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"NO, LANDON, WE MUST NOT LEAVE THEM."

BELFORD'S

MONTHLY MAGAZINE.

JANUARY, 1877.

WHAT HE COST HER.

BY JAMES PAYN.

CHAPTER III—(*Continued*).

BUT, if he could not be termed public-spirited, he had a thought for his friends as well as himself—as indeed may be gathered from the fact of his popularity. Men—especially young ones—make great mistakes in choosing their favourites, but they never select a mere egotist. Landon was gravely concerned upon his friend's account, being well aware of the hostages which, in his case, had been given to fortune; and the delight which his reckless nature would have otherwise felt in the approaching émeute was dashed by this solicitude.

When he saw Darall taking his place with the rest in the dining-hall, he knew that his arguments had failed of their effects, and that his friend's lot was thrown into the common urn. In those ancient days it was the custom of the oldsters at dinner to behave like Jack Sprat and his wife in the nursery ballad: among them they "licked the platter clean," and then sent it down to the unfortunate "neuxes;" or, at least, the heads of each mess cut off for themselves such meat as was tempting, and left the fag-end of the feast for the tails. But to-day, since it was necessary that the whole Cadet Company should be in good condition and full of vigour, there was a more equal distribution of beef and mutton; and at Darall's mess the "snookers" fared exceptionally well, for that gentleman eat next to nothing.

"Darall is off his feed; I think he is in a funk," whispered Whymper to Trotter. An ungrateful remark enough, since he was reaping the advantage of his senior's abstinence in a slice of mutton that was neither skin nor bone.

"Rubbish!" was the contemptuous rejoinder. Conversation at the cadet mess was abrupt in those days, but generally to the point. "If you can't think better than that, confine yourself to eating."

In an hour afterwards the bugle sounded for general parade. After the minute inspection of the gentlemen cadets' stocks, and belts, and boots—which was the chief feature of this ceremony—was over, the usual course was for the officer at command to address the Cadet Company in the soul-stirring words, "Stand at ease." "Break." And then everybody went about their pleasure until the next bugle sounded for study. On the present occasion the words of command were spoken, but without their ordinary effect. When the officer walked away, the "company," instead of "breaking," closed up, and senior under-officer Bex took command of it.

"Atten*shon*," was the counter-order he delivered; "Left turn," "Quick march;" and at that word the whole corps, in one long line of two files only—so that it resembled a caterpillar—wound out of the parade-ground, past the porter's lodge, and marched off across the common to Charlton Fair. The emotion of the officer on duty was considerable; but, perceiving the utter hopelessness of restraining one hundred and sixty gentlemen cadets with his single arm, or even both of them, he turned disconsolately into the library, wrote down a formal complaint for the inspection of old Pipeclay, and washed his hands of his young friends for the afternoon.

"Left, right, left, right, left, right;" the corps had never marched better to church upon a Sunday, than it did upon its mutinous errand; and Generalissimo Bex—if he had flourished in these days, he would have been a prig of the first water—expressed himself highly gratified with their soldier-like regularity of behaviour.

Upon leaving the common, and getting into the high road, he formed his army "four deep," and gave them a word of command that does not appear in the drill-books, and had, indeed, rather the air of a battle-cry than of a military order: "Unbuckle belts." Gentlemen cadets wore neither swords nor bayonets, but their belts had a large piece of metal in the centre with "Ubique" upon it (perhaps because they hit with it "in all directions"), and, when dexterously used, these were formidable weapons. In the hands of a novice it was apt to strike the wielder like a flail; but very few of the young gentlemen of those days were novices in the use of it; and not one who had chanced to have had any difficulty, however slight, with a policeman. There were swarms of Fair-people dotted about the lanes—costermongers, itinerant showmen, gipsies, and the like—but with these the advancing army were enjoined not to meddle; they reserved their belts and their "Ubiques" for the hive itself.

The fair was held in a huge field to the right of the road ; and when the Cadet Company turned into it, "at the double," but still maintaining their serried ranks, it presented an animated spectacle. The principal space between the booths was crowded with sight-seers, and the booths themselves offered the most varied attractions : "The only Living Mermaid from the South Seas," "The Greatest Professors in the Art of Pugilism now extant," "The Genuine and Original Learned Pig," and a whole tribe of North American Indians in paint and feathers, at that moment in the act of celebrating their national tomahawk dance. For an instant business and pleasure were alike suspended at the sight of our youthful warriors ; and then "thwack, thwack" went the Ubique belts, and the denizens of the fair became aware, to their cost, that vengeance had come upon them.

CHAPTER IV.

THE SIEGE AND THE SACK.

It is but right to state that the majority of the besieged persons were fully conscious that they had provoked attack. Outrages and reprisals had, it is true, for many years passed as naturally as compliments in other places, between the Charlton Fair folks and the tenants of the Military Academy, but these had been intermitted for a considerable time, and the treatment the two young cadets received on the previous evening at the hands of these roystering roughs had been very savage and severe, even if it had been provoked. It was only by a gallant charge of their natural and hereditary enemies, the police, that their young lives had been preserved, while their limbs, as we know, had not been so fortunate.

The unarmed mob in the main thoroughfare broke and fled at the first charge ; under waggons and tent-ropes they scuttled to left and right, the boldest making for the hedges where the stakes grew, and the wiliest lying flat on their faces behind the pictures that fronted the caravans. The cry was not indeed "Sauve qui peut!" for it was, "Here are them scaly cadets!" but the effect was precisely the same as what takes place in military surprises upon a larger scale ; only it was more difficult to save oneself by running on account of the youthful agility of the assailants, who laid about them also with a vigour beyond their years. It was no child's play on either side, for whenever a belt-plate came in contact with a man's skull it cut a hole in it ; while, on the other hand, not a few of the "roughs" frequenting the fair were armed with bludgeons, while the big sticks employed in the "Aunt Sally" game of those days (for that lady is of ancient lineage) and the

heavy legs of the pea-and-thimble tables afforded weapons to others. The discipline of the invaders, however, carried everything before them; in a few minutes their enemies bit the dust and fled, and then came the "sacking."

The proprietors of the booths, and the itinerant gentry generally, had, up to this point, rather enjoyed the combat. They were caterers of spectacle to others, and had very seldom the opportunity of judging of the merits of any performance of a public nature. Such of them as had had any hand in the ill-treatment of the two young gentlemen in hospital were naturally careful to conceal the fact, and affected a serenity of mind as to what the invading forces might do next, which they were probably far from feeling; others, however, had no sting of conscience in this respect, and rather hailed the advent of the new arrivals as likely to fill their places of amusement at a higher admission figure than was customary.

They had reckoned without their host, and in very great ignorance, it may added, of the character of their guests. In the first place, sentinels were placed in every tent to prevent the egress of its inhabitants, and Generalissimo Bex, his staff, and the rest of his victorious warriors gave a grand "bespeak," among which were several features rare in theatrical experience, but especially this one—that every performance was commanded to be gratuitous. The audience, too, was hypercritical and very inquisitive. Not content (for example) with the war-dance of the North American Indians, and the war-whoop, for the execution of which those noble savages have such a reputation in musical circles, they made them dance and whoop in even a more natural if less national manner; nor were they satisfied till the unhappy "braves" had stripped off their borrowed plumes, washed the paint from their still dirty faces, and confessed themselves to be natives of Tipperary. With the Learned Pig (whom they requested to spell Pipeclay and other words still more foreign to his usual vocabulary) they were graciously pleased to express satisfaction, and in proof of it (much to his owner's disapproval) conferred upon him the glorious boon of liberty by driving him out into the adjacent woods. The incomparable pugilists (supposed not without reason to have had a hand—or a fist—in the ill-treatment of the two neuxes) they compelled to fight without the gloves, and when one of them had been beaten till he resembled less a man than a jelly fish, they thrashed the victor.

I am afraid they pulled the "only mermaid's" tail off, and derided the "fattest woman in the world" in a manner which even a court-martial would have pronounced unbecoming officers and gentlemen: but when places are "sacked" it is notorious that our very Bayards cease to be the pink of courtesy. Perhaps the greatest attraction to the vic-

torious army was, however, Richardson's booth, at that epoch the great representative of travelling melo-drama. The performances "commanded" from its talented company were at once numerous and varied: they compelled those artistes who had passed their lives, if they had not been born, in the purple, delineating kings, and seldom condescending to be archdukes, to exchange robes with clown and harlequin, and some very curious and noteworthy acting was the result. The attentions, too, of our gentlemen cadets to the corps de ballet were what would be now designated, I suppose, as "marked with empressement." Richardson's booth was, in fact, to that honourable corps what Capua was to another victorious army, and with the same fatal consequences. While the young warriors indulged their taste for the drama and flirtation, the scattered forces of the enemy gathered together, and returned to the tented field in vastly augmented numbers. Armed with pitchforks and hedge-stakes, with bludgeons and rakes, they burst into the inclosure, and drove in the sentinels, with the most terrible cries for blood and vengeance. The besiegers in their turn became the besieged; and if the description should seem a joke it is the fault of the describer, for the reality had very little fun in it for either party. The bloodshed, if not the carnage, was something considerable.

Generalissimo Bex at once put himself at the head of a sallying party, but, though performing prodigies of valour, was driven back to his wooden walls—the booth. For, though it was called a booth, Richardson's was built of wood, and afforded the only tenable military position in the fair. The proverb that proclaims there is nothing like leather, was proved fallacious in the combat between belts and bludgeons. The cadets found their natural weapons inefficacious against the cold steel of the pitchforks and those other arms of their adversaries, which, if not "of precision," made a hole wherever they hit. They fell back, therefore, upon the theatrical armoury, and waged the combat with every description of mediæval weapon. Halberds of beefeaters, spears of knights, cross-handled swords of crusaders, were all pressed into the service. One gentleman cadet even donned a suit of armour belonging to Richard Cœur de Lion, and with a mace in one hand and a ballet-dancer in the other, defied the howling throng from the platform of the stage. The whole scene resembled that at Front de Bœuf's Castle, where Brian de Bois Guilbert escapes from the rabble of besiegers with the beautiful and accomplished Rebecca. Only there was no escape for his modern counterpart. Matters began to look very bad indeed for the corps of gentlemen cadets. They fought like men, even like heroes, and there was not an abusive epithet—much less a blow—which they did not return with interest. It is notorious that the use of strong language greatly strengthens and exhilarates our military in the field of

battle, and this auxiliary—of which they had a store which was practically inexhaustible—they did not spare. Yet the battle was going against them very decidedly. A council of war was hastily called together in the green-room—an apartment of bare wood, resembling a large packing case; and it was decided that there was no hope but to cut their way through the enemy, by issuing from the back of the booth, a comparatively unbesieged quarter. It was thought that this might be effected if the movement was performed with rapidity. Their chief difficulty lay in their wounded, whom, of course, they could not in honour leave to the tender mercies of the roughs, and many of whom had been put hors de combat. If they could march with the army, it was as much as they could do; they could act the part of combatants no longer.

And now we are to narrate an incident as touching and romantic as ever happened in regular warfare. It must be premised that, although the male performers of the great Richardson troupe had taken the conduct of the cadet army in some dudgeon, and had fled from the booth as soon as its siege began, the lady performers were by no means so inimical to the honourable corps, and had remained. They had slapped the young gentlemen's faces when flushed with victory, and inclined to be too demonstrative in their attentions; but now that they were discomfited and in danger, the hearts of these ladies warmed towards them: they were touched by their youth, their bravery—which seemed about to be so ill rewarded—and, perhaps, in some cases, by their good looks.

The damsel whom I have ventured to liken to Rebecca was very softhearted, yet had also an unusual amount of intelligence, and, in the midst of the hurly-burly, and while one of the many onsets of the besiegers upon the platform was in the act of being repulsed—which was done on each occasion with greater and greater difficulty—she inquired naïvely of her Brian de Bois Guilbert, "Why don't you show these scoundrels our muskets?"

"Muskets!" answered Landon excitedly, for he it was who had for the nonce taken the trappings of the Templar, which he was now in the act of discarding as too cumbrous; "I saw no muskets. Where are they? They would be our salvation."

"They were in the wardrobe"—so this simple creature described the armoury—"With the rest of the properties."

"I never saw them," cried Landon; "did you, Darall?"

Darall had come in from the fray with a broken head, to which the simple remedy of cold water was being applied by a fair creature in tights.

> "When pain and anguish wring the brow,
> A ministering angel thou,"

was his neat acknowledgment of her solicitude.

"Get along with you and your angels," answered she, unconscious of the quotation. "Don't you hear your friend speaking to you?"

"Yes, I hear him; I found the muskets and hid them," said Darall coolly. "Things are bad enough as it is, without there being murder done."

"Yes, but it is becoming a question whether we or those scoundrels yonder are to be murdered," observed Landon, hotly. "Come, where did you hide these things?"

"I shall not tell you," answered Darall, decisively. "You may say what you like, but you will thank me for it some day, since a single shot——"

"Why, you young stoopid," interrupted Rebecca—she was his elder by about six months—"the guns ain't loaded; there is neither powder nor shot in the booth; you need only show the muskets, to frighten the fellows."

The young lady had, doubtless, some experience of the effect of the exhibition of fire-arms upon a crowd, and at all events, in their desperate case, it was quite worth while to try the experiment. Every minute that the besieged now spent in their little fortress added to their list of wounded, while, on the other hand, the forces of the enemy increased in number and audacity. Their sole hope, except in flight, lay in their being rescued by their friends the military at Woolwich, who would have been glad enough to have done battle for them, had they been aware of their hard straits; but, unhappily, Charlton Fair was as "taboo" to Her Majesty's forces, and for the same excellent reasons, as it was to the cadets themselves, not a uniform was to be seen among the crowd without. A general sally was therefore at once determined on.

Acting upon Landon's suggestion, the dozen or so of muskets that served for Richardson's stage army were served out to the wounded, who had instructions to level them at the enemy, but by no means to pull trigger, lest their harmless character should be thereby disclosed; thus it was hoped that the prowess of those who were least able to defend themselves would be most respected. These formed the first line of battle, as the whole Cadet Company issued forth from the back of the booth, and the effect of their appearance even exceeded expectation. The crowd who had rushed round to cut off the retreat at once fell back before the threatening muzzles of the muskets, and not until the retiring force had cleared the enclosure, and reached the lane, did they pluck up courage to fall upon the rear-guard, which was under the command of Landon himself. Then, indeed, that young gentleman had quite enough to do; the march of the main body was necessarily slow because of those who had been hurt, and were scarcely fit for marching, and this gave the crowd opportunity for "cutting out" expeditions, whereby a cadet

or two would get torn away from his friends, and had to be rescued, if not by tooth and nail, by every other description of weapon. It was fortunate for the whole corps that in their brief hour of victory they had not neglected, in their pursuit of more ethereal delights, to fortify themselves both with food and liquor; the weather was hot, and fun and fighting had made great demands upon their strength, which, after all, was not quite that of full-grown men; and now, with the sense of something like defeat depressing them, it was hard to have to contest every inch of their way, under pain of being left behind in hands that would have shown no mercy.

They fought, however, like young tigers, and, thanks to Darall, who had as quick an eye for a weak point in their own array as Landon had for one in that of their adversaries, they emerged from the lane on to the high road without the loss of a man. At this point the pursuit was stayed, and their peril might be considered over.

"We may be in time for evening parade yet, if we push on," said Darall, consulting his watch.

