concerning the robbery, and the fatal blow she had received at the hands of the robber whom she declared to be no other than Desmoro Desmoro, the red-handed, who was now in close custody, confined in the Braymount gaol.

"Yes," repeated she; "Desmoro Desmoro, and none other, robbed me last night, and dealt me my death-blow. I, Patience Polderbrant, whose spark of life is well-nigh quenched, who will soon stand before the Bar of Judgment, do swear to these facts."

Jellico, who was present at the moment, looked at her most imploringly.

She stooped over her pillow, and, in a low voice, addressed her.

"Do you know that you are putting a matter about this poor lad's neck? I do not think him guilty; there is some mistake; your sight has been deceived in some way or other. For the love of mercy, recall, then, your words before it is too late to do so. Say that you are not certain that Desmoro was the villain who perpetrated this cruel outrage on you—in the name of heaven, leave this matter shrouded in doubt, and do not go out of this world leaving a young life in such awful jeopardy!"

Mrs. Polderbrant raised herself on her elbow, and fastened her glassy eyes on the speaker.

"Samuel Jellico," she said, in solemn yet hollow tones, "shall I depart hence with a falsehood on my soul? There was no mistake at all. I saw his hand—the hand of the thief, and it was a red one—it was the hand of Desmoro Desmoro."

Jellico groaned aloud.

"Believe you in the words of the holy Gospel?" she went on. "Are we not told in it that blood should be paid for with blood? Let it be so now—let it be so now!" she added, sinking back upon her pillow, the heavy death-dew on her brow. "I have only performed my duty in this wicked business. Justice must be done!"

"Without an atom of mercy?" asked he. "Let me sue to you for this poor young man?" he continued, entreatingly. "How would you be if he who is at the top of judgment should but judge you as you are? Oh, think on that, and mercy will then breathe within your

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MONTREAL, SATURDAY, DEC. 21, 1872.

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THE ENGRAVING IS NOW READY FOR IMMEDIATE DISTRIBUTION.

MAKE UP YOUR CLUBS. Address, GEORGE E. DESBARATS, Montreal.

MURDER IN THE UNITED STATES.

At the present time there are no less than twenty-three murderers awaiting trial in the Tombs prison, New York; if we take the whole United States we will find that hundreds—we had almost said thousands—of persons accused of murder are awaiting trial in the various prisons throughout the country.

A curious report about a celebrated murderess has lately reached us, which at first looked like a joke, but on consideration we are prepared to believe it, in fact we are prepared to believe almost anything with regard to murderers in the United States.

acquitted; and now she wants the State of California to pay the expenses of said acquittal. The State of California might reimburse Mrs. Fair, but if they do we shall certainly think that all the wise men have gone back to the East, and that none are left in the Legislature of the State of California.

MANSARD ROOFS.

Although mansard roofs are looked on as a modern invention, they are really about a century old, having first been used by Mansard, whose name they bear and who was superintendent of public buildings in the reign of Louis XIV.

A THOROUGHLY GOOD THING.

One of the most complete and useful inventions which we have lately examined is Wilson's Adjustable Iron Chair, the Canadian Agents for which are Dr. N. A. Smith & Co., 241 St. James Street.

THE FIRE IN FULTON, N. Y.

(From the Fulton Patriot and Gazette, Nov. 20, 1872.)

Yesterday forenoon our village was startled by the cry of fire. (We haven't any alarm, and are obliged to depend upon human lungs for notice in such a case.)

LITERARY ITEMS.

THE DOLL WORLD SERIES. By Mrs. Robert O'Reilly. 3 vols in a neat little case.

THE MARQUESS OF CARABAS, OR PESS IN BOOTS. These are two of Marcus Ward & Co's Illustrated Legends, published by W. P. Nimmo, Edinburgh.

THE CANADIAN EVANGELIST is the title of a new religious paper published in German at Preston, Ont., and is designed to fill in the German literature of our country somewhat the same position that the Witness does in English.

THE ALPINE.—This is without doubt the very best art magazine published in America, and very nearly resembles the Art Journal of London.

BOOKS RECEIVED. A WOMAN'S VENGEANCE. A novel. By James Payal. New York: Harper & Brothers.

FOR THE KING. By Charles Gibbon. New York: Harper & Brothers.

WISE AND OTHERWISE.

A boy with microscopic eyes is the latest scientific wonder in England. He possesses the faculty of seeing minute objects magnified to a marvellous degree.

A NEW religious sect has sprung up in London, of a very peculiar kind. Its chief characteristic seems to consist in howling at stated times.

ing as the power is expended; while so simple is its construction there is less skill required in handling this locomotive than a horse or mule. Some of the intelligent and ambitious mechanics and machinists of Pittsburgh might find their account in entering the same field of investigation and experiment.

THE FOLLOWING ARE MEDICAL SIGNS OF DREAMS.

The following are medical signs of dreams, as published in a medical work—Lively dreams are, in general, a sign of nervous action.

THE NATIONAL ANTHEM.

It is generally supposed that the words and air of "God save the King" originated with Handel.

A SINGULAR COINCIDENCE.

There is a singular coincidence between the destruction of Chicago and Boston. The Boston fire occurred at the very same hour and on the same day of the week and month.

A SUBSTITUTE FOR HORSE POWER WANTED.

One of the results of the prevalent horse epidemic will unquestionably be to give a great impetus to investigations and experiments having for their object the substitution of some perfectly safe and practical motive power for street cars and road vehicles in place of horse and mule power.

FRANCE.—The number of petitions for the dissolution of the National Assembly circulating for signatures throughout Paris and departments is greatly increasing.

SOUTH AMERICA.—Advices from Rio Janeiro to November 22nd, state that General Mitre, the Argentine envoy, brought his negotiations with Brazil to an end.

ITALY.—The floods in the north of Italy continue to spread.

ENGLAND.—Several of the gas stokers, who were summoned to appear on a charge of conspiracy, have been found guilty and sentenced to six weeks imprisonment.

SOUTH AFRICA.—Cape of Good Hope advices by mail state that a fierce battle is going on in the interior between the Krole people and Tambahies, in which the latter were whipped, and from 100 to 1,000 were slaughtered.

SWITZERLAND.—The election for President and Vice-President of the Swiss confederation for the year 1873 has resulted in the choice of M. Cressat for the former office, and Dr. Schenk for the latter.

SPAIN.—A body of Carlists entered the town of Alamos last week, but were met by troops, and repulsed after a sharp fight.

JAMAICA.—Large numbers of wealthy Cubans are leaving Cuba and purchasing plantations in Jamaica.

EPITOME OF LATEST NEWS.

UNITED STATES.—A fire occurred in the upper flats of the Fifth Avenue Hotel, corner of 23rd Street and Fifth Avenue, New York, on the night of 10th inst., seriously damaging the 23rd Street wing.

A Washington special states the old syndicate, in connection with Kohlstedt, have offered to take the remaining three hundred million of the five percent bonds, and also a large portion of the four and a half percent loan.