The poor young fellow was thinking of the price they would have to pay for their fun, and rightly judged that their offence, great as it was, would be held much more serious, should they fail in so important a professional obligation as parade.

Even Generalissimo Bex—who was as good as expelled already, and knew it—recognised the necessity (for others) of getting home by seven o'clock, and gave quite an unprecedented word of command:

"Double—all you fellows that can—and the rest, hobble!" At the same time he gave injunctions to the rear-guard that they should not desert the wounded; the ineffectualness of whose weapons had long been made apparent, and who would have fallen victims to the least onslaught of the enemy. It was bad enough for Darall—to whom every moment was of such consequence—to have to suit his pace to that of these poor cripples; but worse luck even than this awaited him. They had been left by the main body—whose position was now indicated only by a cloud of dust—about five minutes, when a shrill cry for help was heard proceeding from the road by which they had just come.

"Good Heavens! We have left no fellows behind us, have we?" cried Landon; even his reckless spirit slightly dashed by the prospect of having to attempt a rescue in the face of such overwhelming odds.

"No," said Darall, who, with his friend, had stopped behind the rest to listen. "I counted them all myself."

"And yet it sounds like some young fellow being hacked about," replied the other. "It is not a man's voice, it is too thin."

"It is a girl's," said Darall gravely. And, again, not one agonizing cry, but two struck on their ears, passionately appealing for aid.

"Those brutes are ill-treating some women," observed Landon; "they are always doing it. It is no earthly use our going back."

"I am afraid they are paying out those poor girls who helped us to the muskets and things," said Darall, his blonde face growing suddenly pale with concentrated rage.

Landon uttered such a string of anathemas as would have done honour to a papal excommunication. "It is no use thinking about it," exclaimed he, impatiently, "let us get on."

"No Landon, we must not leave them. Just listen to that!"

A cry of "Help, help!" and then of "Murder!" clove the blue air. At the sound of it both the young fellows turned and began to run swiftly back upon the road just traversed.

"Somebody's getting it, and some one else will get this," cried Landon, his hand still grasping the mace of the Templar—no pasteboard property, as it happened, but a formidable weapon of hard wood. Darall had for weapon only a hedge stake—the spoil of some fallen foe—but no knight who ever laid lance in rest among all King Arthur's court had a more chivalrous soul.

CHAPTER V.

KNIGHTS, LADIES, AND AN OGRE.

AT the point of junction of the lane that led down to the fair with the high road, the two cadets came suddenly upon a little knot of their late adversaries—composed of gipsies and roughs—in the middle of whom could just be discerned two summer bonnets. These gentry were so occupied in persecuting the owners of the same, that they did not perceive the presence of the new-comers till they were actually upon them, and the "one, two," of the mace and the hedge-stake had been administered with crushing effect; then they broke and fled, imagining that nothing less than the whole Cadet Company were returning upon them. Behind them they left two young girls, their raiment torn and bedraggled, their bonnet-strings flying, and their whole appearance pitiable to an extreme degree; yet in no way contemptible, for besides the not uninteresting fact that they were both very pretty, there was a spirit in the looks of both, and a fire in those of one of them, that seemed to proclaim the scorn of higher caste as well as the indignation of insulted modesty.

One was taller and darker than the other, and while the same heightened colour glowed in each of their faces, the eyes of the former gleamed with passion, while those of the latter were filled with tears.

"Quick, quick, young ladies!" cried Darall; "come back with us, before these cowardly scoundrels muster courage to return."

The shorter and fairer of the two girls hung back a little at this offer of being run away with by two young gentlemen in uniform, but her companion seized her by the wrist, and began to hasten with her in the direction indicated.

It was not a moment too soon, for their late assailants had already discovered how small was the party that had attempted their rescue, and were pouring down the narrow lane with oaths and yells.

"If one could kill one of these howling beggars maybe it would stop the rest," muttered Landon between his teeth, as he stood, with his mace sloped upon his shoulder, awaiting the onset. Darall, with his pointed stake stood behind him, to the full as dangerous an opponent, though his firm face showed no such passion.

"We must make a running fight of it, Landon; every moment of delay is a moment gained for the girls; but we must never be surrounded; strike sharp and then take to your heels."

Even as he spoke the mob began to slacken speed. There were only two against them, it was true; but they looked very ugly customers, and those who had an eye to their personal safety—who formed the majority—had already reflected that it was better to let somebody else do the knocking down, and leave to themselves the easier and more grateful task of trampling on the prostrate bodies. A gipsy and a travelling tinker, however, each armed with a tent-pole, separated themselves from the rest, and charged the two cadets at full speed, while the rest of the rabble rout came on less furiously behind them. These men were of large build, and the poles were long and strong, so that it seemed they must carry all before them, and they would without doubt have carried—or transfixed—these two young gentlemen, had they remained to stand the shock. But one of the arts and sciences taught at the Royal Military Academy, to its elder pupils, was that of parrying the bayonet. The poles went on, but not quite in the direction indicated, and on the skulls of those who were bearing them, as it were, into space, descended the weapons that had just averted them with crushing effect; the tinker stumbled on for a few paces, and then fell in a pool of his own blood; the gipsy went down like a stone.

Without stopping to make the least inquiry as to the result of this military operation, the two young gentlemen were off like a shot, and had placed twenty yards of road between them and their pursuers, ere the latter had recovered from their dismay. In front of them the two terrified girls were making what haste they could, but it was plain that running was not the strong point of at least one of them. The shorter of the two, overcome more by agitation and alarm than by fatigue, could only stagger feebly along; and it was merely a question of a few yards nearer to or farther from home that they would be overtaken by

their tormentors, with whom it was not likely in that broad high-road that their two gallant defenders could again even so much as delay.

"We're done," exclaimed Darall, perceiving the situation at a glance; "that is," added he, with a gleam of hope, "unless that is Bex coming back to help us."

Beyond the two girls there suddenly came into view two or three figures, marching, or at least walking in line, from the direction of Woolwich.

"By jingo, they are gunners!" exclaimed Landon. "Hi, hi! to your guns, to your guns, guns, guns!" It was a war-cry well known to the artillerymen of those days in and about Woolwich; and known also to their foes. At the first note of it, the hurrying throng slackened speed, then stopped and stared as if to make sure of the red and blue uniforms that were growing every moment more distinct; for the new-comers were now running. Then the mob turned tail and fled tumultuously to their tents.

It was for a moment not quite certain that the two damsels thus preserved from Charybdis might not have fallen into Scylla, or in other words have exchanged the rudeness of the Fair folk, for the blandishments of the military, who, always gallant, are sometimes lacking in chivalry; but, as it happened, the two cadets hurried up only to find the young ladies in safe hands.

"Lor bless yer," said one man to Landon, as if in apology for not having committed any misconduct, "the tall 'un is niece to our own colonel," a relationship doubtless at least as binding to him as any in the tables of affinity in the Book of Common Prayer. But for this recognition, it is my fixed belief that, in the wild and wicked times of which I write, the young ladies would have had to pay the ransom of a kiss or two. To the common eye they did not in their dishevelled and agitated state, look very like young ladies; and one of them, the shorter, had not breath enough left, poor thing, to have said "don't." The other, however, had recovered herself sufficiently to thank Landon and Darall with much warmth and gratitude, and to narrate in a few words what had befallen them. "I was out for a walk with my friend Miss Ray—a daughter of the commissary-general—and on our return home were met by that cowardly rabble, from whose hands you were so good as to deliver us. My uncle, Colonel Juxon, will, I am sure, take the first opportunity of expressing to you, much better than I can do, his sense of the service you have rendered us."

She addressed these words to Darall, not because he looked like the elder of the two cadets, for he did not, but because Landon's gaze was fixed so earnestly upon her as to cause her some embarrassment. The fact was the young fellow could not keep his eyes off that dark-hued but

lovely face, with its grand eyes and grateful smile. His heart, always susceptible to beauty, was aflame, and his ready tongue experienced for once a difficulty in expression. It was nevertheless necessary for him to speak, since it was certain Darall could not. To say that that young gentleman, when in the presence of the softer sex, was more shy than any young miss at her first dinner party, would fall very short indeed of describing his modesty. His face had softened so during the last few moments, that you would have scarcely recognised it as the same which had been set so steadily against his enemies; the hand that had just used the hedge stake so effectively, shook with nervous terrors; in short he looked as thoroughly "upset" and disorganized as Miss Ray herself.

"I am sure," stammered Landon, "that my friend and I are more than rewarded for any little assistance we may have rendered you, Miss Juxon——"

"Not Miss Juxon," interrupted the young lady with rapid earnestness, "my name is Mayne." Then perceiving that he was in difficulties with his little speech—as well he might be—she took it up for him. "As for what you are pleased to call a little assistance, it was an act of great courage against overpowering odds, and I shall never forget it,—never."

"Well, the fact is, Miss Mayne," answered Landon, the "cupidon" lips showing his white teeth—his smile was his best property, and few could withstand it—"we owed you the rescue; for if it had not been that we cadets had just been robbing their nest, those wasps yonder—and I compliment the scoundrels by such a metaphor—would not perhaps have annoyed you. We had just given them a good thrashing"—this was scarcely true, but the military, when describing their own achievements, are allowed some license,—"and I suppose it struck them, on their retreat, that it would be very pleasant to annoy those who could not defend themselves."

"We found defenders—brave ones," answered the young lady softly; and then she once more added: "I shall never, never forget it"—only instead of "it" she said "you."

The two were now walking together, side by side, towards Woolwich, while behind them came Darall and Miss Ray—whom a common shyness had at least placed on the same plane, and who were getting on, in a monosyllabic fashion, tolerably well. The ladies were now quite safe from any possible annoyance, but still it was very embarrassing for them to be walking on the high-road in rags and tatters—for the mob had sadly spoilt their summer finery—in company with two gentlemen-cadets, however gentlemanlike. It was therefore with great joy that they found themselves presently overtaken by a return fly from Greenwich, which was at once secured for them by Landon.

"I think, Darall, you had better go off to the Shop," he said confidentially; "the sooner you get there the better, though I don't doubt that the service you have performed for these ladies, being who they are, will cover a multitude of sins. One of us, of course, must see them home."

The advice was doubtless good, and certainly unselfish, for the effect of it was necessarily to leave Landon with one young lady too many; and yet his friend did not seem so grateful for it as he ought to have been. Conscious of his own bashfulness, perhaps, he regretted having to quit Miss Ray's company, with whom he had by this time managed to "get on" tolerably well; and that barren ground he knew would have to be gone over again when they next met, for it was almost as difficult for young gentlemen of his character to resume the thread of an acquaintance as to find it in the first instance. However, he had not yet arrived at that point of courtship at which we are enjoined to leave father and mother, to cleave to a young person of the opposite sex; and the thought of his parent, and her dependence upon him, sent him off at once.

"You will call on papa, if papa does not call on you," said Miss Ray softly; from which remark we are not to imagine that that damsel was "forward," but that she had some well-grounded apprehensions of her father's being backward in performing any act of courtesy. He was not the commissary-general, though Miss Mayne had called him so, being only the acting-deputy-assistant-commissary-general; but he had all the Jack-in-office peculiarities of the most full-blown official.

Once in the fly, both young ladies at once recovered their self-possession. Fortunately the vehicle was a closed one, so that their dilapidated condition could not be observed as they drove along, and to Landon they had appeared under so much more disadvantageous circumstances, that his presence did not embarrass them. They laughed and chatted quite unreservedly.

"What a kind, courageous creature is that friend of yours, Mr. Landon," said Miss Mayne.

"Yes, indeed, he is," echoed Miss Ray admiringly.

Sometimes it is not pleasant to hear young ladies praise one's friend, but on this occasion Landon saw nothing to object to in it, for what Darall had done he had also done; and somehow it struck him that the term "creature" would not have been used—in however complimentary a sense—had the speaker made mention of himself.

"Mr. Darall is all very well" (she seemed to say), "but it is clear you are the master mind."

To do him justice, however, Landon was not slow to sing his friend's praises; and, with the frankness of youth, proceeded to give a sketch

of his position, and how his future prospects were likely to be imperilled by the escapade of that afternoon.

"I have sent him off to make the best excuse for himself he can—and I am sure he has a good one—for not having returned with the other sinners."

"But what will *you* do?" exclaimed Miss Mayne, with an anxiety that the young fellow flattered himself had also a touch of tenderness in it; "why should you run any needless risk by accompanying us, now that we are quite safe?"

"Oh, my case is different," laughed Landon carelessly. "It would not break my heart if I was to be sent away from the Academy to-morrow; whereas, it would break it, you know," he added roguishly, "to think that, after such a terrible adventure as you have experienced, you should be suffered to return home alone."

"But you have a mother also, perhaps?" suggested Miss Ray.

"Unfortunately I have not," said Landon, and while Miss Ray said "Oh dear!" commiseratingly, and Miss Mayne's fine eyes looked two large volumes of tender sympathy, he added gaily: "and as for the governor, I think he would be rather pleased than otherwise, to find that I had stepped out of my uniform, and was prepared to help him to make money in his City counting-house."

"It must be very charming to be rich," sighed Miss Ray.

"If you are not so," answered Landon, with a little bow "you prove that it is possible to be very charming, and yet not to be rich."

Miss Mayne broke into a musical laugh, and only laughed the more when her friend, suffused with blushes, told her that she ought to be ashamed of herself for laughing, and thereby giving encouragement to Mr. Landon's audacity.

They had altogether a very pleasant drive; and when Miss Ray was dropped at her father's residence, which was letter Z, "Officer's Quarters," and did not present an attractive exterior—the two that were left behind enjoyed it perhaps even more.

Colonel Juxon, R. A., lived a little way out of Woolwich, in that now well-known suburb called Nightingale Vale, and the address, we may be sure, afforded Landon an opportunity of paying a well-turned compliment. At the period of which we write, this locality was only sparsely sprinkled with villa residences, inhabited mostly by the families of officers of high rank, or whose private means admitted of their living out of barracks. Hawthorne Lodge, which was the colonel's house, was a really pretty little tenement, standing in a garden of its own, and having in its rear that unmistakeable sign of prosperity, a coach-house. As they drove up the neatly gravelled drive in front of the cottage, covered with its flowering creepers, and offering a view of a very elegant

"interior" through the open French windows of the drawing-room, Landon expressed his admiration. "Why, I did not know Woolwich could boast of such a bower, Miss Mayne; your home looks like Fairyland."

"Yes, it is certainly pretty for Woolwich," answered the young lady; "and it also resembles Fairyland in one particular, that it is inhabited by a wicked enchanter."

"I know about the enchanter, but I did not know she was wicked," answered Landon.

"I did not mean myself, sir, as you very well knew," returned she, reprovingly, "I was referring to my uncle, Colonel Juxon, a gentleman rather formidable to folks who don't know him; in the army he is called a fire-eater, I believe; but at home——"

"Who in the fiend's name, my dearest Ella, have you brought here?" inquired a sharp testy voice, as the fly drew up at the door, and a short spare old gentleman in undress uniform, presented himself at it. His hair and moustache were as white as snow, and made by contrast a pair of copper-coloured and bloodshot eyes look yet more fiery; altogether he had the appearance of a ferret, and also of a ferret who was exceedingly out of temper.

"This is Mr. Cecil Landon, uncle, to whom Gracie Ray and I have just been indebted for the greatest possible service."

"The devil you have!" said the colonel, sardonically.

"Yes, uncle; Gracie and I were returning quietly home, after a walk along the Greenwich road——"

"A deuced bad road to choose for a walk," interrupted the colonel, angrily; "the most deuced bad road."

"So indeed it turned out, uncle," continued the young girl in unruffled tones, "for a lot of drunken people from Charlton fair——"

"Aye, cadets, I suppose; I've heard of their doings," interrupted the colonel, regarding Landon with great disfavour; "there's going to be a clean sweep made of them by Sir Hercules this time, however."

"But it was not the cadets, uncle; on the contrary, it was to the cadets, or at least to two of them, one of whom was this gentleman here, that Gracie and I are indebted for escaping perhaps with our lives."

"Pooh, pooh, what did they want with your lives?" returned the colonel contemptuously. "The dashed vagabonds wanted to kiss you, and by the look of your bonnet they must have done it. By the living Jingo! if I had only caught them at it, I'd have set a mark on one or two that would have taken a deal of rubbing to get it off again."

"That is exactly what, in our humble, and doubtless less effectual way, we did," explained Landon deferentially.

(To be continued.)

HER ANSWER.

ALL day long she held my question
In her heart ;
Shunn'd my eyes that crav'd an answer,
Moved apart ;
Touch'd my hand in Goodnight greeting,
Rosier grew,—
"Should I leave to-morrow ? early ?
Then Adieu ! "
Bent her head in Farewell courteous,
Onward pass'd,
Whilst a cold hand gripp'd my heart-strings,
Held them fast.
Still I waited, still I listened ;
All my soul
Trembled in the eyes that watch'd her
As she stole
Up the stairs with measur'd footsteps.
But she turn'd
Where a lamp in brazen bracket
Brightly burn'd,
Show'd me all the glinting ripples
Of her hair,
Veil'd her eyes in violet shadows,
Glimmer'd where
Curv'd her mouth in soft compliance
As she bent
Towards me from the dusky railing
Where she leant.
Ah, my sweet ! . . . . . The white hand wanders
To her hair,
Slowly lifts the rose that nestles
Softly there ;
Breathes she in its heart my answer
Shyly sweet,
And Love's message whitely flutters
To my feet.

"HER ANSWER"

ROSE-LEAF LIPS: THE STORY OF A CROUPIER.

CHAPTER I.

"Faites votre jeu, m'sieurs "

A STORY this of brief sunshine, very bright, and short-lived flowers, very sweet; of long days of cloud and darkness, and the desolation of a wrecked life; a story of temptation wilfully incurred; of punishment, and of repentance, deep, unfeigned, but powerless to save:—the story of my life.

What right had I, Evelyn Harcourt, artist and struggler for bare foothold at the very edge of the world's limit; fighter for the right of title to the noble name of Earthworm; despairing dangler on the lowest fringes of the mantle of Respectability—to dream of Love! is a question as to which my four-and-twenty years did not, at the time, offer any satisfactory solution; neither has a since superadded lustrum afforded me any tenable excuse for the act; but I was twenty-four, and I met my ideal.

I was at Nice, working and waiting, working at "bits" of mountain and sea, gorge and valley; here a gnarled, mis-shapen old olive trunk, the very realization of the grace of the Distorted—twisted, curled, and curved, bent and broken into the perfection of lawless deformity; there, some wayside chapel, where, guarded from storm and rain by the curvature of a humble niche, the dear Madonna and her Child, blessed and blessing, looked with benignant eyes on the passers up and down the steep winding road which led to terrace on terrace of orange and lemon trees above, or climbed, devious, the alpine spur which divided valley from valley. And such passers-by as these were! Such picturesquely wrinkled old men and dried-fig-faced old women! for, with humanity here, youth alone is beautiful; the skies only favour, and the gods only care for the young. Many a queer figure, descending to market on four sure and steady asinine feet, as, with ever busy fingers knitting the everlasting stocking, it sat perched atop of the bales and bundles of garden stuff which swung from the animal's back, did I, in artistic ecstacy, transfer to my canvas, to the appreciative delight of the rich English, Russian, and American visitors who made the Nice "season."

Working and waiting I said. Waiting for what? Shall I confess to the weak vanity, the drivelling satisfaction with my own progress in her good graces which made me hope that my Mistress, Art, would one day inspire me to paint a great picture—would one day give me a *name?* But so it was, and I was content to go through the mire and darkness of a young artist's life, cheered only by the inner light

which I so sedulously burnt at the altar of Her whom alone I served. Would that I had known no other mistress! It was not to be so!

One day I was out sketching. It was a day bright and sunny, but with a touch of the hot mistral blowing gustily over the indigo-tinted Mediterranean, raising the dust in clouds over the city far below me, but up where I sat only causing a quivering excitement amongst the tiny leaves of the olive trees, turning their dainty dull green to daintier grey—the under tint of the leaf. I had pitched my easel a little way below a bend of the roadway, which here crept along, airily, above a declivity of some two hundred feet, and was sketching a couple of old olive trees between whose trunks I could catch a distant glimpse of the city and sea. A charming "study," charming, perhaps, only in an artistic sense, came slowly up the roadside, *en route* home from the city—an old woman spinning as she walked, short skirted and doubtless dirty, but with a big basket balanced juggler-wise on her head, making a delightful "bit of colouring." By her side, a girl of about eighteen, also busily spinning, carrying at her back a brown-cheeked baby, and wearing on her head, or rather thrown back behind it, the invariable round straw hat which, in that position, always reminded me so strongly of the "nimbus" with which the old masters encircled the heads of their saints that it was only natural to evolve the nimbus from the straw hat. Just before the group vanished behind the turn of the road, a providence, considerate of artists, caused them to come to a halt, and the artistic *pose* they made there gave the very effect my sketch wanted. Rapidly as possible I filled in the group, and was just engaged in the last touches, when my ear, being fortunately at the moment an idle organ, caught the sound of the sweetest and most musical ripple of a laugh I ever heard. I looked up, and at the moment, dashing round the bend of the road, faster far than the steep descent warranted, came one of the delightful low pony carriages which abound in Nice, drawn by a pair of high-spirited little Corsicans. I had only time to see that it contained two ladies, one of whom held the reins, and a man servant behind, when, as fate would have it, just as they passed the group of peasants, a vicious gust of the mistral caught the basket on the head of the elder woman and hurled it with a crash to the ground. A shy! which swept the slight carriage to the very verge of the precipice, a succession of loud screams, a wild plunge, and in a moment more the ponies would have bolted to certain destruction. Without thinking what I did, I dashed up, caught the reins, and, with all my force, drove the frightened animals down upon their haunches—the ladies were safe!

The excitement of the moment over, the poor beasts themselves seemed to be aware of the peril they had so narrowly escaped, and now stood with quivering flanks and dilated nostrils. For myself, the blood

which had all rushed to my heart at the moment of action now came back with great beats, and I was quite ready to share in the excitement of the driver, who having, with commendable alacrity, bestowed his own precious person on the ground at the moment of the first shy, now came running down with tears still in his eyes and the wringing scarcely yet out of his hands, but with as much noisy satisfaction as if he had not deserved to be well kicked for a coward. Leaving him at the ponies' heads, I advanced to the side of the carriage. The elder of the two ladies had evidently fainted, and her companion was speaking volubly in French; scolding her too, as I live! for making such a mountain out of so trifling a mole-hill. Standing thus with my hat in hand, quite unregarded, I could not help being amused at the coolness of the young heroine; being moreover sensible of a certain graceful curve of neck, and an undefined perception of a very perfectly moulded figure. The situation required alteration. Accordingly, I ventured to ask if I could be of any assistance.

Heavens! what a lovely face was turned upon me! I could not venture to describe it. I did not dare to look into the eyes which, haughtily enough, flashed over me; indeed I was instantaneously lost in wonder at a pair of lips which looked for all the world like a couple of fresh curled rose leaves, and uncrumpled rose leaves too. I am a moderately self-possessed man on ordinary occasions, but there I stood like a Sunday-school child, or a fool. I felt like the latter. I have a hazy notion of having stammered out some imbecile remark or other, and of hearing a voice as of some very superior musical box trill out a reply. I had spoken in French, but my beauty, seeing through me in an instant, replied in most excellent English. She was evidently "put out" at the situation, which seemed, and indeed was, much the consequence of her own heedless hold of her ponies, and spoke rather more slightingly of the danger than was quite just. She was very sorry to have put "monsieur" to such trouble: it really was a mere nothing. Her companion was quite recovered now, and with many thanks they would now go on. All this with a flushed cheek and a little air of petulance which heightened her charms and set my heart dancing. I was of course only too delighted to have been of any slight service (here I looked grimly down the declivity—slight indeed!) raised my hat as she touched her ponies with her whip, and watched them disappear down the road with the mingled feeling of disappointment, elation, and a certain generally queer sensation which comes to a man but once in his life. The peasants had disappeared. I stepped to the edge and looked down. Good heavens! there was a mark of the pony's hoof where positively the poor beast had slipped, though it had fortunately recovered itself. One hoof in the grave with a vengeance! And such a grave!

Standing thus, enjoying a feast of horrible imaginings as to what might have been, I was startled again by receiving a sharp slap on the back, while a cheery voice—the cheeriest in all my cognizance—called out,

"Hullo, Evelyn! What is it now old man? Are you sitting to yourself for a picture of a nightmare?"

It was Jack Forster, a trump of a fellow, my own particular friend and sworn comrade. He was the one exception to the rule I have always found good, that "Johns" are staid, sober, wise people, who get on in the world through strict sympathy with the business proprieties, and with little else save themselves. Jack was not a staid, successful man—true he was, at that time, only "Jack," which may account for it, the rule not applying to Johns in embryo. I don't think I quite cared for his interruption at the moment. I was just then carrying my new-found beauty in my own appreciative arms from the bottom to the top of that horrible steep; she had fainted, was perhaps dead, and I was engaged in the sad but exquisite delight of looking at those wonderful rose-leaf lips of hers; indeed I might have dared perhaps to —— well, it *was* too bad. I suppose I looked sulky, for Jack continued:—

"Why, now I look at you, there is something the matter. You're not yourself at all, Molly dear."

"Jack," said I, caustically, "if your excess of animal spirits must be blown off, go away and do your explosion somewhere else where there are fools who won't mind it."

"Don't get on your hind legs, there's a good fellow," returned Jack, imperturbably. "What are you plotting? Highway robbery or invasion? Indeed your attitude is rather Napoleonic out-at-Elb*ow*ish. See the joke?"

"Jack," said I, "I am more than ever confirmed in my opinion that you are, to put it plainly, a——"

"A good sort of fellow who doesn't really wish to annoy you, but you *are* in a queer temper to-day. I'll leave you; pick you up as I come back. Ta, Ta." As he spoke he turned to continue his walk. I was surprised to see him suddenly stop, stoop down, and pick up something white. It was a lady's handkerchief. *Hers!* I started forward, holding out my hand. Jack tantalisingly held it aloft—he was six feet one in his stockings—confound him, why couldn't I have seen it first!

"So ho! The mystery's out. Who's the lady?"

It was no use being angry with Jack; besides his question reminded me that I really did not myself know the name of my beauty. Jack might be able to help me.

"Sit down here, you absurd fellow you, and I'll tell you an adventure which has just happened."

Jack was sobered in a moment when he found how earnest a matter it had been, though he threw one or two queer glances in my direction when, as unconcernedly as I could, I spoke of her as a "very good-looking woman."

"By Jove you're in luck, Evelyn," said he, when I had finished. "I met the pony carriage as I came up the hill."

"Do you know her?"

"I know who she is at all events," said Jack, rather evasively, I thought. "She is a Russian, the Baronne de Moëdders. Very rich and —her own mistress."

"Does she live at Nice?"

"No. She is staying at the Hotel de Paris at Monaco."

"Monaco!"

"Yes. She must have just driven in this afternoon."

"Do you know her well enough to introduce me?"

"Yes. I can manage that for you all right."

I sat for a moment absorbed in my own reflections. Rich, and her own mistress. Lovely! Ah yes, she was indeed. Pshaw! what was I thinking about; the rose-leaf lips would rise before my eyes.

"Jack," said I, "we will go to Monaco to-morrow."

Jack said nothing, but gave a low whistle which I perfectly well understood. It said as plainly as if he had spoken: What! *you! you*, the purist! the abominator of gambling; the condemnor of poor slaves of that most despicable vice. *You* who have so often refused even to set foot on the enchanted ground for fear of putting yourself in the way of temptation. *You* ——, and so on for an hour. I knew it all, but still, I would go to the hotel. I could at any rate command myself sufficiently not to go farther. In fact it was a weak and unfair treatment of my own moral strength to keep it thus as it were in cotton wool; besides, there was the handkerchief to be returned. I said so, holding out my hand for it. Jack did not surrender his prize readily, but ultimately did so, though with no great grace.

"Evelyn," said he, as I packed up my sketching traps in silence, having hurriedly thrust the dainty little bit of lawn and lace into my breast pocket. "Evelyn, you're in love with that girl."

"Jack," said I, angrily, "you're a perfect idiot to-day," but I felt "that girl's" little treasure trove next to my heart, and muttered to myself—

"That's true!"

Jack said nothing.

CHAPTER II.

"Le jeu est fait!"

EVEN a sleepless night ends at some time, and the chatter of the ciccala, "happy as a king," and the conversational powers of the green tree-frog, lying complacently on the leaves of the orange trees around me by the thousand, and croaking harsh nothings to discordant mates, in *esse* and in *posse*, set me from thinking to dreaming of my new found enchanter. Jack and I had made friends with an honest couple who grew orange trees for the sake of their sweet blossoms, made into sweeter scent, and were, besides, owners of an olive mill, whose big water-wheel slowly ground the rich berries into oil, and consequent ducats for its contented proprietors. A kindly, simple pair they were, who had taken a fancy to their artist inmates, and made a happy quiet home at the mill for us which they would have denied to more pretentious lodgers. Jack Forster was no artist, only an idle man. He was a younger son of a good family, and had succeeded to that curse to a man of easy-going temperament, a small independence and an indifferent education, which had taught him just enough to enable him to get a good deal of enjoyment out of life without much labour. I woke to find Jack standing over my bedside with a somewhat troubled look on his handsome face.

"Ah!" said he, "it's as well you have come to yourself at last. A fine nightmare you have been riding, I should imagine! Here have you been rolling and groaning, pitching and tossing, like an empty fishing smack in a gale. What's the matter?"

"Matter! nothing," said I, "eat too much supper I suppose."

"'Twas that confounded cucumber,
I've eat and can't digest,"

quoted Jack, with an I-see-through-you-look which I detest. I turned my face to the wall. Truth was that I had been compelled by the abominable activity of an excited brain to rehearse for my own benefit the whole scene of the previous day, with elaborations, the principal of which were a pair of rosy lips, mockingly offering themselves to my pursuing kiss, and turning to serpents' jaws which viciously snapped at me whenever I touched them. Pleasant certainly!

"Breakfast's ready," said Jack; (breakfast being a concession to our insular prejudices) "a cup of strong coffee will quiet your nerves; we have an expedition to-day, remember."

Monaco, and an introduction to my Russian beauty! I dressed rapidly, and entering our little sitting-room, found Jack engaged in stuffing cold chicken and hard boiled eggs, together with other sundry matters, into a couple of knapsacks.

"What on earth are you doing?" said I, "one would think we were going to a desert island instead of a first-class hotel."

"Oh, you won't find the hotels very first-class."

"Why, I thought Monaco had the best hotel in these parts," said I.

"Monaco! Oh yes, but we are not going to Monaco."

"Where then?"