A San Diego special states the steamship had struck on a reef off miles south-west of San Diego, and was returning to the harbor.

THE SACRAMENTO.—It is generally supposed that the words and air of "God save the King" originated with Handel.

THE LATEST NOVELTY in suicides comes from Cleveland, Ohio, where an individual who had drawn a blank in a lottery, went to his death after the following unique and elaborate preparations.

A QUEEN country is China; a country where roses which no fragrance and women no petticoats; where the laborer has no subsistence and the magistrate no sense of honor.

THE REMAINS of John Howard Payne, the author of "Home, Sweet Home," are to be brought from Tunis, where he died and was buried, and will be interred by the Faust Club of Brooklyn, at his old home on Long Island.

HAMILTON contemplates the introduction of the fire alarm telegraph system. Great additions have recently been made to the public library—reports of 3,000 volumes.

HUNTERS are taking large numbers of deer from the Upper Ottawa District to the United States market at the Brockville and Ottawa.

THE EXECUTIONS for the new Post Office have been commenced, and the work will be pushed forward rapidly by the contractors, Hatch Bros., of Quebec.

ACTION has been taken against Mr. Gaudin for the purpose of improving the present salary of \$300 for each and every day he has illegally occupied a seat in the Legislative Assembly since the opening of the present session.

THE HOUSE OF COMMONS has been adjourned until the 27th inst., and the light-house on Anticosti Island was completely destroyed by the late hurricane.

SEVERAL small fishing vessels were also wrecked.

THE PROTOCOLS of the several departments which the movement has assumed, and the portions have been summoned to attend the members of the moderate left are in favor of the dissolution of the Assembly.

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"Sure an' it's illigant, it's fairy work!" said all the neighbours.

"Thru' for you, it is the fairies' work," said Larry, with a sly wink at Pat; an' Pat, knowin' what he had seen, an' nothin' of the fairies, burst into a loud laugh, an' let out that Larry was the workman.

"No neighbor was more astonished than Larry's own father an' mother. They knew nothin' of Larry's friend the leprechaun, nor his fairy teachers; they said the blessed St. Joseph must have put the knowledge in his head, an' called the boy a rare born genius.

"Other farmers' wives envied Mrs. McCann her fine dresser, on which a set of new wooden plecters an' hammers were ranged, with here and there a bright-coloured crock for show; an' they came beggin' of Larry to make the copy of it for them. So, sure, an' it came about that soon Larry had so much of his new work he was forced to take two of his brothers the trade, an' build a proper workshop; and Farmer McCann had to set the gossoms to work on the farm instead of lounging about an' propping up door-posts all the day.

"But never a bit did Larry go near Kitty all this time, though many a long look did he cast that way when he passed Peter Quin's gate. If they met at mass, he just gave her the time of day, as any other friend might do; but though his very heart was bursting with love, he kept it, like his other secrets, to himself.

"As for Kitty, there were plenty of bachelors after her, either for herself or her fortune; but she never got the feel of Larry's kisses or her lips, an' cared more for a glance of his blue eye than for all the bachelors in Wicklow.

"She knew she had sent him away with her proud words, but she would have given all her gold for a whisper of love from him now he had taken her at her word, and seemed to forget her infidelity. She just went paler an' thinner, an' when the next mid-summer roses were red on the bushes, there were only white ones on Kitty's cheeks.

"Mike and Larry had been fast friends all the time, an' many a job of work Larry did for him on his own account, but soon a wall would he drive for Peter Quin. It was Mike who let Larry into the secret that owd Corcoran the agent was after Kitty, an' that she had sent him about his business with a sharp word agen his desart in shanderin a better man—namin Larry.

"A smart young shopkeeper from Dublin had made her an offer besides, an' even set Molly Mulroony the Blackfoot to try an' persuade her.

"What's a Blackfoot, Margaret?" we asked in a breath.

"Sure, an' a Blackfoot's a match-maker, a woman as goes between shy lovers an' helps the courtin'."

"Well, then, as Larry never went to the whiskey-shop, nor to Peter Quin's, Mike found his way to the busy carpenter's shop. He used to ask a power of questions about the work in hand; for I must tell ye, Larry had been so well taught by the Good People, he could turn his hand to cabinet work as well as rough carpentry.

"About this time, Mike saw Larry an' Pat workin' early an' late over furniture not meant for the farmers or gentry about; an' for a wonder, Larry never said a word who they were workin' for. But Pat, the sly rogue, let out as a great secret that it was for Larry's own house, agin his weddin'.

"Where is the house?" says Mike.

"At Bray," says Pat.

"An' who's the sweetheart?" says Mike agin.

"Arrah, now, an' that's the last what meself don't know," says Pat in reply.

"Mike went with his news straight to Kitty, who, with bare arms an' tucked-up gown, was makin' butter in the dairy, though she did despise a farmer's life.

"Down went butter an' butter-mould, an' Kitty into the bargain, an' Mike had much ado to bring her out of her fat.

"Kitty," says Mike, when they were all by themselves, "sure an' ye didn't care for Larry, did ye? I thought ye didn't, as ye treated him wid scorn an' contempt, an' Larry tuk to the drink wid the heart-break."

"O, don't, Mike dear, don't! Thru' an' it was my own pride an' conceit that drew Larry away, an' it's I that have had the heart-break ever since."

"Be me soul, an' it must be a new sweetheart, an' a clever lass, that set him agin drink an' made him turn carpenter! Oh, Kitty, I'd sooner ye'd had Larry McCann than the biggest lord in the land; an' Mike took out his pipe—his unalligant consolator—for a draw an' a think; an' Kitty having no such consolation, he left her sobbin'.

"The next day was Sunday, but Kitty was not at mass. Mike, however, was there, an' Peter, an' Larry as fine as a Dublin tailor could make him.

"How's Miss Quin?" asked Larry purtly to Mike as they walked home together.

"Thro' an' she might be better," answered Mike; an' says he, quite abrupt, "Whin's this weddin' of yours to come off, Larry?"

"It's not settled," says he; "I've not got the lady's consent yet."

"Not settled, an' her a lady, an' your house taken, an' your furniture made! Bedad, this presses me intirely!" An' Mike looked hard at Larry, an' Larry looked at Mike, an' whatever they saw, they shook hands, and Mike flung up his shilly an' caught it again, an' danced every foot of the way to their own gate.

"Mebbe ye wouldn't mind comin' in for a bit, as Peter's stayed behin for confession," says Mike with a grin. An' in they went together.

"Dinner was bein' laid in the kitchen, but Kitty was in the parlour.

"As ye're not very well, Kitty, I thought I'd better bring a doctor to see ye," says Mike, openin' the door.

"A doctor?" says Kitty, starting to her feet, growing crimson an' then white as Larry stepped into the room, an' Mike discreetly shut the door upon them, an' being weak she might have fainted again, but Larry caught her in his arms—an' she got better.

"Dinner was for Peter, and Peter waited for Kitty; but Mike told him that Kitty was ill an' the doctor was wid her, an' they couldn't be disturbed. But Peter wanted his dinner, an' grew impatient; an' then Mike told him that as he had been to confession, Kitty was at confession too, an' that Larry McCann was her confessor.

"Sure, Peter was thunderstruck; but he had sense to see that Larry McCann the thrivin' young carpenter was another sort of a man from the Larry McCann who worked on his father's farm with scarce a thought of payment; an' Mike soon got his father to give his consent with a blessing.

"The priest followed the doctor in less than a month, but the priest this time was Father Maguire.

"The day before the wedding, Larry took Kitty down to Powerscourt Falls, an' they sat with his arm round her slender waist, on the stone under the plane tree where his head had lain, he told her all about the leprechaun, an' his own apprenticeship to the fairies.

"An' that was how the McCanns became carpenters."

Fred and I tried to convince Margaret, that the leprechaun was the result of her grandfather's morning dream, and that under the influence of further potatoes he had strayed in safety from the road down the precipitous path to the Dargle, and so on to the Falls; and there sleeping, had dreamt of the fairy funeral.

But Margaret was not convinced; and a few years later the faithful creature died, as firm a believer in fairies as when she told us the story of Larry's apprenticeship, and the fortune he found in his own right hand.

## ON DECK.

BY W. W. HUTCHINSON.

Three of us sat on the hurricane deck,  
Watching the waves roll high,  
Watching the dark smoke float away,  
Watching the sails drift by.

One was stately and tall and dark,  
With the air of an Indian queen,  
And one was a dainty little one,  
With the grace of a stray sunbeam.

While I,—but what is the use? You know,  
You, of three—sore and ten,  
How at twenty-one you played your part,  
As other boys did then.

We sang and chanted, shanted and sang  
The idle hours away,  
Till our singing was only the ghost of a song,  
And for talking, we'd nothing to say.

At last the sun, whose ride had been  
A quiet part at best,  
Wary of playing at hide-and-seek,  
Sank down in the fur-off West.

The queen of our party, grown weary  
Of the quiet monotony,  
With caution of "Don't stay late, my dears,"  
Arose, and left us alone.

Along with the wind and the restless sea,  
Only the sea and the sky,  
And the two great flocks of soft, gray smoke,  
That, mingled in one, drift by.

The wind grew fiercer; we moved our seats  
To the leeward side of the boat,  
And watched, in the West, a phantom ship  
On a golden cloud-sea float.

Till at last the shadows hid them all,  
And molten gold turned gray,  
And the stars from their moorings had broken  
Loose,

And went drifting over the bay.

I looked from the sea and the straying stars,  
To the sunbeam at my side,  
"Darling! the ship that bears my hopes—  
Must it sink in a stormy tide?"

The waves, with a whisper sad, swept by,  
The wind played a dirge in the ropes,  
As into the sea of silence sank  
My ship, with its beautiful hopes.

## A CHRISTMAS STORY.

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

## CHAPTER I.

"Christmas Eve—Christmas Eve," rang out the bells merrily in the cold, clear, frosty air. The snow lay white, soft, and thick upon the ground; it fringed the tall, leafless trees; it covered the wide meadow lands; it made the world look new, fresh, and pure in its virgin robe. The wind moaned and sighed, sometimes in a soft whisper that the trees bent their stately heads to hear, and then arising with a giant voice, swept all before it, drowning in its wild music all other sounds of earth. The golden stars blazed in the blue wintry sky; the moonbeams silvered the white earth; they fell alike on the quiet country, where Nature seemed to sleep, and upon the crowded town, where rest is unknown; upon the heaving billowy sea and the dark waving woods, lending wherever they smiled some of their own quiet beauty to the scene.

There was one spot where they lingered, making the whole place so beautiful that it looked like a dream of fairyland. In the distance lay the glorious sea, with a broad stream of silvery light playing on its waves, which broke with a soft murmur upon the shore. The dark pine wood seemed to reach nearly to the water's edge; broad lauds lay on either side, and in the midst stood the noble old hall of Erlwood. The moonbeams fell upon turret and gable, lighting the many windows as with diamond flashes, showing the icicles which hung like a crown around it, making the lake a sheet of silver, and the pleasure grounds a picturesque mixture of white and shadow. From out the spire of the church, which crowned the hill near, the bells pealed with a loud and jubilant voice. The village was one blaze of cheerful firelight; but the hall was in darkness, save for the beams that played upon it and the ruddy glow that from one solitary window shone upon the snow.

There was no sound of Christmas mirth or music, no waifs singing the sweet song of old, no murmur of glad young voices, no gathering of friends and retainers; all was silent, dark and cheerless, even the very wind seemed to hush its moanings as it sighed round the house. The quiet was deep and unbroken; far away sounded the breaking of the waves and the merry chiming of the bells, the murmur of the wind in the pine trees, and the hushed music of the Winter's night; far away sounded the dim echo of the village waifs, and the gay chorus from many a happy home. No sound disturbed the stillness which fell like a mantle around Erlwood; no warm, genial light cheered the darkness that reigned supreme.

Yet for many long years Christmas had been royally kept within those ancient walls. The yule-log had burned upon the hearth, the holly and mistletoe had wreathed the rooms and corridors, friends had gathered there, young and lovely, old and tried; there had been open house, and a well-spread table for all who cared to share it.

But a shadow had fallen upon Erlwood, and its darkness had obscured all Christmas light. Only three short years before Sir Bertrand Lyle had brought home to the old hall a young bride, so lovely, so fair, and so gentle, that she had won all hearts; he had loved her so passionately that his whole life seemed to have merged into hers; and now men spoke of them in whispers, and gossips looked wise when they heard the Lady Hilda's name. Surely no shadow could fall on that pure and noble heart, or bow that bright golden head with sorrow.

All regardless of the past joy and the present sorrow, the bells chimed merrily on that

glorious Christmas Eve, and soon the stillness was broken by the sound of a stealthy footstep; out of the pine wood there came a traveller, a tall, stately man, wrapped in a thick fur cloak; a cap, which defended him from the cold, screened his features; he could not, however, conceal the fact of his presence, for in the thick snow there was the mark of every step. He stood for a moment at the still that led from the wood to the pleasure ground; he knew the way well, for he glided past the laurel trees, round the path where in Summer the lilacs bloom, and stood at last underneath the window from whence came the one glow of light. Shaking the snow from his heavy wrappers he turned his face to the window and looked in. He saw something there that made his strong frame tremble and made the breath come thick and heavy from between his white quivering lips.

It was a large and gorgeous room into which he gazed, the walls were panelled in white and gold, a few of the rarest pictures in costly frames and graceful statues, "frozen music," were interspersed with gorgeous flowers of every color and hue; a soft golden light from the crystal chandelier mingled with the ruddy blaze from the fire, costly books, a piano and harp that seemed made only for beautiful fingers, showed that the room was occupied.