"Up into the mountains, as we settled last week," said Jack, calmly whistling. He was right as to our arrangement, but all that was changed now for me. I had but one object in life at that moment. To my remonstrances Jack was deaf. To Monaco at that time he would not go, and without him the main object of my visit would be difficult of attainment. Finally I had to succumb; the concession being made that within a week we should end our trip at the Hotel de Paris.

I fear I was but bad company throughout that week, fretting and fuming at every delay; but the week did ultimately pass by, and we reached Monaco one afternoon in time to catch the exquisite pink and rose of the setting sun, as it touched lingeringly on town, and castle, white villas nestling in orange and olive groves, and the gaunt, grey crags of the mountain spur which shut in the tiny princedom. Man of one idea though I was, I could not but look with feasting, artist eye on the beauty of the scene now opened to me for the first time, as our carriage rounded the fairy bay, and mounted the steep which led to the "*Etablissement.*"

"I know this spot pretty well," said Jack, looking back as we reached the top and turned into the "place" in front of the Hotel, "but upon my word it's just the sweetest slice of Paradise I ever saw."

"And a boiled down Hades ready to tumble into," added I, with the superiority of a being above a fall.

"I don't know that. Hades is Paradise to a good many here, and lots wouldn't change quarters if they could."

Appalled at the indecent sentiment of the "lots," but without a sufficiently severe retort on my lips at the moment, I followed Jack into the Hotel. Here he seemed quite at home, and gave orders for rooms, by their number and locality, with the confidence of an *habitué* of the place.

"Just in time for dinner," said he, and led the way into an immense and splendidly-frescoed hall, filled with well-appointed tables of different sizes, each of which held a more or less numerous party, while the clatter of plates and the confused noise of a number of voices, made a Babel of sound which was the reverse of depressing. Through the crowded room with a bow here, a nod and a smile there, or a whispered word in passing, Jack steered his way, till at the end of the room he stopped at a small table at which there were only four seats, all empty. I looked round the room eagerly. *She* was not there.

"My own particular spot," he remarked.

"You come here often then," said I. Jack was always somewhat reticent as to his movements, and of course my own artist life led me much away from our home.

"Oh, yes. Latterly I have been here a good deal. Where is Madame la Baronne?" he continued, turning to a servant dressed in black and wearing a silver chain round his neck.

"Madame has left the hotel, monsieur, this week past."

"Indeed!" He spoke indifferently, but I could not help the feeling that there was a touch of satisfaction in his tone. "That's unfortunate, Evelyn; you will not meet your charmer after all."

I was at once dashed from the seventh heaven of nearly realized expectation to the abyss of utter disappointment. Was it for this I had come. I was about to make some angry observation when the major domo added:—

"But, without doubt, madame will return to-night. She makes a little promenade along the Corniche with her friends."

I wonder I did not get up then and there and embrace the man. Up from the nadir to the zenith once more! Jack appeared indifferent.

"Very well," said he, "let's have some dinner."

Dinner passed rather silently. At its close Jack proposed coffee and a cigar, outside the café opposite. The cigar was excellent; so was the coffee; so were my spirits. We chatted for some time on the scene before us; I interspersing divers observations of a moral character as profound and effective as such observations of twenty-four on its highest moral rocking-horse are wont to be. Jack was cynical, and not particularly good-humoured.

"I acknowledge it all," said he, "all the idleness, and sinful waste, and general viciousness of the entire caboodle. But what would you have? In consequence of the introduction of original sin into this much-abused sublunary sphere, man is conscious of a liver. That liver, owing to said cause is, alas, too sadly apt to become torpid, whence flow the chief evils of life—ill-tempers, quarrels, wars. To stir up that degenerate organ, we must have an exciting cause; we cannot be always feasting on blue pills. The constant imbibing of the festive black draught is a pernicious and distasteful practice. It must be a tough liver or an endless purse which can't be stirred thoroughly here, and that with the least possible hurt to the world outside. If it does sometimes end in prussic acid or a pistol shot, I don't know that much is lost. Let's come and hear the music inside, the band is just beginning."

We threw away the ends of our cigars, and walked across the grass and flower-filled space in the centre of the square towards the porch of

the play-rooms—the *Etablissement* itself. Jack stopped on the steps which led to the building and said in a low tone:

"Evelyn, will you take my advice? A train back will start in half-an-hour; get into it and go home."

"Thank you," said I, coldly, as a suspicion crossed my mind which had been lying dormant there for some little time past; "are you quite sure that your advice is disinterested?" I spoke with something of a sneer, for which I was ashamed the moment after. Jack merely shrugged his shoulders and passed in. I followed.

"That's Cerberus," he said, with a laugh, as we passed a grave sharp-eyed man near the door.

"Why Cerberus?"

"Well, the good Prince of this Monaco, though he receives an immense income from M. Louis Blanc, the magician who has built this palace out of his bare rocks, does not care to have his people bitten with the Tarantula of Play. The natives are not admitted."

We passed into a noble hall, along the sides of which stood rows of comfortable chairs, into which visitors might sink and listen at their ease, gratis, to the music of one of the finest continental orchestras. The band, some fifty in number, was playing a dainty bit of waltz music as we entered, rendered with such exquisite modulations of time and tone as showed a master mind guiding the bâton. We stayed till the music ceased, and then left the room, turning towards a corridor, at the end of which were heavy baize-covered double doors; entering these, we found ourselves in the first of the two great *salons de jeu* which form the heart of this vast system. A general effect of gilding and colour, massive chandeliers pendant by heavy brass chains from lofty ceilings, a crowd of people, ladies as well as men, gathered closely round long tables covered with green cloth, and—silence. This was my first impression of Monaco. The silence was broken only by a mysterious rattle which almost immediately ended with a slight click, upon which a monotonous but clear voice made some announcement, succeeded by the sound of coin falling upon coin, and the raking together of pieces of money. Then the same monotonous voice called out words heard by me for the first time, "*Faites votre jeu, m'sieurs!*" followed by a pause, during which there seemed to be a general rush to put money on the table. Jack and I managed to get close to the envied spot, succeeding to the seats of a little old lady in black who made her exit, followed by another who looked like her maid, and probably was.

"The old lady is not in luck to-night," whispered Jack. "I dare say she thinks some one here is looking at her with an evil eye."

"Who is she?"

"Oh, a wealthy Russian; widow to a notable diplomat who left her

a fortune and, what he considered better, an infallible "system" for roulette. Your Russian is a born gamester."

Was my Russian beauty also a gamester? I longed to ask, but refrained.

"*Le jeu est fait!*" called out one of the croupiers at the centre of the table, and with a twist of his finger he set a circular disk spinning on its axis with great velocity, at the same moment dropping in the circle a small ivory ball. Round and round rushed the disk, and round and round careered the ball. I looked up and down the immense table. Anxious to seize the latest moment, people were depositing coin—gold, silver, and notes—in the different compartments which were marked on the cloth. Three long parallel lines of numbers ran down its whole length, from one to thirty-six, corresponding with divisions of the roulette wheel. In addition to these were bigger divisions according to colour, "Rouge" and "Noir"; again, two other divisions for odd and equal numbers, "Pair" and "Impair"; two more, "Manque" and "Passe," embracing numbers below and above the middle number eighteen; other divisions again offered still further varieties of combination. Above all came "Zero," the joy of the bank, the dread of the players. All this Jack hurriedly explained to me as the ball galloped on its course. As it showed signs of slackening speed, its attendant called out, "Rien ne va plus," after which nothing further could be put on the table for that turn, and in a moment more it had tumbled, with a sharp click, into one of the compartments of the wheel.

"Vingt-et-un, rouge, impair et passe," sung out the imperturbable voice, and the work of absorption and payment to the lucky winners went on like the mere question of machinery it was. The busy rakes dragged in the bank's winnings, leaving on the cloth the stakes about the lucky number; towards these a golden and silver shower descended from the deft hands of cashiers, while croupiers at either end regulated the ownership of the various piles. A brief squabble would occasionally occur as to a doubtful ownership, but all was easily settled, and the monotonous performance was ready to be repeated hour after hour through the long night. This was Roulette. But the faces—the expressions! This was the place to see the natural man and woman. No artificiality here! Bound by a common tie of passion indulged, none had reason to feign a decorous propriety; though transient visitors would for awhile assume an air which expressed their sense of the general fie-fie-ness of things. But Monaco is a universal and impartial leveller, and those "who came to scoff" remained most frequently—to *play*.

"See that portly personage opposite?" said Jack, looking across to where a gentleman was covering the table with 100 franc gold pieces.

"That's the Duke of ——," naming an English nobleman; "by his side is an English parson in mufti. By Jove, the parson's in luck!" he continued, as that estimable divine, who was evidently a visitor experimenting on a novel sensation—"being in Turkey did as the Turkies do"—became a recipient of the golden rain. Sharer in the same beneficence of Jupiter Auripluvius, a graceful white hand, whose fingers were covered with brilliants, stretched out to gather in the coin. By accident, the rake it held slightly touched and upset the parson's pile. With a little laugh and a "mille pardons, m'sieur!" the *amende* was made; the parson bowed, smiled, and said some small suitable nothing.

"Thirty-nine Articles flirting with original sin," said Jack.

"There is a queer mixture here," I whispered.

"Oh yes. Hell, like heaven, is no respecter of persons. M. Blanc's showers fall alike on the evil and on the good. What's the last number? Trente-six! Let's try the other extreme;" and Jack carelessly threw a Napoleon on "Zero." Round went the ball, and to my great excitement, "Zero" came from the croupier's lips, and whilst the long rakes gathered in the spoils all round, thirty-five golden drops fell to the lucky Jack. He pushed some to me:

"Here, old man," said he, "try your luck; you needn't mind. It's their own money."

I declined decidedly. I had come there, it was true, but nothing should induce me to put a sou on the fatal board. On that point, with a little inward glow of satisfaction at my own decision of character, I was quite determined. I would not play. Jack shrugged his shoulders and continued his game with a coolness or self-control which I could not pretend to share. I found myself getting absorbed, and watching the ups and downs of his fortune with an excitement which was as exhilarative as unusual. At last Jack got up with a little forced laugh.

"Let's get out of this," he said.

We left the table, our vacated seats being instantly filled.

"What's the damage?" I asked.

"Oh, fifty Naps. or so to the bad. Luck was against me to-night. Better next time. Come and see the trente-et-quarante table."

It was on my lips to have "improved the occasion" for his benefit, but, in truth, his was much the better mind and stronger will, and argument with him did not always mean success for me. I was of a disposition I fear to follow rather than lead; what would be called a "weak" man; how weak I little imagined at that time—I realized fully before long.

At the trente-et-quarante table in the next room, which was even more handsome than the last, there was a smaller and more select circle, and the medium of the play being cards, it was an extremely quiet group.

Here Jack pointed out to me various celebrities in the continental world of diplomacy and the fine arts. Here a famous Prussian officer engaged in "running through" his play as though it were an enemy. Next to him a great financier whose name would be honoured in every spot throughout the world where money is a power; everywhere, that is, save a few islands in the Pacific where the "unconverted heathen" has not been elevated into civilized 'cuteness. He was trying hard to get rid of some of the incubus of wealth which sat on him, but his efforts were useless; he was winning constantly. By his side sat a lady dressed in a pale pinky silk made in the height of fashion, a gracefully shaped hat on her beautiful head which was at the moment turned from me. My heart beat wildly. I required no intimation that here was my lady of the rose-leaf lips—my beautiful Russian! I felt that Jack was regarding me with a cynical smile, and that I was blushing with pleasure like a foolish girl. She was playing high, and apparently losing heavily, but with the most consummate air of indifference. She was chatting to an elderly lady who sat by her side, but who was not herself playing; only turning to the table at each renewal of the game to replace doubly or trebly the stakes which were rapidly swept from her towards the insatiable maw of the "bank." The other lady I recognized as her companion on the eventful day of the accident. A kindly sympathetic face, her's, full of high intelligence and moral goodness; while the loving look she gave in answer to some observation of her lively companion, came as a kind of solace to the pain I felt at seeing them *there*. My beauty could not be bad at heart to have gained the love of such a woman. She was playing for very high stakes. A pile of thousand franc notes lay in her lap, and her perfectly moulded hand *bien gantée*, with an arm whose shape and delicacy held me enchanted—was then placing another roll of these upon the table. As she turned, she raised her face in our direction, and recognised us in an instant with a smile and a little flush of the cheek, for which I felt I would have gone through fire. A moment more and her stake followed its companions. With a slight *moue* of contemptuous dissatisfaction she rose, and followed by her companion, left the table, coming towards us.

"Ah my friend," she said to Jack, giving him her hand cordially, "you have come to break my bad luck, I hope."

Jack made some reply, and then turning to me was about to introduce me, when the beauty with a charming grace all her own, held out her hand and pressed mine with cordial feeling.

"Mr. Harcourt and I don't require any introduction; my naughty Garibaldi and Ratto have already made us acquainted. Is it not so?" she said, with one of her sweet smiles. Heavens! How beautiful she was!

"You must allow me to introduce you to another of your rescued dames. *Ma chère*," she continued, turning to her companion, "Here is Mr. Harcourt at last. Ah sir, Madame de Vost and I can at last thank you, though not half enough, for your bravery."

Madame de Vost said some pleasant, quiet words of thanks, and I stammered out a reply—what, I have no notion.

"We looked at the place as we returned; *Mon Dieu!* it was horrible!" ran on my beauty, "but let us not stay here where it makes so hot; let us come outside on the terrace—see, the moon is shining beautifully."

We stepped through an open window on to a broad terrace. Below us were flowers and grass, and graceful palm-trees, *and*, the broad moon-lit breast of the Mediterranean. To the right, the sister peninsula of rock to our own ran out, bearing on its crest the quaint outlines of the little town of Monaco and the palace of its Prince, bathed in the bright rays of the moon. It was a fairy scene, such a one as lives in an artist's memory. The Baroness sank down on a garden seat with a rustle of silks and a scent of sweet flowers about her, the very embodyment of fair womanhood, and made room for me at her side. Madame de Vost sat on her other side with an arm round her waist, and Jack, the lengthy and luxurious, stretched himself at her feet.

"Now, gentlemen, light your cigars," said our mistress; I say mistress, for we all seemed to own her sway instinctively. "Stay, I will myself, with my own hands, roll cigarettes for you. Mr. Forster, you carry the material I know."

Jack laughed. "I should think you did," said he. She took off her long gloves, and, with a woman's coquetry, gave them to me to hold, while with rapid fingers she folded up tobacco and coaxed it into form, till she had produced four excellently-made cigarettes.

"There!" she said, "one apiece," and, giving us ours, proceeded to light her own as though there were nothing strange in the operation.

"You seem surprised, Mr. Harcourt," she said, watching me with amusement, "but I really don't see why you gentlemen should have all the pleasant things of life, and a delicate tobacco is certainly one of them."

As she spoke, with the fairy smoke curling from her lips, with the grace of her attitude and gesture before me, I could not, for the life of me, say why she, at least, should not smoke or do any other masculine act she might choose; content that she could do nothing ungraceful or unbecoming her womanhood. It is the manner of the acting, not the act itself, which unsexes a woman.

"These are days of advance and change," said Jack, "and manners and customs must march with the tide. Little did those warlike old buffers, the Grimaldi, through their seven centuries of princedom over

yonder, anticipate the accession of so potent a power as M. Louis Blanc."