Yes, occupied, for there, walking restlessly up and down the length of that magnificent apartment, was a young and most lovely woman. A robe of rich violet velvet fell in graceful folds around her, and revealed a neck and shoulders of unrivalled beauty and fairness, a small circle of diamonds was clasped round a brow white as snow and crowned with a wealth of golden hair, one superb bracelet glittered upon the exquisite arm, and the face was peerless in its glorious beauty. She was alone, and ever and anon she threw herself into the crimson velvet fauteuil drawn near the fire, took up a book and tried to read; then with a weary sigh she laid it down and paced in her restless agitation up and down the room; now, as she stands where the light from the chandelier falls upon her golden hair and flashes in her diamonds, she looks like one of those fair and bewitching women for whom men lay down their lives and think themselves happy in so doing. Her face was pure and sweet with all its witchery, the charm of truth lay in those dreamy violet eyes and fresh beautiful lips. Eyes like those never were dimmed yet with remorse, and yet the Lady Hilda had shed many bitter tears; lips such as hers never spoke a false, untrue, or mean word, and yet she had been judged guilty of that and worse.

"Christmas Eve, Christmas Eve," murmured the lady, "and I am here all alone. What cruel fate has pursued me? What has taken Bertrand's heart from me? Why has he left me and ceased to love me?"

She clasped her white jewelled hands and wrung them together as she began again her dreary walk. The light flashed in her diamonds and drew her attention as it shone in the large mirror upon the wall. A bitter smile curved her lips.

"I did well," she said, "to wear them tonight of all nights in the year; yet it was on this very Christmas Eve he gave them to me, and told me they were an old heirloom he had forgotten when he gave me his mother's jewels. He said while he loved me the light would live in them and the fire burn, and that when he ceased to do so, they would become cold and dim. Ah! my diamonds are bright, but his love is dead and buried."

Hot tears dimmed the beautiful eyes which gazed so intently in the mirror, and then she turned away.

There was a lull in the moaning of the wind, and a faint distant echo of the Christmas bells was heard. The lady started; she drew near the window, and the watcher stood back in the shade. The beautiful face was pressed close to the cold glass, while the sad eyes gazed drearily on the white landscape.

"Only one year since and he stood here with me," she said.

The music of the bells came nearer and clearer as the night air grew colder. It seemed to smite her with a strange pain. She left the window and sat once more by the fire. Sad thoughts came to her with the picture she saw there. One was of a noble and gallant young lover with the face and bearing of a knight of old, who had wooed and won her, who had wiled the heart from her breast, until she had no thought, no care, save for him.

Then the brave and handsome lover was changed into the tender and loving husband. She saw herself a worshipped wife, whose least word was law. Ah, and then the lover and husband both disappear—a grave, stern man took their place. She saw herself deserted and alone; she saw him no longer, and then the lady's heart gave way, and she flung herself in her bitter grief upon the ground, and lay weeping.

When the watcher at the window saw her lying there, the rich velvet, the shining diamonds, and the golden hair, all crushed in her wild grief,—when he heard her bitter sighs that rose above the murmur of the wind and the music of the bells, he turned hastily away, and with rapid steps disappeared from sight. No one knew that he had been there, for the fresh fall of snow destroyed all trace of him.

## CHAPTER II.

"Shall you go, Kate, or not?" asked my brother, as he stood before me with an open letter in his hand. It was Christmas Eve, just one year before my story opens.

"Yes," was my reply. "I would rather spend Christmas at Erlwood than in dull, foggy London. Of all places for real enjoyment, commend me to a country house, where a beautiful lady reigns supreme."

"When shall I tell Sir Bertrand that we shall be there?" he asked.

"Let us go on Christmas Eve," I replied; "if we leave here at noon we shall reach Erlwood in the evening."

"It will be cold travelling through all this snow," said my brother.

"Yes," said I; "but what does that matter; plenty of wraps will keep us warm enough, and I must say I thoroughly like what people call reasonable weather at Christmas. I am sure if we had sunshine instead of the clear frost or cold snow, I for one should not believe Christmas was come."

"I will answer the note," said Philip. "Sir Bertrand says they are arranging some very clever charades and tableaux, so we shall not have a dull visit."

"Now, Philip," I answered, laying my hands upon his shoulder and looking into his face, "how can you be so hypocritical,—talking of a dull visit, as though you had ever weighed or even dreamed of the probability of such a thing? You know well that ever since last October, when you heard that Maud Gresham was to be of the party, you have never ceased to long for it."

He had the grace to blush and look ashamed of himself. He bit his moustached lip and tried to frown. And while he stands endeavouring to look dignified and grave I will sketch his portrait.

I have seen handsomer men than my brother, Philip Dean, but never one who had a more winning face; it was so frank, so truthful, so intelligent, so full of good humour, yet with the least touch of satire about the firm, pleasant lips. It was a face that won both confidence and love. You felt instinctively that the man it belonged to must be like it. A thick rich mass of dark brown curls waved on a head proudly set; a fine manly figure, and a genial musical voice, placed Philip far above the race of merely handsome men. Our parents had been dead for some years, and we lived,—at least were to do so until I was twenty-one,—with a bachelor uncle, who had been appointed our guardian. We were both in possession of a handsome fortune, and my uncle promised us that some time or another it would be nearly doubled by what he had to leave us.

Of myself I need merely say I was at this time eighteen, moderately accomplished, but blessed with a fund of animal spirits which nothing could damp or restrain. My greatest pleasure then consisted in teasing Philip, who, though he loved me most dearly, thought his five years of seniority a pretext for assuming strong powers of government over me. Modesty forbids me to describe my personal appearance. If I were vain I should refer you to the diary of Captain Lionel Vaughan, who describes somewhere in that interesting record, as I have since read, the details of his first rencontre with me at a horticultural fête.

Philip's dearest friend was Sir Bertrand Lyle. They had been at Eton and Oxford together. When Sir Bertrand went down to Erlwood to take possession of his estate Philip went with him. When we met, at some old castle on the Rhine, with the haughty Countess von Rosenberg and her lovely daughter, the Lady Hilda, with whom it pleased Sir Bertrand to fall most passionately in love, Philip good-naturedly undertook the countess, and became her devoted slave in all walks, pic-nics, and excursions. Finally, when the Countess von Rosenberg had ascertained that Sir Bertrand Lyle was a man of noble family and good fortune, that his estates were as large as many German principalities, and his family jewels a mine of wealth in themselves, and in consequence of this gave her consent to the marriage of the devoted lovers, Philip acted as best man, and supported his friend on all trying occasions, as became such a hero.

We had spent one half the Summer with them at Erlwood, and were only permitted to leave that we might return at Christmas. Certainly if ever a bride was to be envied it was Lady Hilda Lyle; not for her magnificent mansion, with its extensive park and wide domain,—not for the heaps of gold and silver plate that glittered upon her table, or for jewels that would have satisfied a princess,—not for the perfect and gorgeous mansion in Belgravia, that had long been the envy of match-making mothers and marriageable daughters, nor yet for the wondrous beauty that spread her name far and wide. Not for any of these did I envy her, but that she was so beloved, so worshipped. She had won the true, passionate love of one of the noblest men living. No wife was ever so indulged or so adored. It was a picture to see his dark handsome face when he was speaking to her or for her.

In the goodness of his heart Sir Bertrand had invited the stately countess his mother-in-law to spend the remainder of her life with her daughter in England, but she made him a bow that would have enchanted Sir Charles Grandison, and told him she had one more duty to perform before she died, and for that reason she must remain in her castle on the Rhine.

Perhaps Sir Bertrand was not sorry, for Hilda, when once removed from the gloom and restraint of that stately presence, was so enchanting in her wild gaiety that he could not wish for any change. So they lived happily enough at Erlwood, and when Christmas came Sir Bertrand determined to do as his fathers had done before him, and kept Christmas in right royal style. First and foremost amongst the invited was Philip; my presence was insisted upon because during my summer visit Lady Hilda had grown fond of me. Captain Lionel Vaughan was invited because Philip had said he was the best hand at billiards, the best shot and the best waltzer he had ever met, and had besides such great conversational powers. It had cost me a whole morning to impress those facts on Philip's mind, but I was repaid for the trouble when I heard of the invitation.

Pretty Maud Gresham was coming too; every one loved and every one pitied her, for poor Maud, with all her beauty and wealth, was very miserable. Her large fortune had been left to her by her uncle, Mr. Gresham, on condition that she married his only "next of kin," a nephew some twenty degrees removed—a man whom Maud fairly detested, and who had but one passion in life, and that was rowing; give him a boat and good oars, and he asked for nothing else; mind and manners formed no part of his creed,—muscle was a thing to be beloved in.

Maud would have given up both lover and fortune long ago, but her mother, who was proud and ambitious, so resolutely opposed all idea of such a step that the poor girl had no courage to act in opposition to her somewhat tyrannical parent. Then came Charley Lester, a man without whom no one attempted, if they could avoid it, to get up charades, he was such a universal happy genius,—the life and soul of every party he entered. There was the stately beauty, Miss Bellingham, and her scheming aunt, Lady Flora Ross; Mr. Lindowes, the latest millionaire and the match of the season, whom Lady Flora particularly affected. A dozen or two more friends, among whom was Herr von Wagner, a cousin of Lady Hilda's, made up one of the happiest and gayest parties I ever enjoyed.

How beautiful the drive was from the sta-

tion to Erlwood Hall. I shall never forget it. The snow was frozen with the intense cold, but looked so white and so pure, and glowed with such a dazzling brilliancy, that it made one's eyes ache to look at it. The moon was at her brightest and best, and sailed in the dark night sky triumphantly; the golden stars lent their light; and the wind seemed singing a Christmas anthem in the trees as we drove through the park.

I wish I were a painter, that I could tell you how the trees looked in this their lovely winter robe, stripped of all leaves, with their giant arms bare and thrown up to the sky, the snow lying thick on the dark branches. The laurel trees in their green leaves held a little soft nest of snow, and the red holly berries shone from amongst the same white burden. The air was so cold, so clear, and so frosty that we could hear every sound for miles around. The bells were pealing as we came to the end of the long lime walk, and the band from the neighbouring village was playing on the lawn.

How the old Hall glowed with light and warmth! The lights from every window seemed to bid us welcome. When the carriage stopped and the large entrance door was thrown wide open, I saw quite a little crowd of friends ready to meet us.

There was Sir Bertrand, handsome and courteous, full of anxiety over our cold drive. In vain I assured him of its beauty; he persisted in ordering as much mulled wine as though we had been in Siberia. There was our gentle, graceful hostess, Lady Hilda, looking more lovely than ever, in her robe of rich violet velvet and a circle of diamonds shining in her golden hair. Captain Lionel Vaughan was the first who seemed to speak to me. "Pretty Maud, too, was in the hall; she looked like a fairy in her white dress and green holly wreath."

"Let her have time to breathe," said Lady Hilda, as one after another they came with their Christmas greetings.

Then, with her usual graceful kindness, she would go with me to my own room; the cheerful fire which blazed there, and the few fragrant flowers in the vases, showed that I had been thought of even before I came. She left me to dress, and then I went down to the great drawing-room where all the guests had assembled I have never before or since known Christmas kept as I saw it there. It was not only that every room and corridor was in a blaze of light and warmth, but the very cens made the house look almost like a forest; long branches of laurel twined the staircases and wreathed every picture and wall; dark masses of fir were mixed with laurestinus, and the crimson holly berries shone from the dark green leaves. The delicate mistletoe was there in great profusion; festive hands had decorated those gorgeous rooms.

In a little boudoir, separated from the drawing-room only by a crimson velvet curtain, was the Christmas Tree, Lady Hilda's pride, reminding her of the customs of her native land. It was a tall, tapering fir, whose dark green branches were laden with every variety of beautiful fruit and glittering toy. There were bunches of dark purple grapes, rosy-cheeked apples, golden oranges, and luscious brown pears. Costly and rare books, and little engravings, elegant mementos and trinkets of all kinds, were mixed with the white tapers and many-coloured flowers.

The living room, too, was one worthy of an artist's pencil. The beauty par excellence, Miss Bellingham, whose magnificence and recherche toilette was a perfect study of good taste and elegance, was, with her aunt and aide-de-camp, Lady Flor, engaged in an animated conversation with Mr. Lindowes, whose eyes expressed his earnest admiration of the charming coquette. Lady Hilda was, with her husband, the centre of another animated group.

Maud Gresham was just taking her seat at the piano, where my brother joined her, and I found myself in less than five minutes discussing Christmas with Captain Vaughan in a delightful *conversazione* near the fire. Yet my eyes would wander around the magnificent room, observing how the golden light from the chandeliers streamed upon the pictures with their green wreaths, the red holly berries and the dark fir; how the same light played upon the young and lovely faces, but seemed best of all to like to linger on Lady Hilda's golden head and glow in her diamonds. All was mirth and happiness, the yule-log burned upon the hearth, and the voices at the piano suddenly commenced a fine old English glee.

"I think," said Captain Vaughan to me, under cover of the music, "that this is perfect. I had no idea Sir Bertrand understood Christmas so well."

"It is always the same at Erlwood," I answered; "it is one of the strong points of the family, the observance of all Christmas customs and rules."

"What a lovely dreamy face Lady Hilda has!" said my companion somewhat irreverently. "I never saw such a perfect contrast as she presents to Sir Bertrand; he is so dark, so manly, so strong, and she so fair, so womanly, and so delicate."

"I am glad you have so great an admiration for fair women, Captain Vaughan," I returned. "You will find your taste gratified at Erlwood."

"What a jealous child I was, but my looks were dark as night and I did not like to hear him praise the golden-haired beauties so warmly."

"Nay," he replied with a smile, "I have not said I admire the blonde beauty most; my idea is of the type we find among the daughters of sunny Italy."

"They are lighting the tapers on the trees," I said; "let us go."