Some one replied, and the ball of conversation was kept up with much force and gay badinage, though with but scanty contribution from me. A sweet, strange lull of thought, aspiration, hope and fear, seemed to enwrap me. I was conscious of but one sentiment—that I was near *her*. I did not care to analyse feeling further. By and by she complained of feeling chilly, and we rose to return to the room.

"Twelve o'clock," said Jack, "I beg to propose some supper."

By general consent the motion was carried, and we passed through the rooms on our way to the hotel. We stopped for awhile at the roulette table which was in full swing, though not now so crowded, owing to the departure of the Nice train with its load of visitors. I had told her that this was my first visit; that I had never played.

"Will you do me a favour?" said the Baroness to me as we stood looking on.

"There is nothing you can ask me that I will not do," I said, like the the simple, innocent, happy fool I was.

The same slight flush which I had noticed before came over her face to my delight. I was almost beside myself. Everything was misty; everything was *her*.

"You know how superstitious we Russians are, and people who play here are doubly so. I have had a run of ill-luck to-night. Will you see if your hand can break the spell. Play for me."

She put a roll of notes into my hand. Scarcely conscious of what I was doing, I put the entire roll on to the table. It was on "rouge." "Rouge" came up and her stake was doubled. She clapped her hands in childish glee.

"There, there! Did I not tell you so?" she said. "Mr. Harcourt you are born to be my guardian angel!"

I smiled, and said in a low voice:

"Will you, too, do *me* a favour?"

"Of course! I owe you a very great one you must remember—my life."

She looked at me with one sudden glance of her beautiful eyes. I could scarcely dare to read what I did read there.

"Then let me keep your glove."

"Certainly, for ever and a day, if you will," said she, adding, with a laugh to hide, as I fancied, a deeper feeling, as she took my arm to leave the room. "Men are so easily pleased."

As we passed the door, the monotonous voice of the croupier cried the never ending formula,

"Le jeu est fait!"

What did I care!

CHAPTER III.

"Rien ne va plus."

AND now there began for me a season of such happiness as I had never dreamt could have fallen to mortal lot. Through the whole of those happy winter months I lived as if in another and ethereal world. The practice of my art I utterly gave up, proving myself, to my shame, to be no true artist. My once sole mistress was supplanted by one more potent, and to serve two such at the same time was impossible. I left my once dear and happy home by the old olive mill at Nice, and removed to the gay splendour of the Hotel de Paris, that I might be nearer the one object that alone made life valuable to me. It was infatuation; it was madness; it was *love*. But looking back to that time now, in calmer and thoughtful moments, I can neither wonder at, nor, what is stranger, even to myself, regret the sacrifice I then made, or rather, to speak more honestly, the self-indulgence I surrendered to through that long day-dream. Had she whom I loved beckoned me from heaven, I would have followed her there; had she called me to hell, I would have sought her side. In and through life I was her's—in and through death—to eternity her's only. I felt it mere blasphemy to imagine separation from her, ——. I *loved* her—she, too, loved me.

What is it that produces the sentiment we call "love?" What mysterious influence is it which attracts or repels, or simply leaves us indifferent when the sex opposite to our own is concerned? Is it that we are human anemones, magnified and, possibly, improved cydipi; from whom emanate, all unseen, and beyond influence of our own, delicate threads of soul-nerves which meet with other soul nerves, to harmonise or to disagree, and so compel our grosser consciousness to feel the liking or the love, the indifference or disgust which, somehow, we do, involuntarily, feel, often with the first glance? I cannot say; but this I know, I *loved* Feodora from the first moment of our strange meeting on that mountain side: and this with no partial measure, no reservation, but with all my heart, soul and strength. I worshipped her; she was my religion, my God; all else was swallowed up in her. An artist must perforce be also poet. Mine was the impassioned love of the poet; my life one sweet idyl.

I had accumulated, by hard work, and a small legacy left me in the will of a relation, who had taken considerable interest in my life as an artist, some twelve hundred pounds, with which I had purposed continuing my studies in Rome, the centre of art life. This sum now provided me with the means of maintaining my new position. I lived regardless of the future, determined, at all costs, to seize my present day.

How it all came about; what golden glorious hour brought the crowning point to my joy is immaterial. What, and when, and where came the story that the stars saw and the birds heard; on which the palms nodded kindly, whilst the myriad voices on the southern shores—of the ciccala, and the green-tree frog, and the rustling olive leaves hummed a dainty accompaniment—of this it matters nothing; it was the old, old story, and, no doubt, as foolish as any. I write flippantly and untruly—it was like *no other*, for my darling was like no other woman.

How could I attempt to describe her! How and whence she inherited her wonderful beauty and grace, I never quite gathered; nor indeed was her history ever quite clear to me. I only knew that she was nobly born, and the ward, before she married, of the Emperor. She never talked, even to me, of herself; and beyond a general idea, formed more from my own inferences than any definite statements of hers, that her brief married life had been a far from happy one, I knew nothing. That she was rich, good, true, and all womanly, besides being accomplished beyond the ordinary, and possessed of rare powers of mind and observation, summed up all I knew—all I cared to know.

Her one defect was the intense love she had for the excitement of the tables, but even this soon appeared greatly to give way to the pleasure she evidently had in my society. Entire mistress of her own actions, both she and I went our ways regardless of the possibility of remark from women envious of her beauty and wealth, or men equally so, of my good fortune in possessing so absolutely her favour. Sometimes, accompanied by Madame de Vost, (of whom I say little here, but who was the essence of all nobleness of thought, word, and deed, and Feodora's truest, dearest friend and confidant,) but more generally alone, we roamed about the country sketching or botanising; chiefly using the same famous pair of ponies to whose exceptional naughtiness I owed my happy introduction; and a more happy, contented quartette than Feodora and I, "Garabaldi" and "Ratto," could not have been found under the sun through that pleasant winter time. Sometimes we wound along the giddy Corniche road towards the west, through Roccabruno, standing so queerly glued to the mountain side, just as it did seven hundred years ago when St. Bruno, worker of miracles and founder of the grim Carthusian Order, held up his finger and obligingly stayed its rapid slide seawards; over against Eza, rock-perched nest of pirates in the old days, through Villa Franca, and so to Nice; or else we wandered eastward through quaint Mentone with its ancient churches and modern rheumatics, along the Riviera; alone through old time villages with our fresh young love, not finding discord but harmony in the union of new and old. There was but one source of regret. Jack

ERRATUM.

There is an error in the numbering of this page (177), but the connection of the story is not affected by it.

steadily changed in manner, to downright silence and moroseness; till one day after some words in which he warned me not to "make a fool" of myself with the "pretty Russian," he left us for a lengthened tour. We were too selfishly happy to regret him long. So passed the winter.

One morning, going out with her on the terrace, after breakfast, Feodora said with a transparent attempt at gaiety:

"Evelyn, do you like fairy stories?"

"That depends," said I, guardedly; "do you?"

"Oh sometimes; not all the time. I'll tell you one."

And then she wove into words, in her own pretty, dainty way, some queer little conceit of a lovely, "oh ever so lovely," Princess, who was beloved *au désespoir* by a cavalier of the most distinguished, kind and handsome as the Apollo; upon whose halcyon days descended an enormous monster, with great, red eyes and an exceptional profundity of jaw, breathing out fire and smoke, which seized her, tore her from the arms of her love, and flew "away, away, away, oh, ever so far." As she spoke she looked over to the distant station, where stood the engine of the Nice train, whose smoke we could see distinctly over the olive trees.

"You are going away?" I said, aghast.

"I must; only for a short time, though—to Paris—on business; and alone too," she continued, forestalling my words, "to get a bonnet," she added, with a smile.

"Nonsense. You don't expect me to believe that?"

"Vraiment! No. I will have no secret from you. I am going to see about the sale of some property there. Indeed, this terrible Monaco has swallowed up much of my wealth. I shall be a beggar soon if I don't run away from it."

There was a touch of trouble on her face, as she spoke, which showed me she was in earnest about her losses. I knew, of course, that she had lost, and that to an enormous extent; but the question of her monetary concerns had never risen between us till now.

"Darling," I whispered, taking her sweet face in my two hands, and looking deep down into her eyes, "I almost wish you could become a poor girl, so that we might fly away from this deadly place and live quietly somewhere. I could support a poor wife at any rate, if not a rich one, and we might be rich some day, who knows?"

She made no reply at the time, but some half an hour after:

"Evelyn," she said, with a sad, tender look in her eyes, as I held her in my arms, my parting kiss on her lips: "It is no use; you'll never be rich enough to marry me. I should ruin a Crœsus. Let us pretend it has all been a dream; shall we?" She looked up archly into my face.

"A dream from which we will never awake then," said I. "Do you love me?"

This was a question to which neither required an answer. She only laid her cheek caressingly on my hand as it held hers.

"Well, then," I went on,

> "If you love me as I love you,
> No pecuniosity shall cut our love in two."

"I swear I *will* be rich. I'll wrench fortune from Monsieur Louis Blanc's bank, or perish in the attempt. 'Victory or Westminster Abbey!'" I said, gaily.

"That's what your Nelson said, was it not?" she asked; and then continued, gravely, looking into the distance with unseeing eyes: "He got what he wanted, didn't he?"

Her mood perplexed and pained me.

"And so shall I," I said, trying to hide from her the pain which was filling my heart at our approaching parting.

"You didn't know Cræsus?" I asked.

"Not intimately. We were distant acquaintances only," she said, with a little laugh, looking up at my face.

"Why?"

"Because I shall be prepared to introduce you to the individual when you return."

"When I return," she repeated, dreamily.

A few minutes later, and I was standing by the window of the railway carriage in which they were seated. Just as they started, my darling beckoned me:

"Good bye, Cræsus," she said, and dropped into my hands, with a kiss on the white petals, a spray of orange flowers.

As I walked back disconsolately up the long road and steep hill which rounded the bay, holding my darling's precious buds to my heart, my mind was filled with one fixed determination. Though I had never played, I had, as I have said, constantly sat beside Feodora and from constantly watching the game, was master—so far as that was possible—of its intricacies. I had often felt that I could foresee the gyrations of the ball or the turn of the card; amusing myself harmlessly by imagining losses which did not hurt, gains which did not benefit me. I now determined, myself, to play in earnest, and the consciousness of a possible reward which might follow a successful game drove every other consideration out of my mind. At any rate, my gains might relieve Feodora of the embarrassment to which she had confessed. That alone was sufficient for me. Besides, too, my long stay in the enervating and insidious influences of the place had thoroughly blinded my perceptions of the right and wrongs of the moral life, and the surrender of my principle of resistance to the spirit of "Play" was no difficult matter. There

was nothing I would not have surrendered for *her* sake. Body or soul, what did it matter! Was I not hers only!

All through that afternoon I played: played carefully, thoughtfully; studying each turn of the ball. Played and lost, played heedlessly, and—lost, played desperately and still lost. After a hurried dinner I renewed my funds, and played again, still losing. I grew obstinate. I *would* win, cost what it might. I left the tables to obtain fresh funds: some one followed me, and as the door silently closed behind us, I felt a hand on my shoulder. I turned. It was Jack, returned after his long absence.

"Look here, old fellow," said Jack, holding me by the arm. "Take a fool's advice, and don't go in there again."

"I'll trouble you to keep your advice for fools," said I, angrily, shaking off his hand. "I'm not a child, I suppose!"

"Not much better," said Jack, with, I fancied, something of a sneer.

"You have plenty of money I know. The point is, will you lend me some?"

"Not a sou," said Jack, imperturbably.

"I tell you I *must* win to-night. I feel it."

"Not with my money."

"Very well. I can get some at the hotel, I dare say," I said, hurrying to go down the steps, and assuming an air of indifference, though I was really trembling with excitement. "I have learned the value of your friendship already in other ways," I said, meaningly.

"I can only wish the lesson had done you more good," said Jack, speaking, for him, rather warmly.

"I don't in the least doubt it," I replied sharply. "It isn't so difficult as you think to read you, my friend. Your advice was, of course, purely disinterested."

"About the handsome Russian? Oh certainly," said Jack. "I may admire her but she will never rank *me* amongst the number of her lovers."

"Lovers!"

"Lovers! certainly. You needn't think that you have the monopoly of those pretty lips of hers."

My blood boiled from heart to head. I turned upon him, and dashed my fist in his handsome face.

"Liar!" I hissed out. "Liar!"

Jack made a movement towards me and then checked himself, with marvellous self-control, saying quietly, as he wiped his lips—covered with blood, with his handkerchief—"For God's sake, don't make a scene I hate a scene. You will apologise for this to-morrow."

He was moving off towards the Terrace.

"Never!" said I. "You will meet me, or I'll horse-whip you

publicly and point you out everywhere you go as a coward as well a liar!" I stood in his way, threateningly.

"There, that will do," he said: his eyes gleaming with a deadly look I had never seen before.

"You will meet me;" said I, speaking now very quietly.

"I will."

"When?"

"Oh, the sooner the better, say to-morrow at daybreak."

"Your friend?"

He named an old French colonel, who was known to have been out in several affairs already; raised his hat formally, and left me.

For me, I went immediately to the rooms where I knew I should find an Irish captain, an acquaintance of mine, who would not be loath to aid in so laudable a cause. I found him easily enough in the music room, half asleep on a sofa, and only semi-conscious of the strains of the orchestra before him.

"Oh! Harcourt, my boy," said he, listlessly, as I sat down beside him. "What's the matter with you? You look as if you'd been punching somebody's head."

"Look here!" said I, our conversation being covered by the sounds of the band, which was playing, as I even then could not help observing, a waltz of Strauss with exquisite grace.

"I want you to do me a favour."

"So long as it isn't money you want," said he, "I'm ready; but it's cleaned out I am entirely. I had to leave the tables, it was too tantalizing staying there without a copper to put down."

I told him just what I wanted.

"Couldn't you do without the fighting?" he said.

"No. He *shall* meet me. Besides I struck him!"

"Whew!" said the captain. "The divil ye did! All right! I'm your man," he added, after a moment's consideration, "though it's plaguey awkward to arrange a meeting just now." "Well," he continued, cheerfully, "we'll, just step over the frontier a mile or two and you can have it out quietly and no offence in the world. I'll go and see his friend and settle the matter. But what are you going to do?"

"Back into the rooms to play. I know I shall win."

"Well, you're a good plucked 'un! I say," he added, as we left the room. "Luck's dead against the table to-night. *Try number nine!* I've a notion it will win."

"As good as another," I said.

Going across to the bureau of the hotel, I drew a heavy check. For reasons of his own the manager made no difficulty about cashing it.

"M'sieu va jouer le grand coup?" said he, with a bow and a smile

as he handed me the notes. I made some slight remark in reply, and calling for a bottle of champagne, tossed off a couple of glasses. As I put down the empty glass the pendule in the bureau struck *nine*. The coincidence made me smile. The urbane *directeur* remarked it. "Numero neuf," said he "c'est bon ?"

"Bon assez!" I replied, and took my way to the salon de jeu.

Here the tables were crowded, and play was going on at high pressure. However, I found a seat, and sat for some little time, carefully pricking on a card with a long pin the various chances of the game. Whether it was that I played with too much caution I cannot tell, but with various alterations of fortune I steadily lost: until, after about a couple of hours play, I found myself minus the large amount I had brought into the room with me. As my last stake was swept into the clutches of the croupier's rake, I leaned my elbow on the table, and watched the game go on gloomily. Should I abandon it? As I watched, fortune seemed to change again, like the reflux of the tide, and the incessant "Faites votre jeu!" to sound less like the seductive voice of a ghoul. Feodora's dear image rose before me. Success meant *her*; failure—I did not dare to think what failure meant. I had gone too far to recede. I must either master the wave or the wave would certainly overwhelm me. I ran across to the hotel and drew another cheque; this time for an amount which would I knew nearly, if not entirely, drain my credit at the bank.