He offered me his arm; and how amused I was in watching the groups round the pretty fir! My brother, in spite of Mrs. Gresham's anxious looks, monopolised pretty Maud; the innocent joy that shone in her eyes and spoke in her sweet shy face might have touched any heart. I had long known that Philip loved her; I saw now she loved him. The beauty still held the millionaire enthralled; Sir Bertrand, though a courteous host, had no eyes for any one save his peerless wife.

"How happy Philip looks!" whispered Lionel to me; "how easily lovers betray themselves."

"How can Philip be Maud's lover when you know she is engaged to that tiresome cousin Charles?" I asked.

"Engaged she may be," he replied; "but I will forfeit my epaulettes if ever she marries him."

"Do you know him?" I asked.





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CHRISTMAS MORNING.

By M. K. D.

His little blue eyes wide open, His little red lips apart, His rosy cheeks all a-dimple, Hope bringing over his heart: All the dreams of the wonder-land Filling his bright young brain, On the hearth he stands a figure To peep into his stocking again. A little trilled laugh of triumph, A silver scream of joy, He sits on the floor in his light gown, Amidst sugar-plum, holly, and toy; He rattles the string of sleigh-bells, He beats on his scarlet drum, And calls to his prancing tin horses To "Come up, come up!"

Good old Father Christmas Peeping in at the door, Did you ever see anything human Had so happy before? You may lose him the wide world's treasure, When he is as old as we, And his soul will never be sold, Into a sack, bundle, or sled. Ah, fanciful toy village, Greater the bliss you bear Than all the taxed lands and houses Of any great millionaire! And the white fawn-drummed rabbit, And the hoasts from the Noah's ark, Are worth all the deer ever treasured In any nobleman's park.

THE POTTLETON SOCIAL.

By Ephraim.

The little town of Pottleton was in a state of unusual excitement. The public square beat with alarming rapidity. The social barometer indicated a change, and general appearances tended towards fever heat.

Groups of persons were standing on the public square, engaged in conversing upon some all important topic. The office of the Pottleton Trumpet was regarded with special interest. The leaves were blown in the same direction, as if their presence was absolutely necessary, and small clouds of dust met them by appointment to discuss some prominent question. Even the hungry dogs were attracted thither by an unaccountable agency, and showed a total disregard for the safety of their lives, and a bold contempt for the city ordinance in which they figured conspicuously.

A stranger would have at first supposed it to have been the eve of an election; but on second thought he would have discovered his mistake—because everybody was sober. Elections seldom troubled Pottleton; besides it was a moral town, and always appointed its officers for lengthened terms of office; thus saving a large amount of money and a larger amount of time.

It boasted a railroad, a corporation, a town-hall and a bank. It possessed all the requirements a town of its size needed, and so far, was content.

The demoralizing effects of political excitement had not, as yet, contaminated Pottleton, and it rejoiced exceedingly in the high tone of its moral state.

The church clock had just struck the hour of 10 (A. M.) correctly for the first time in a month.

With commendable punctuality the office of the Trumpet was thrown open to a large and eager crowd, which set at naught the strenuous exertions of the constable, sheriff and town clerk, whose several positions were combined in the person of a weak and bald-headed official, who vainly endeavored to maintain order by observing: "Do keep back, gentlemen, please, and respect the constable." Failing to obtain respect in that capacity, he would appeal in virtue of his office as sheriff, and, town-clerk as a last resource. Whether on account of the thinness of his voice, or a lack of befitting dignity of exterior to command respect, I cannot say; but he suddenly retired from the contest.

The cause of this excitement, which I will presently explain, is based upon the authority of the Trumpet itself, the official organ of Pottleton and immediate vicinity," claiming a circulation (principally in unpaid subscriptions) greatly in excess of any other paper in the county, and, in consequence the best advertising medium (value taken out in trade to suit the convenience of advertisers) you could possibly select.

It was independent in its political tone, and its opinions were constantly changing. It exhibited a marked caution in its expressions and never left itself open to a prosecution for libel, as it was never known to assume responsibility in any shape whatever. As a proof of its importance as one of the institutions of the country, and illustrating its freedom of the press, it was full of typographical errors which were committed with a corresponding freedom.

In explanation of this overwhelming rush I refer you to the second column of the first page of said Trumpet, which I take the liberty of quoting:

"The Pottleton Lyceum.—The members of this distinguished society will give a grand, scientific, social and literary entertainment at their Hall this evening, at eight o'clock prompt. Our local talent, of which Pottleton is so justly proud, will meet en masse, and we anticipate an array of literary and classical ability, seldom if ever equalled in the Province.

"Miss Arabella DeLaurey will sing a *bravura* from 'one of the Italian Masters, in her most charming style; and Mr. St. Clair, the gifted baritone, will render his valuable assistance in a duet.

"It is worthy of remark that while we are happy in noting the admirable good taste shown by the committee in the arrangement of the programme, it is also observable that a higher tone of literary excellence and classical ability will be presented to a discriminating public than has hitherto been given by the society.

"We are always ready to admit that a becoming modesty over characterizes true genius, but we should feel we were doing our citizens an injustice if we failed to predict that Pottleton may yet produce its Shakespeare or its Milton."

I regret my time will not admit of giving the whole of this interesting article which the editor had taken unusual pains to "set up" correctly.

With the exception of Miss DeLaurey's *bravura* and Mr. St. Clair's selection the programme was original.

highest order; combining instruction with amusement, not forgetting to charge said "treat" to their respective parents and guardians.

Dry goods stores and millinery establishments had a busy day of it. Every available inch of space had been engaged at the Slush House by families from the country.

The brass band, numbering eight pieces, exclusive of the drum and cymbals, was to "proceed" through the town and play in front of the Lyceum in the evening.

The performance was billed to commence at seven o'clock sharp.

At six juvenile patrons of art congregated before the door, and by half-past the side-walk was crowded. The pupils at the boarding-schools went without tea to enable them to be present in time.

Carriages, light and heavy waggons rumbled along the High Street.

The Slush House presented a brilliant appearance.

The Town Hall clock was illuminated in honor of the occasion.

A tasteful monogram, composed of the letters "P. L.," was ingeniously constructed out of Chinese lanterns, and suspended in front of the Lyceum. An enterprising member had erected a transparency, with the words, "Literature, Science and Art" boldly inscribed thereon. Below these magic symbols he informed the readers—"sign painting executed at reasonable rates."

The doors opened and the crush came. The constable wisely appointed three specials and presented them with refreshment tickets in consideration of their services.

As soon as the house filled it presented a brilliant appearance. Gayly-colored dresses of costly silks met the eye at every turn, and contrasted finely with the sombre attire of the gentlemen. Jewels of immense value (if you could judge by the size of their settings) dazzled the eye. Varied types of beauty mingled together in one blazing galaxy of wealth and refinement. Blondes and brunettes outdid each other in the richness of the wardrobe, and the rosate tinge of their complexions. Pearl powder was at a premium. Roman noses buried themselves in elaborately beaded handkerchiefs of gossamer fineness.

The unadorned freshness of the school girls—some were budding into womanhood—mellowed the beauty of the scene. Bracelets of wonderful workmanship were displayed on arms of alabaster whiteness. Chignons of every size, hue, design and quality that you could think of, adorned the heads of the ladies. The atmosphere was permeated with a delicious odor of rare perfumes. Pottleton excelled itself.

The programme was selected with great care and read as follows:

PROGRAMME.

Overture..... The Pottleton Band Introductory Address.... E. Freshwater, Esq. Paper entitled "Farming and Reform"

[Mr. J. Snuggler *Bravura*, from *Il Trovatore*.... Miss Arabella DeLaurey *Rossini*, "Thoughts on Keeping an Hotel,"

[A. Fogg, Esq. *Duet*, "When Shall we Harvest be?"

[Miss A. DeLaurey & Mr. C. St. Clair. *Recess to conclude with refreshment and social gossip.*

The orchestra, which had been hard at work, opened the evening's entertainment. It showed evident signs of a premature fatigue. Some of the members presented a foreshadowed appearance from over-blowing.

The selection was fine; but would have been better appreciated had the bass-drum and cymbals not predominated quite so largely, as it marred the effect of the softer toned pieces.

This volume of sound was understood to be an instrumental representation of a battle scene, in which the bass-drum was supposed to be cannon, and the side-drum a volley of musketry. The shrieks of the wounded could be heard from the clarinet with horrible fidelity, and the charge was beautifully rendered by the 1st E. flat cornet.

After the last shot had been fired and the plaintive wailings of agony from the wounded had sobbed themselves to sleep, the overture closed amidst a gloomy and impressive silence.

E. Freshwater, Esq., came next in order. His appearance was the signal for one continued demonstration of applause.

He bowed repeatedly, thrust his hand carelessly through hair which wouldn't curl, coughed sympathetically, postured gracefully, and displayed his finger ring to the best advantage. Laying his hand somewhere in the region of his heart, but suggestively close to his vest pocket, he proceeded:

Ladies and Gentlemen: When Art and Beauty meet here face to face, Fair Science also claims of right a place, With other aspirants to honored fame, Clever Apollo bringing up the train— Though last, not least, a willing prisoner sure With graceful mien advances Literature.

(This happy allusion to the Trumpet was publicly acknowledged by its proprietor, who exclaimed "Not at all," which remark slightly confused the speaker, who was doubtful in what sense the expression was offered.)

Then as we mingle in the busy throng We pay our homage to the Queen of Song, While different tastes their different subjects choose;

Some worship music—others coo "the muse, And as I gaze around this beautiful scene— Am I awake, or is't some fancied dream? Can such things be so lovely, wondrous, grand? Or is't a romance from sweet fairy-land? What kindred spirits have I strayed among? Is it, it must be, classic Pottleton! No dowry language can my thoughts express. Th' tumultuous heavings of my throbbing breast. In weak and feeble words I but convey The pride and happiness I feel to-day.

Then old and young, ye friends and patrons dear, Thrice welcome all, a thousand welcomes here!

The poetic allusion to the "Queen of Song" evidently referred to Miss DeLaurey, and took immensely.

It was several minutes before Mr. Freshwater recovered sufficient composure to bow himself off the stage.

Well might Pottleton be proud of such talent! As the enthusiasm had toned itself down, Mr. James Snuggler made his appearance.

This gentleman had a matter-of-fact business air about him, which told greatly in his favour. With mature deliberation he slowly unfolded his manuscript and launched into business. His writing, like himself, was plain and easily understood. I will endeavour

to give you an idea of the substance of his remarks:

He truly observed that a considerable quantity of land is annually wasted through extravagant farming. This is an age of progress; but although an age of progress it should also be one of economy. Mr. Snuggler didn't believe in such lavish consumption of earth, and he proved, by carefully drawn-up statistics, that several million dollars are annually thrown away through the recklessness of short-sighted agriculturists. This, he considered, is a retrograde movement instead of a professional one. He felt it his duty to point out these things, and although he was likely to meet with opposition from prejudiced persons, he was not to be deterred from his object.

Some people might say if he knew so much about these matters why didn't he give them the benefit of his experience? He would do so. Mr. Snuggler then went on to show the different kinds of vegetables which would yield the best paying capital. (I will omit this portion of his subject, as it is purely technical.)

His concluding remarks were: "Build your land on the perpendicular. You thus economize your earth surface and can grow a greater variety of produce."

"You will find this method to work exceedingly well. Get your neighbour to plant something on one side and you something on the other, and you will find your own crop double that of any year preceding. Should your species of vegetable be stronger than his, it is very probable an amalgamation will take place, novel in character as well as agreeable to the palate and useful to science at large."

Mr. Snuggler retired, a triumphant smile of self-satisfaction sufficing his ruddy face.

Mr. Snuggler's exit caused a general reference to the programme to see what was coming next. Double-barrelled opera glasses were levelled at the stage in expectation of Miss Arabella DeLaurey's entrance.

The *prima donna* made her entrance. With a bow of matchless grace she took in the whole house with one glance of her expressive eye; the soft patting of gloved hands brought forth a smile of singular sweetness, which revealed a set of magnificent teeth—not her own.

The lady was built in the Elizabethan style of architecture and of rugged proportions (vulgarily termed "senggy"). Her age might have been either twenty or forty. Her face was oval and its expression *spirituelle*. The colour of her hair—or rather the hair she wore—was an intense Auburn. Her forehead was broad and intellectual. Her eyes large and penetrating and dilated with belladonna. Her nose was of the composite order—Roman above the bridge, Grecian below it. Her waist—well her waist was considerable of a waste.

In one gloved hand she held a mutilated piece of sheet music, and, in the other, a pocket-handkerchief—with her right she arranged the folds of her drapery in the most approved style, and with her left slightly raised her skirt, showing a delicately formed foot uncased in a number nine satin gaiter. She stretched herself to her full height, cast a look of contempt at the pianist, which ought to have annihilated him on the spot—but didn't—raised her eyes heavenward, toyed with her bracelet, shook herself together and went in heavy on the Italian.

As nobody knew much about the language everybody agreed upon the correctness of her accent. The only syllables I could hear distinctly were a *moor*, a *moor*, near a *poco delie forte a moor*, a *poco*. A gentleman who had been to Italy sometime in his youth said she was singing something about "a Dutchman going for a nigger."

Of course Miss DeLaurey was encored (that had been provided for beforehand), and she went through the same performance to the delight of an intelligent audience. The way she rolled her eyes as well as her voice was truly thrilling!

Alfred Fogg, Esq., one of the thinnest men in Pottleton, succeeded the *prima donna*, and read a short essay—"Thoughts on Keeping a Hotel."

Mr. Fogg besides being thin was lantern-jawed and hawk-eyed. His appearance led you to suppose he had never seen the inside of a hotel in his life; but as he was going to tell us something about keeping one, the presumption was he would get fatter by-and-by. His remarks were listened to with much interest, probably because the subject was about something to eat. It made you hungry to look at him, it did indeed.