"Mauvaise chance, M'sieu?" said the *directeur*, as he proceeded to cash it, looking this time, however, somewhat carefully at the amount.

"Malheureusement, oui!" I said, carelessly.

"Au bonheur, M'sieu!" came his parting benediction, as I retraced my steps into the play room. I kept murmuring to myself the name of Feodora, as though it were some charm. "Feodora! Feodora! Feodora!" I reiterated. I regained my seat with some difficulty, but took it with a sense of mastery of the position which I had never felt before.

I *must* win. I *would* win. *I did win.* That night I seemed to have some mysterious power over the ball. I could not go wrong. I laughed to myself. I laughed out loud, with such ridiculous amiability did fortune seem to follow at my beck and call. It was I, who was for this night only master of the usually self-willed, erratic imp—for I had come to regard it with such well-grounded superstition as to invest it with a personality, whose gambols had so often allured, decoyed, and destroyed me. Did I favour "rouge," rouge it was. Did any pure caprice lead me to select "noir," down into a black compartment tumbled the obedient little sprite, and my pile doubled itself as if by magic. Suddenly, I bethought myself of the number so kindly suggested by my friend—number *nine*. I immediately placed a sum of money on that number. Round went the wheel, but the number was *not* nine. Again I tried; with

the same result. I debated whether it was worth while to make a third trial, but just before the warning "Rien ne va plus!" fell from the croupier, I once more replaced my stake. To my delight, the tardy number was the winner. Thirty-five times my stake fell towards me. I let it all lie. Round went the ball, and *again* it fell into the same division. This time my winnings were not so easily counted out. Confident in my good fortune, I allowed my second stake still to lie, and for the third time the croupier had to announce, amid a buzz from the crowd who surrounded the table, "Neuf, rouge, impair et manque." The two *directeurs* sitting in their high chairs at the side over the wheel and the "*banquier*" looked grave, but no way uneasy; they had confidence in the turn of the tide.

Still I went on, backing the colours as my fancy led me, generally with success. It seemed well nigh impossible but that I should before long "break the bank." This was my intention. I had determined to rest satisfied with nothing short of this result. At last, after a prolonged run upon red, which had doubled my pile at each turn, the *directeurs* hesitated about allowing so large a sum to lie longer. I asked for one more turn, which would, I believed, bring me the issue I hoped for. Of that issue, I had no doubt whatever. Fortune, "the blind goddess," had at last opened her eyes, and had surrendered the Philistines into my hand. Was I to spare them! After long consultation with other potentates, it was determined that I should be allowed to venture these, my entire winnings, on the one last stake. If I won, I broke the bank; if not, why, that was *my* concern; and, with a shrug of the shoulders, round went the ball. The excitement was now intense. The most perfect stillness pervaded the room, all eyes being fixed on the ball, now gradually lessening speed. For myself, I was perfectly collected, more so than at any time in the evening, perhaps; my eyes fixed on my huge pile as it lay on the kindly red section, its nursing mother, and wondering how much it would all amount to. Suddenly, a click! and the ball had tumbled into *Black*. The Bank was saved, and *I!*—I was, I hardly know how I was, or where—I only remember going quietly out of the room, crossing the square, and wondering as I went how many lamps there were in it when the festoons were all lit up, and thinking what a lot of money it must cost to keep them all burning; so much in French francs, which would be so much in English pounds sterling, at forty pounds sterling to the thousand francs!

At the door my Irish friend met me. "It's all right," said he. "I've got everything ready. The others have gone on before us, so as not to attract attention. A carriage will be here for us in an hour's time. What's the matter? You look as if you'd seen a ghost. Luck been against you?"

I murmured, "Rather."

"Ah!" he ran on; "you didn't back number nine: he'd have seen you through."

It was not worth the trouble of disabusing him. What did it or anything else matter? Going to my room, I called for some cognac, and, pouring out half a tumbler full, drank it. I dare say it was strong, but I did not feel it. Presently, it produced an effect upon me, and gave me back my nerve, which had been somewhat hardly tried. I sat down, wrote one or two hurried notes, in case of an unfortunate issue to myself, and one to Feodora. The latter was brief: I did but write down a little Russian phrase of endearment my pet had once playfully taught me. "'Melinka moja,duschenka tibia lubluh!' Darling, *I love you! I love you! I love you!* God bless you. Good-bye." This I enclosed, together with a ring I had always worn, and I directed it to her. I had but a few trifles to give away, and some few sovereigns which happened to be in my desk. These I put into my pocket, and my preparations were complete. Presently, my friend rapped at my door, and told me that the carriage was ready. Down we went, he and I, and so impressed was I with the solemnity of the occasion, as it affected my usually volatile friend, that I succeeded in making some stupid joke or other and so relieving his mind of the fear which had evidently taken hold of it, that I was going to show the white feather. Fortunately, he did all the talking, and I could lie back in the carriage, and think. Memories of our old days of wanderings together came upon me, and recollections of many deeds of kindness my once friend, now foe, had done me. Besides, it grew upon me that it was not impossible that, at heart, he might be himself, the ardent lover of my darling that I was, and that I myself had, really, supplanted *him*. I knew well his proud, reserved inner self would never allow me to know it, were it the fact. So I determined to fire in the air, receiving, of course, his fire myself. In honour could do nothing else. After awhile, in the grey of the morning, we passed the boundary bridge beyond Mentone, and a mile or so further on, leaving the carriage, we walked on till we came to a sheltered quiet ravine in the mountains where were already seated my opponent, his second, and a doctor, besides the driver of their carriage, who had been concerned in similar affairs on former occasions and was keenly interested.

I pass over, as hurriedly as possible, the details of that horrible morning. The pacing, the loading, and the attempted cheeriness of the little Italian doctor, whose only interest seemed, and no doubt was, centred in a possible "case" and corresponding fees. As we fronted each other I looked stealthily at the dear old face of my friend, and longed to throw down my weapon and ask a forgiveness, which somehow I felt I ought to seek. It was not for long. As the white handkerchief fluttered to

the ground, our two reports rang out simultaneously. Jack had fired into the air, whereas *my* bullet—how, I could never imagine, save that my nerves were so thoroughly unsteadied that I had lost control over my hand—*had struck him.* Putting one hand to his heart, he fell to the ground. I rushed forward. The doctor was already at his side.

"Il est mort!" he said.

"My God! Have I killed him!" I cried in a frenzy; then kneeling down at his side I held him in my arms, and called him by his name.

"Jack! Dear Jack! Jack!" I do not know what I said. There was no reply. Presently the driver came running hurriedly, saying that some of the custom-house people were coming up, and urging us to get into our carriages at once, and get away or we should all be arrested. The doctor and my dear late friend's second lifted the body and hurriedly carried it to the carriage which stood near. I lingered, I could not bear to leave it so.

"You will only get us all into trouble," said my second. "You *must* come at once! The body shall be properly cared for. The authorities can be bribed to tell no tales. I will attend to all. Come!" With one kiss on the forehead of him I had once called friend, I got into the carriage, which drove rapidly back to Monaco. Nothing more could be done. On entering the hotel, scarcely knowing where I went, or what I did, the Majordomo put into my hands a packet addressed to myself in Feodora's hand-writing. I broke it open quickly and found another cover, on which was written, "A gift for my love; to be opened when we meet again." I cannot say what impelled me to open this envelope. At another time I would, of course, have religiously respected her slightest whim—but there came across me a half sense of danger and disaster. Nervously I opened the case. It contained her principal diamonds—all in fact but the rings she habitually wore. On the top of these lay a letter. This I seized and tore open. A vision of her strange manner that evening filling me with the worst forebodings. What was about to happen? The letter ran as follows:

"MY DEAREST, DEAREST FRIEND—

"These jolies petites choses are for you. You will say,—Why this so strange behaviour of your Feodora! This is why. You know comme je suis bizarre, what you call 'odd' and *comme je t'aime.* Well, I have a strange presentiment that I will never return to you. It is, perhaps, only a fancy at which you shall soon laugh well at me, if I do come back. If not, it is because I love you that I leave you these. Le bon Dieu te protège. Pense à moi toujours.

"De tout mon cœur, ton amie bien devouée, constante, fidèle,

"FEODORA."

Strung to their extremest tension as my nerves were at this moment, it was a relief to find that the ominous packet contained nothing more than the foolish suggestions of my darling's feminine and fanciful mind. It was, I knew, a weakness of hers to be somewhat susceptible to impressions of this nature, and it was with a sigh of relief that I closed the case of her diamonds and placed it in my despatch box. I had dreaded, with a certain undefined feeling, the arrival of some other trial to my already sorely strained mind. Leaning my head on my hands, I tried to review the terrible scenes of the past twenty-four hours. I could not; my brain seemed to be in a whirl; I could retain nothing before me but the consciousness that Jack was *dead*, and I—*ruined*. Suddenly, there came a tap at my door, and the manager himself placed a letter in my hands. I saw by his face that something had happened. I tore the letter open. It was from Madame de Vost. It said, "An accident has occurred. Feodora is dangerously hurt. A special engine takes this, and will bring you back." It had come then at last—the climax!

A few minutes later, I was in the cab of the engine, and we were tearing back to Villafranca; near which place the accident had occurred. The driver was an Englishman and full of the kindest sympathy. It appeared that, at a sudden curve, just after emerging from one of the many tunnels on the road between Monaco and Nice, the engineer saw before him a huge mass of rock which had fallen from the precipitous heights above, completely breaking up the line and blocking the train. There was no time to use the breaks—on the engine dashed!—There was a terrific concussion, and, in a moment, the spot was strewed with the splintered fragments of carriages. Fortunately there were but few passengers, of these two, and the engine driver, had been killed; others were severely wounded; two ladies, one of whom had subsequently written to me, had been taken, both wounded, into the hotel at Villafranca, where doctors from Nice had been summoned. He did not know the extent of the injuries. The line had been so blocked that it was impossible to get it clear for several hours; while the telegraph had been rendered completely useless. At last we reached Villafranca. I sprung from the engine before it stopped, and ran to the little hotel where Feodora had been carried. There was a crowd of French peasants about the door, whose voluble voices a priest was endeavouring to still. He had evidently been expecting me. As I entered, he shook his head gravely and led me up stairs, knocked at a door, and left me. Presently, the door opened, and Madame de Vost came out; her arm in a sling, and her head bandaged.

"At last!" she said, "my poor friend!" then added, "The doctors say she must not be excited, but she insists on seeing you." I nodded. She motioned me to go in. I entered, and there lay my darling, white

and motionless. Thank God! the face so dear to me was all unscarred. She was lying with wide open eyes and parted lips, watching the door. She smiled, and a faint flush rose to her cheek. I bent my lips to hers, and for a long time neither spoke; at last she murmured very softly and with evident pain, "Sweetheart!" followed by something else which I could not catch. Hope revived in me. She would recover. Leaning over her, I whispered, with all manner of fond words, my trust that her injury was not serious; my revived hope in her recovery. "We will leave this unfortunate place," I said, "for ever, you and I, never to separate again." She shook her head. A moment more and she had fainted. Her doctor and Madame de Vost entered. I looked at him anxiously. He looked grave. I took him aside. "There is no hope," he said at last, in answer to my urgent question, "she has sustained severe internal injury! She may go at any moment."

I heard as if in a dream, she, *go!* My love! My northern bird! My lady of the rose-leaf lips! My life! At this moment she came to herself, and murmured, "It is better so."

Presently, as though she felt the fatal moment to be near, she said with an effort, feebly motioning her head toward the doctor:

"Send him away—*You*—alone—*confess.*" The doctor left the room. She held Madame de Vost's hand in her.

"Kiss me!" she whispered. I bent over her.

"Forgive Feodora, darling." Her words came with difficulty now, "but—I—am—*married*—already!" She half sprung up in the bed, something rose to her lips, and, in a moment, the white sheet was stained with a gush of blood! She fell back with a sigh, she was *dead.* With a loud cry, I rushed to the door to call the doctor back. My brain whirled. I fell heavily to the ground,—and remember nothing more.

Little more remains to be told of my sad story. Six weeks after, I was slowly recovering from an attack of brain fever. Why could not I, too, die! I found a letter from Madame De Vost marked with her tears, saying that they had taken the body back to St. Petersburg, to be buried—*buried!*—and giving me an address where I might find her. She added some words as to my lost love's past. It appeared that Feodora had been married by her relations to a man whom she had never even seen before the wedding day, no uncommon thing in Russia; that the marriage had been a most unhappy one, resulting early in a separation, the Greek Church not admitting a divorce: that, meeting with me, she had loved me with all the force of her loving soul, and, holding herself morally free, had allowed herself to admit of a friendship which she had not strength, in her then lonely life, to deny herself. Her journey to Paris had been made with the design of breaking for

both of us the pain of a separation which she felt was growing absolutely necessary. I say nothing; I blame no one; I defend no one. This is a story of temptation, it is also a story of punishment. God knows it is the latter!

Vitality slowly came back to me in time, and I visited my darling's tomb; then, returning to Monaco, so dear and so painful to me that I could not bear to quit it, I sought and obtained the position of croupier in the *Etablissement.* Life goes on wearily enough with me, and I look forward to the day when I may be permitted to rejoin Feodora; nothing more.

One gleam of joy I have had. One day, as I was engaged in the ceaseless labour of raking in the spoils of the table, a hand was laid on my shoulder. I looked round, it was *Jack!* Dear old Jack! The bullet sent by my hand had not proved fatal, and after a long period of sickness and careful nursing on the part of the little doctor, whom Heaven bless, he had recovered.

That night, I told him the particulars of my darling's death, of which he of course knew. When I had finished, he said, "I knew something of her story, but not the truth. Forgive me," he went on, the tears rising in his eyes, "Forgive me, you dead darling, for the words I used of you, the thoughts I had of you!" I looked at him in wonder. He turned to me and said softly:

"Long before you knew her, I, too, loved your Lady of the Rose-leaf Lips."

F. A. D.

NEVER GROW OLD.

I LOOKED in the tell-tale mirror,
And saw the marks of care,
The crow's feet and the wrinkles,
And the gray in the dark-brown hair.
My wife looked o'er my shoulder—
Most beautiful was she,
"Thou wilt never grow old my love," she said,
"Never grow old to me."

"For age is the chilling of heart,
And thine, as mine can tell,
Is as young and warm as when first we heard
The sound of our bridal bell!"
I turned and kissed her ripe red lips:
"Let time do its worst on me,
If in my Soul, my Love, my Faith,
I never seem old to thee!"

—*Belgravia.*

MARCHE-LES-DAMES.

A WALLOON LEGEND.

BESIDE the Meuse's shimmering sands,
Beneath Marlagne's incumbent wood,
The ancient monastery stands,
Still beauteous in its widowhood.
As I advance, by slow degrees
Appear, above the aged trees,
The peaked roof of the stately halls,
The bastions and the double walls,
Grey, mouldering ruins ; and still higher,
The feeble splendours of the spire.
And full athwart the leafy road,
The key-stone of the archway bears,
Graved on a scutcheon bold and broad,
Memorials of the holy wars.
The court-yard teems with briars and reeds ;
The central basin, where the swans
Disported for the lonely nuns,
Is overgrown with slime and weeds.