I will give you his closing remarks: "I have made up my mind," he said, "that it does require a smart man to keep a hotel. With painful consciousness I am aware that I am not, in this connection, a smart man. I have tried it and ought to know; I have lost money at it, and my experience is from actual knowledge. We must creep, my friends, before we can walk. I crept and kept on creeping, but I never walked in the hotel sense of the word, though my customers did—they walked off without paying. It was a sorrowful stagger with me. I opened a restaurant—not a large one, my means being limited. For the first week I had no customers. The second week business was more encouraging. They came, but brought their own dinners, and I lent 'em the knives and forks.

"The third week I took in half a dollar.

"The fourth week, it was on Monday, a gentleman-looking person called upon me and made numerous inquiries. He became interested, and made himself unusually agreeable. I thought he had an idea of buying me out, and I was only too ready to jump at the chance. Feeling my way cautiously I inquired if such was his intention.

"Oh dear, no; by no means."

"Then why this interest in a stranger's affairs?"

"Look here," said he, "do you repose much confidence in human nature?"

"Some, I replied, but very little. Why?"

"Because if you do, repose that confidence in me."

A transient smile suffused his face as he continued: "Will you cook this sausage and lend me a quarter? Say, will you?"

I did neither, and then I knew how sharp a man it required to keep a hotel successfully."

the opera glasses were again brought into requisition, and Mr. St. Clair was greeted with rapturous applause.

They then introduced the latest stage bow and looked at each other.

Mr. St. Clair made quite an extensive display of shirt bosom, wrist-bands and white gloves. He first drew public attention to the capacious dimensions of shirt bosom, (his idea evidently being to let people know he had one) then pulled down his wrist-bands to show they were not paper, referred to his collar, looked at his audience attentively, also coughed twice, glanced at the audience scornfully, wiped his mustache and turned to Miss DeLaurey, as much as to say: "I am quite ready, what are you waiting for?" The pianist received the customary scowl and played a prelude to the duet referred to in the programme. The prelude was finished. Mr. St. Clair then asked Miss DeLaurey in a deep tone of voice, "When will the harvest be?" She replied to his question, seemingly much hurt, by asking him, "When will the harvest be?" He declined no reply; but a sudden inspiration seized them both they simultaneously repeated the question. An elderly farmer in front "guessed they didn't know much about harvesting." The question was again asked, and the same gentleman expressed his opinion, rather loudly, that if the weather was good the harvest might be a week earlier than last year. This caused a laugh among those who heard it, and was the only answer that applied to the question.

This concluded the musical and literary exercises, and the lyceum adjourned to refreshment and social gossip.

The gastronomical abilities of the cook at the Slush House was severely tested. Ice cream, raspberry cakes, jolly cakes, fruit cakes, custard, coffee, sponge cakes, currant cakes, pound cakes, plum cakes, tea, chocolate, apples, nuts, oranges, cold water and electrics, were partaken of with a vigour that impressed upon the capacity of the Pottletonian appetite. But eating and drinking must come to an end.

The *prima donna* received her congratulations gracefully, and affected the usual languid air those ladies are supposed to have at their command. She got up a stereotyped smile, which would have looked well in print, and never left her the whole evening. I am sorry to say I could not stay long enough to enjoy all the good things I saw and heard, but I went away fully satisfied that the social should not pass unrecorred.—Canadian Illustrated News.

MARKET REPORT.

HEARTHSTONE OFFICE.

Dec. 14, 1872.

The local money market continues steady and unchanged. There has been a good demand for exchange at advanced prices, 10% being how the quotation of Western Wheat \$2.00 to \$2.10. A moderate amount of mercantile paper has been presented for discount and previous rates prevail.

The condition of the local flour market remains about the same. There is no demand except from city dealers, and sales are therefore light. 1,000 barrels changed hands at about quotations. Grains provisions, dressed hogs and general produce remaining quiet at somewhat nominal prices.

Submitted are the latest market reports from Liverpool:

Table with columns for Flour, Wheat, Corn, Barley, Oats, and Pork, listing prices and market status.

Flour.—Superior Extra, nominal, \$0.00 to \$0.00; Extra, \$0.90 to \$1.10; Family, \$0.30 to \$0.35; Fresh Super (Western Wheat) \$2.00 to \$2.10; Ordinary Super (Canada Wheat) \$2.75 to \$2.85; Strong Bakers' \$5.00 to \$6.25; Super from Western Wheat (Welland Canal (fresh ground) \$0.00 to \$0.00; Super (dry brands) (Western Wheat) \$0.00 to \$0.00; Canada Super, No. 2, \$2.50 to \$2.60; Western Super, No. 2, \$0.00 to \$0.00; Fine, \$5.00 to \$5.10; Middling, \$4.00 to \$4.20; Poor, \$2.25 to \$2.50; Upper Canada Fine Flour, \$1.00 lbs., \$2.65 to \$2.85; City bags, (delivered), \$3.00 to \$3.10.

WHEAT.—Nominal. OATMEAL, per brl. of 200 lbs.—Held at \$4.00 to \$5.10, according to quality.

PEAS, per bush of 66 lbs.—Market quiet. Recent sales were at 7 1/2c.

OATS, per bush of 32 lbs.—Steady. Quotations are: 32c for new, and 34c for old.

CORN.—Quiet. Held at 57c.

BARLEY.—Steady; nominal rates are 55c to 60c.

BUTTER, per lb.—Dull. Nominal quotations are: Store-packed Western, 8c to 10c; fair dairy Western, 12c to 13c; good to choice do, 15c to 17c.

CHEESE, per lb.—Quiet. Factory fine 11c to 11 1/2c; finest new 12c to 12 1/2c.

PORK, per brl. of 200 lbs.—Market dull; New Mess \$15.00 to \$15.25. Thin Mess \$15.50.

LARD.—Quiet at 10c to 10 1/2c per pound.

SAVINGS.—Per firm. Florida, \$7.00 to \$7.10. Pearls firm at \$4.25 to \$5.50 for First \$2.00.

DRESSING HOOP.—Per 100 lbs.—Market steady. Quotations are \$5.50 to \$5.60, according to weight.

IF YOU HAVE BEEN AN INVALID FOR years with some Chronic, Wasting Disease of the Lungs, Heart, Liver or Kidneys, you need not flatter yourself that medicine is going to cure you immediately. Repair goes on slowly, and time is necessary to build up a broken-down constitution. Do not take every nostrum you read about, nor follow the advice of every friend who has a specific to offer you. Procure a remedy scientifically prepared, that is the result of experience, that has a large amount of evidence of sensible people in favor of its reliability, and persevere in its use until the whole system undergoes a radical improvement and health is restored. THE COMPOUND EXTRACT OF PHOSPHATES AND GALLIC ACID, a Chemical Food and Nutritive Tonic, will meet your most sanguine expectations, as it combines everything necessary to perfect Digestion, Nutrition, and the formation of healthy blood, and to vitalize all the organs and tissues of the body. Sold at \$1.00 per bottle, -5, 51-c.

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