I viewed the chapel low and dim,
Its oaken panels, chairs and stalls,
The altar's faded cherubim,
The tarnished frescoes on the walls ;
And walked along the sounding nave,
Where many an abbess in her grave
Reposes 'neath the marble pave.
I paced the dismal corridor,
And heard with awe the self-same bell,
Which summoned to the chapter floor
Each sister from her narrow cell.
Ah ! there with sigh and humble sense,
The saintly daughters knelt and prayed ;
There to the ground they bent their head,
And wrought their deeds of penitence.
Still deeper in the silent grounds,
I saw the green and daisied mounds,
Where, each within her shroud alone,
They slumber to the world unknown.
Venerable ruin ! In thy halls
An air of sanctity resides ;
Within thy desert aisles abides
A flavour of thy festivals.

"BESIDE THE MEUSE'S SHIMMERING SANDS."

Standing near thy classic stream,
I heard thy legend 'neath the drooping bays ;
And the memory of thy ancient days
Still haunts me like a dream.

I.

The Hermit spake of the holy war,
The Pontiff blessed the high emprise,
And loud there pealed from near, from far,
A hundred thousand battle cries.
Upward from Clermont's level plain,
The breezes caught the heroic strain
DIEX EL VOLT ! With one accord,
To free the white tomb of the Lord,
The feudal chiefs of Luxembourg
Pledged every man a belted knight ;
The high, the low, the rich, the poor,
Enlisted in the sacred fight,
Till in the vale of Sambre-et-Meuse
The red cross graced each manly breast,
And feeble women onward pressed
The loved ones they were doomed to lose.

" Our wives are not safe on our castled steeps,"
Said Hugo to the Suzerains ;
" Nor in our valleys' sheltered deeps,"
Said Samson, chief of Namur's plains ;
And the knights were anxious for the lives
And honour of their lovely wives.
" I have a plan 'twere worth our while
To try," said Arnold with a smile.
The grave Lord Arnold was willing heard,
For wisdom marked his every word :
" Let them unite in sisterhood,
In holy bands of prayer and love,
Deep in the stillness of the wood,
Where hostile foot shall never move ;
And there their loving hearts shall yearn
O'er distant war and war's alarms,
Invoke a blessing on our arms,
And grace from heaven for our return."
" 'Tis well ! 'tis well ! " the chieftains cried,
" MARCHE-LES-DAMES ! Our wives will now
Depose their festal robes aside,
And then pronounce the cloistral vow."
And so the convent's site was found,
The massive walls rose from the ground,
And underneath their hallowed shade,

The faithful wives with fervour prayed
From rising to the set of sun,
Prayed for their dear, their honoured lords,
Exposed to trenchant Moslem swords,
Out on the plains of Ascalon.

II.

'Twas complin hour—the golden light
Of sunset flushed the chestnut wood,
The lapsing waters rippled bright,
And silence thrilled the solitude!
A pilgrim paused awhile to ken
The glories of that lonely glen,
Then onward slowly moved and sat
Exhausted at the convent gate.
The sharp-eyed portress quickly spied
The weary traveller seated there;
She oped the cumbrous portals wide,
And welcomed him with reverent air,
For things were there as they should be,
The poor man found there of the best—
It was the orphan's house of rest,
The tired wanderer's hostelry.

"What cravest thou, Sir Palmer?" said
The gentle nun in pitying mood;
"A shelter for this weary head,
And, in the name of Jesu, food."
The meek religious deeply bowed
At mention of the Holy Name,
Then from the window called aloud,
And after rang the parlour bell.
The cellarer to the summons came,
The cleanly board at once was spread
With all that could the hungry please—
A smoking porridge, wheaten bread,
A jug of cream, a round of cheese,
And flagon of their own Moselle.
The traveller laid by his stave,
His heavy wallet and his gourd;
He crossed himself with gesture grave,
Then sat before the teeming board.
Sore was the tired stranger's need,
For long he ate with haste and greed,
Unconscious that the timid nun
Observed his motions every one.
In him she could not choose but feel
A certain lordly pride and grace,

And in that worn and haggard face,
A manly beauty lingering still.
"Whence art thou, traveller?" said she.
"From distant Palestine," quoth he.
The listener started at the word;
The inmost of her soul was stirred;
And darting straightway from her seat,
She hastened to the Abbess' feet
With the glad tidings she had heard.
Forthwith at Mother Abbess' call,
The ladies gathered in the hall.
"There is a Palmer come," said she,
"My daughters, from far Palestine.
Him we may all go forth to see,
And question too, if need there be;
But ere we go, we fain must kneel
Awhile before the holy shrine,
And in the sacred Presence feel
The blessing of the hallowed rood.
Thus shall we have the grace to bear,
With patience and with fortitude,
Whatever tidings we may hear."
The sisters to the chapel hied;
The Mother's word they all obeyed,
And prostrate there, they wept and prayed
Before the image of the Crucified.

III.

The lone religious eager pressed
Around the unknown pilgrim guest.
But, though scanned by every one,
He was to all, alas! unknown.
Then for the gentle hostess' sake,
He, in a rich and manly tone,
That rose and rounded as he spake,
Told his adventures, one by one,
How he had started with the first
That went to conquer Salem's towers,
Had toiled along the sultry plains,
Weary with hunger and with thirst;
Had oft in humid ambush lain;
Had often braved the fatal showers
Of Turkish lances in the fray,
And hand to hand, with murderous brand,
Had fought from dawn to close of day,
Till broken down by marsh disease,
He came back spent with miseries,
A beggar to his native land.

With bended head and drooping eyes,
The ladies listened in surprise
To the Crusader's wondrous tale ;
And when he finished, gathered near,
Some tidings from their lords to hear—
Their lords still battling in the Jewish Vale.
All save one youthful nun, who stood
Apart, close-veiled, with tight-drawn hood,
And eyes cast down upon the ground,
As if her thoughts were all astray,
Fixed on some vision far away,
And listening to a distant sound.
To each inquiry, brief and true,
The Palmer answered as he knew.
Some of the knights, alive and well,
Still meant to stay on Syrian shore,
Till that the walls of Salem fell,
And Moslem power ruled no more.
Others were held in slavery's chains,
And some had fallen in battle's shock ;
Had died of fever on the plains,
Or of stark famine's levelling pains,
Beneath the walls of Antioch.
O virtue ! thou dost oft impart
A heroism to the female heart,
Which strong-willed men, inured to fate,
Can never fitly imitate.
The saintly nuns heard the varying tale,
Without one cry of joy, one word of wail ;
Only from those resigned eyes
The silent tears abundant roll,
And from their secret mind arise
Sweet prayers to the cloven side
Of Jesu Christ, the Crucified—
The spouse and model of their soul.

IV.

When he had done, the stranger knight
Gazed round upon the ladies there,
And with beseeching, haggard air,
Mourned o'er his own most wretched plight.
" O Sisters ! now that you have learned
The story of my friends in war,
Pity me kind, who am returned
Under the guidance of a luckless star.
Ah ! pray for me, whose sudden loss
None heavier or deadlier could feel,
Of those who with me on their coat of steel

Laced the dear emblem of the blood-red cross.
My heart is well nigh broke, the worth
Of half my life is passed from earth,
Which I am doomed till death to tread,
A hopeless wanderer—swept
Into the vortex of despair—Alas !
My dreams of home are rent as glass,
The young wife of my heart is dead !"
He bent his lordly head and wept.
A sob and a suppressèd cry
Were heard among the listening nuns,
And all demanded that at once
The darling lost one should be named.
Half audibly, the knight exclaimed :
"Matilda, Baroness de Croy ! "
A dread sensation followed now—
A shriek, a scream of ecstasy !
"O Norman, Norman ! Is it thou ?
Thy own Matilde still lives for thee ! "
And in his arms a youthful nun
With rapture of wild love did run,
And on his heart she panting lay,
Till in her passion, she swooned away.
Ah ! what joyous tears were shed,
What songs of praise, what glad refrain
Of gratitude arose that night,
Within those lonely cells,
For him who wept his wife as dead—
For her who mourned her husband slain
In the remorseless, ceaseless fight
With Mahound's infidels !

* * * * * * *

According to the vow she made,
Matilda left the cloister's shade,
And crossed the narrow ford.
Up to the castled heights she rode,
And there through happy years abode
In home joys with her lord.

V.

The Holy City was stormed at last,
By Godfrey and his Chevaliers,
And thus the first Crusade was o'er.
And now that scenes of war were past—
Dread sufferings through the bloody years—
The warriors sighed for their country's shore.
Many knights of Luxembourg,
Returning from the battle plain

Back to their native land secure,
Their cloistered wives received again.
But many, many more, alas!
Returned not from those scenes of blood,
And their fair wives were doomed to pass
Their widowed days in solitude.

The stately walls of Marche-les-Dames
Thus stood for many an age;
Their annals form a brilliant page
Upon the scroll of cloistral fame.
And still they stand within the glade,
E'en in their fall magnificent,
And beauteous to the eye—
A witness of that first Crusade,
And a pathetic monument
Of woman's grand fidelity.

JOHN LESPERANCE.

Montreal.

THE Paris *Moniteur* has an article upon the portraits of Raffaelle painted by himself, of which there are four existing. Two only are of unquestionable authority, that in the gallery of the Uffizi, at Florence, and the portrait introduced into the *School of Athens;* the two others are the drawing in the University Galleries at Oxford, and the portrait engraved by Marcantonio. The drawing now at Oxford has passed successively through the Wicar, Ottley, Harman, and Woodburn collections. It is in black chalk, heightened with white, on tinted paper, and is the head of a beautiful youth, apparently not more than fifteen or sixteen years old; he has long hair, falling down upon his shoulders, and wears a felt hat with the brim turned up. Passavant, says Mr. J. C. Robinson, in his account of the Raffaelle drawings at Oxford, engraved this drawing as the frontispiece to the German edition of his book, believing it to be the portrait of Raffaelle. The portrait of the Uffizi, representing him at twenty-three, in the full vigour of youth and beauty, was painted for his uncle, Simone Ciarla, when Raffaelle was at the Court of Duke Guidobaldo at Urbino. That in the *School of Athens*, where he stands by the side of his master Perugino, represents him at the age of twenty-seven. Lastly, the engraving of Marcantonio was executed shortly before his death, 1520. These four thus comprise the whole of his short career.—*London Academy.*

NICHOLAS MINTURN.

BY J. G. HOLLAND.

CHAPTER III.

As the reader will have concluded, Mr. Benson was not a slow man in his apprehensions. He was practiced in arithmetic,—so far, at least, as to be familiar with the fact that one and one made two. He had put the look of intelligence that passed between Miss Larkin and Miss Bruce, on the occasion of his evening call upon them, with the remark he had overheard in the cabin concerning the fact that "the old man did not know how the thing was done," and had concluded that they amounted to a sum which, in social arithmetic, might mean more or less than two. In that science, when "applied," he had known instances in which one and one put together made one; and in the suspected case, he was in no mood for favouring so tame a conclusion. An addition that would amount to a subtraction of Miss Larkin was not to be submitted to, for Miss Larkin was profitable to him.

So, on the morning after the little affair, in which Nicholas had assisted so efficiently, Mr. Benson approached a young lady of his acquaintance in the cabin, and expressed the fear that the removal of his ward from the deck on the previous day had been effected at some inconvenience to her friends.

Why he should have approached a lady instead of a gentleman, and a young lady instead of an old one, it may be considered ungracious to state; but he had his reasons for that course, and was abundantly rewarded for his choice; for the young lady gave, with great cheerfulness, a graphic account of the whole performance. Mr. Benson shook his head gravely, and expressed the hope that the matter would not be misconstrued. He was sure that some sudden emergency had occurred which had been impulsively met, after the manner of young people. Mr. Minturn, he assured his friend, was a man of the highest respectability, and Miss Larkin was beyond reproach. Such a matter as this was not to be talked about. None but malicious gossips would ever mention it; and he knew his young informant too well to suppose that she would countenance any conversation on the subject.

"I'm sure we all thought it was very nice," said the young lady, laughing.

"It was all right, of course," responded Mr. Benson; "but it is liable to be misconstrued, and I rely upon you to see that the matter is dropped."

"Oh, certainly!" the young lady exclaimed, with an inward chuckle; and then Mr. Benson went on deck.

Nicholas, to tell the truth, had not slept well that night. How far he might have compromised his position with the passengers; how far he might have offended Mr. Benson's fine ideas of propriety; how far Miss Larkin would regard the matter without disturbance when she came to think it all over,—these were constantly recurring questions. He felt sure that Mr. Benson would learn the facts, and it was only after a great mental struggle that he left his state-room and made his appearance at the breakfast-table. He was conscious that he was regarded curiously by many eyes, and uncomfortably sure that he blushed. He was not afraid of meeting Miss Larkin there, for she never appeared there. If he should see her at all, it would be upon the deck. So he ate his meal in silence, and started for the stair-way, steeled to meet whatever might await him.

The first man he met upon the deck was Mr. Benson. He caught a distant vision of Miss Larkin and her companion in their accustomed place, and received from them a courteous and even a cordial greeting. He saw, too, kneeling at Miss Larkin's side, the form of a beautiful young woman whom he had not seen before. Her pretty figure, her tasteful boating-dress, her jaunty hat, her graceful attitude, made the group exceedingly picturesque and attractive.

Mr. Benson had undoubtedly been waiting to intercept him; but nothing could have been more cheerful than his "good morning, my young friend;" and when he slipped his arm into that of his "young friend," and proposed a morning promenade, Nicholas felt that all his troubles were over, and that he had done nothing to be ashamed of.

"Well," said Mr. Benson with a hearty voice, "how are you this morning?"

"Never better."

"And how are you enjoying the voyage?"

"Very much, I assure you."

"You found our young lady interesting and agreeable, I hope?"

"Very!"

"Yes—yes—Miss Larkin is a cheerful, patient, and intelligent young woman."

The tribute was paid with great precision, as if it had been done with well-tried coins instead of adjectives.

"You must be very fond of her," said Nicholas.

"Yes—yes—," Mr. Benson responded; "yes, I am fond of her. I have stood to her *in loco parentis* for several years, and presume that the relation will continue until one of us shall be removed by death. Of

course, she has no hope of marriage ; and without me, she would be as much alone in the world as you are ; more so, perhaps."

"Is her complaint so hopeless ?" inquired Nicholas, with an anxiety in his voice that he could not disguise.

"It is believed to be so by the best physicians," Mr. Benson replied. "I am taking her to Europe to see what a voyage and foreign skill can do for her, but with slight expectation of benefit."

Mr. Benson was reading the young man's thoughts, as if his mind were an open book. He saw at once that Nicholas was much interested in his ward, and feared that, with him, the degree of her helplessness was the measure of her strength. He had, as gently and delicately as was possible, warned the young man away from her. He had told him that marriage was out of the question. What more could he do ?

Mr. Benson was a man of great resources, and it would evidently be necessary to divert Nicholas. The young lady, kneeling at Miss Larkin's side, was a suggestive vision, and that young lady suggested several other young ladies who were on board, but who had thus far been confined to their state-rooms. Mr. Benson quietly rejoiced in the consciousness of possessing a mass of very promising materials. Certainly, the young man would be different from other young men if he did not prefer a woman who could walk and dance and take care of herself to one who was quite helpless. Nicholas *was* different from other young men, and, while Mr. Benson recognized the fact, he determined to meet, in what seemed to him the best way, all the necessities of the case.

Mr. Benson had other motives for the showy promenade he was making besides that of warning Nicholas against becoming too much interested in Miss Larkin. He was entirely sure that the young lady from whom he had sought information in the cabin would tell all her acquaintances about it. His ostentatious friendliness toward the young man was, therefore, to be an advertisement of the fact that he, with his nice ideas of propriety, approved, not only of Nicholas himself, but of all he had done. He meant to say to all the passengers : "This young man is my friend. I will stand between him and all harm. A word that is said against him, or about him, is said against, or about, me. I know all that has happened, and I approve of it all."

He had a design beyond this, too, and it dwelt warmly in his mind as—the young man's arm within the cordial pressure of his own—he paced up and down the deck. Nicholas was alone in the world, and he wanted to be to him a father. He wanted to inspire him with confidence and trust,—to make him feel that he had a warm and reliable friend. For Nicholas had a great estate which Mr. Benson would only be too happy to manage for him for an appropriate consideration. He yearned over the young man, and that which belonged to him, with a

tender and conscientious anxiety. He was so armoured by pride of character and self-esteem, that he had no suspicion of his own selfishness. He could have gone upon his knees for confession, and never mistrusted his disinterestedness, or dreamed that he had committed the sin of covetousness. He had always done his duty with relation to every trust that had thus far been committed to his hands. He had been a wise and thrifty manager. Why should not the young man have the benefit of his wisdom, and the security of his faithfulness?

"Mr. Minturn," said Mr. Benson, "my employments, which have connected me very closely with public aud private trusts, naturally make me interested in your affairs. I hope you have confided them to safe hands? Of course you think you have; but have yon? You will pardon me for asking the question; but do you understand business yourself? Are you familiar with public securities? Are you in the habit of keeping watch of the market?"

"Not at all," replied Nicholas with great humiliation.

Mr. Benson shook his head, and said dubiously:

"Well, let us hope for the best."

"But I wasn't told about it. I wasn't brought up to it," said Nicholas, with a feeling that somebody had wronged him.

"Yes—yes—yes—I see."

Mr. Benson nodded in a hopeless sort of way that distressed Nicholas exceedingly.

"Who has charge of your estate? On whom do you rely?" inquired Mr. Benson.

"Mr. Bellamy Gold; and he's a very good man."

"How do you know, now? Who says so? Is he a man of conscience—of strong convictions? Has he a large and comprehensive knowledge of affairs? Is he a man who follows duty to the death? Does he never act from impulse? Is he proof against temptation?"

"I'm sure I don't know," replied Nicholas.

"What is his profession?"

"He's a lawyer, sir."

"Humph!" ejaculated Mr. Benson, with an intonation mingled of distrust and despair.

"Don't you believe in lawyers?" inquired Nicholas.

"I wish to do no man—I wish to do no profession—injustice," said Mr. Benson with a fine, judicial air; "but I have had a good deal of experience with lawyers, and I feel compelled, in all candour, to say that the legal mind seems to me to be about as devoid of the sense of duty as it can be. The legal mind—well, there is undoubtedly something demoralizing in the profession. A man who will work for the wrong for pay—for pay, mark you—comes at last not to see any differ-

ence between right and wrong. Knowing what I do about the profession, I have ceased to expect much of a lawyer. There may be good men among lawyers,—I suppose there are,—but a trust is always a matter of business with them. The paternal relation of a client is practically unknown among them. How it may be with Mr. Bellamy Gold, I cannot tell, of course; but country lawyers are petty men, as a rule. Do you lean upon him? Do you look up to him as an example? Do you entertain a filial feeling toward him?"

All this was said with a great show of candour, and the closing inquiries were warm and almost tender.

The idea of entertaining a filial feeling toward Mr. Gold amused Nicholas, and he could not help laughing as he replied:

"No, I don't lean on him, and I don't look up to him as an example, and I don't regard him in any way as a father. He's as dry as a chip."

"Chip! Yes—yes—chip! That's it—chip!"

Mr. Benson nodded his head half a dozen times, as if that little word was charged with the profoundest meaning, and ought to be powerful enough to fill the mind of Nicholas with the wildest alarm.

"I wouldn't make you uncomfortable for the world," said Mr. Benson,—lying, without any question, although he did not know it,—"but I advise you as a man largely familiar with trusts to look well into your affairs on your return home. I hope the examination will not be made when it is too late. You will permit me to say that I feel interested in you, and that if you find that you have need of advice, I shall be happy to serve you, in all those matters with which my life has made me unusually familiar."

Mr. Benson could not help feeling that he had done a fair morning's work. He had warned Nicholas away from his ward, believing that he had done it as a matter of personal kindness, and unconscious that he was selfishly trying to retain a profitable guardianship and trust; and he had fished, in the most ingenious way possible, for another trust. He had certainly made Nicholas thoroughly uncomfortable, but he was as well satisfied with himself as if he had saved a life, been placed upon a new board of directors, or made fifty dollars.

"By the way," said Mr. Benson, recurring mentally to his old purpose, but ostensibly changing the subject, "have you ever paid any attention to heredity? Curious thing this heredity."

"Not the slightest," said Nicholas, with a gasp.

"Well, it will pay for examination," said Mr. Benson. "I have never looked into it until lately. You will find an article in the last 'North American' about it. This transmission of parental peculiarities, diseases, weaknesses, is something very remarkable. I suppose I owe my physique to my mother, and my moral qualities to my father, what-

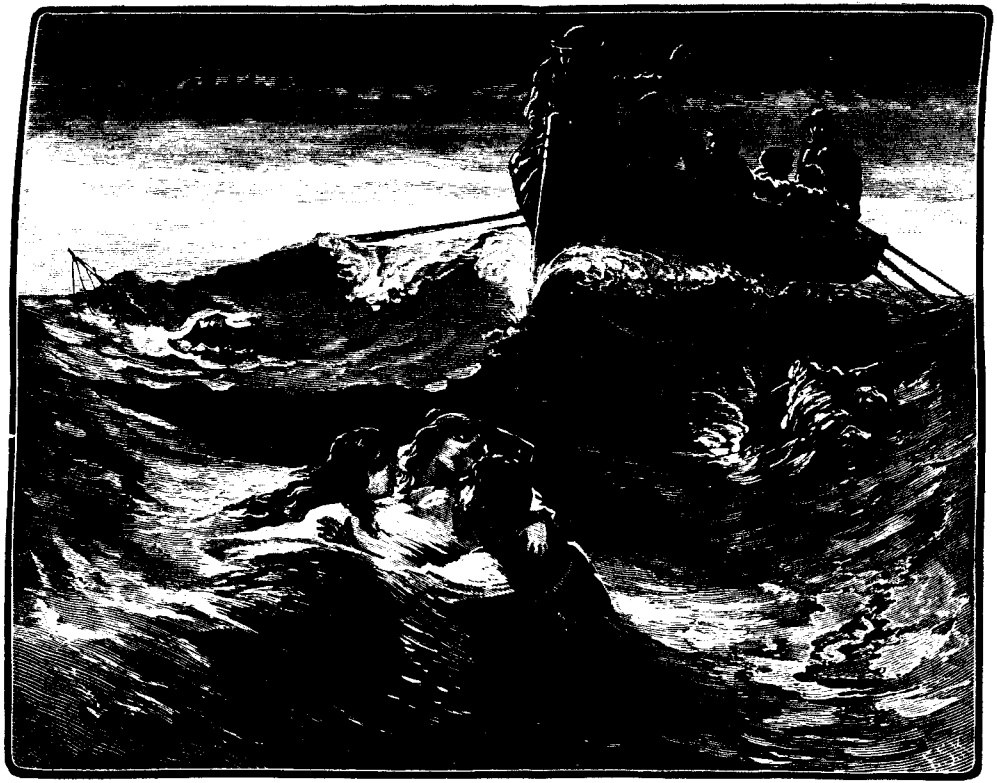
ever they may be. It is a subject which a young man like you cannot too carefully consider. We owe a duty to posterity, my young friend, which can never be found by following a blind impulse."

Poor Nicholas, though at first stunned by the sudden change of the subject, could not fail to understand the drift and purpose of Miss Larkin's guardian ; and it was with a feeling of disgust that he paused, and withdrew his arm from Mr. Benson's. He wanted to talk more. Under other circumstances, he would have done so. He wanted to ask the cause of Miss Larkin's helplessness, and learn more about her, but his mouth was stopped ; and if Mr. Benson could have read the young man's mind at the close of their conversation as easily as he did at the beginning, he would have seen that his work had not been as successfully performed as he supposed. Clever intriguers are quite apt to overdo their business, especially when engaged upon those who are recognized as frank and unsuspicious. They are apt to forget that an unsophisticated instinct is quite as dangerous a detective as a trained and calculating selfishness. It was hard for Nicholas to realize that he had been carefully manipulated by one to whom he had been tempted to open his heart, but he did realize it, with a degree of indignation which made him profoundly unhappy.

He did not undertake to deny to himself that he was much interested in Miss Larkin. He could not think of her as an incurable invalid. Possibilities had opened themselves to him with an attractive aspect, which was at once eclipsed by the interposition of Mr. Benson's majestic figure. This strong, inflexible man had come by stealthy and well calculated steps between him and a strange, new light which had charmed him. He could not have chosen to do otherwise than mentally to resent what seemed a gratuitous and ungentlemanly intrusion.

Of all this revulsion of feeling in the mind of the young man, Mr. Benson was unconscious, and he parted with him as courteously and heartily as if he were his own son, with whom he had been enjoying the most free and loving communion.

Then Mr. Benson had other business to do. Nicholas was to be diverted. Up to this time, he had kept the young man to himself and his little party. He had not only not introduced him to others, but he had not told any one about him. So, on speaking to different groups that morning, he managed to introduce Nicholas as a topic of conversation. The young man's good character, his fine education, his fortune, his unoccupied home, which Mr. Benson had learned from his friend, Mrs. Fleming, was quite a palace—all these were presented to appropriate listeners. Mr. Benson knew just where the ladies were whom he wished to have presented to the acquaintance of his young friend, so soon as they should be released from sea sickness.



"A BOAT APPEARED UPON ITS CREST ABOVE THEM."

It was a touching sight which presented itself that day at the side of Miss Larkin. Elderly ladies, who had not paid her the slightest attention up to this point, presented themselves, and inquired for her health.

Sometimes there would be two or three young and pretty girls kneeling around her. It was something to be near the young woman whom Nicholas had carried down stairs! It was something, at least, to be at the centre of what seemed the circle that enchained him. The first day after it became generally understood that Nicholas was rich and fancy free, the current of sympathy and society enjoyed by Miss Larkin was remarkable. She was petted and read to; and she received so much gracious ministry that the work of Miss Bruce was quite taken out of her hands. Perhaps it was a coincidence. Perhaps they were unconscious of their own motives. At any rate they formed a pretty group, and quite shut Nicholas away from her during most of the day.

There are certain villages in Vermont and Maine in which a city gentleman never arrives at night without arousing the suspicion that he is looking for a horse. It is not even necessary that he should inquire of the landlord, in the most careless way, if he knows whether there is a good horse in town that is for sale. Every jockey is on the alert, and the next morning, without visiting a stable, he has only to take his seat upon the piazza, or look from his window, to see every horse in town driven or ridden by the house. High-stepping horses, rakish little mares, steady-going roadsters, amiable-looking family beasts, graceful saddle animals, go up and down, and he may take his pick of them all, or go on to the next village.

It may seem ungracious to say that Nicholas came soon to be regarded on the steamer in very much the same way by those who had young women on hand for disposal, as the horse-hunter is regarded in one of those villages, but truthfulness demands the statement. There was not a woman with a young lady in charge who did not intend that, in some way, that charge should have a chance. Mothers and chaperons and duennas were busy with their schemes of exhibition. They courted Mr. Benson, who understood the matter perfectly, and smiled graciously upon it. They courted Miss Larkin, who did not understand it at all. They even courted Miss Bruce, who was anything but gracious in the reception of their attentions.

There was a Mrs. Ilmansee, with her pretty sister, Miss Pelton. Mrs. Ilmansee was as bold and prompt as a drum-major. She was young, fresh from the field of conquest herself, quick to seize advantage, and armed with personal attractions of her own, with which to carve her way. A calculating mother may be written down as nothing and nowhere by the side of an enterprising and married sister. There was Mrs. Morgan, with her stately daughter, already bursting with the

promise of an amplitude that would match her altitude—sweet, monosyllabic and inane. There was Mrs. Coates, a pudgy little woman, dragging at her sharply sounding heels a reluctant girl, who was heartily ashamed of the maternal vulgarity, and who went into the enterprise of making the young man's acquaintance, or attracting his notice, with poorly concealed disgust. There was the fashionable, self-assured, gracious Mrs. McGregor, with diamond knobs in her ears, and a buxom little hoyden, just out of school, who thought it all great fun. There were others who might, but need not be, mentioned; and every woman and every girl understood what every manœuvre meant, and had the impression that neither Mr. Benson nor Nicholas comprehended it at all. All were interested in Miss Larkin, and all were appropriately unconscious of the presence of Nicholas at her side,—unconscious even of his being a passenger on the steamer.

It was two mornings after Mr. Benson's promenade and conversation with Nicholas that the former reached the culmination of his schemes. The recluses had all emerged from their hiding places; and when he went upon deck Miss Larkin had collected her disinterested adorers in a chattering, officious group. Nicholas was entirely shut away, and was pacing up and down the deck alone.

"My young friend, this will never do," said Mr. Benson, approaching Nicholas. "So much young beauty, and no young man to appreciate it, is all wrong. You must know these people."

Nicholas protested, but Mr. Benson quietly drew him toward the group.

"Ladies, here is a lonely young man," said he, "and I want you to help to make him at home."

Nicholas raised his hat, and with a warm blush upon his face, went through the process of being presented. It was a long one, and his bows grew shorter and shorter, until the last, which was so short and impatient that they all laughed, and poured in their commiserations upon him.

"And now let us all have chairs," said Mr. Benson, with benignant emphasis; and then he and Nicholas nearly exhausted the resources of the deck in securing seats for the party.

"The young with the young," said Mrs. Ilmansee, "and Mr. Minturn by me."

The elderly women raised their eyebrows, and exchanged glances with the young ladies. Mrs. Ilmansee had made herself pert and unpleasant from the beginning of the voyage; but Nicholas took the seat saved for him, and found himself ensconced between Mrs. Ilmansee and her pretty sister.

"I declare," said pudgy Mrs. Coates, "this is real good. It seems

like a meetin'. Now, if Mr. Benson would only preach to us "—and she gave him a bland smile—" we could improve ourselves. I said to Mr. Coates before I started—says I, 'What is travel for unless it's for improvement?' Didn't I Jenny?"

The young lady appealed to was on the outside of the group, biting her lip, but, as all turned to her, she was obliged to reply:

"They will believe you, mother. They will recognize the need of it at least." The last in an undertone.

"Yes, that's just what I told him," she went on, unmindful of the irony. "People who have been raised as we were need improving, says I. We need to cultivate our minds, and embrace all our opportunities, and give our offspring the best advantages. Haven't I said that to him, Jenny, often and often?"

Mrs. Coates was intent on keeping Jenny under notice, and that young lady, who was smarting in every sensitive fibre of her soul, said:

"Yes, mother. Please don't appeal to me."

The other mothers were disgusted, and started little conversations among themselves. The young ladies looked into each other's faces and tittered.

"People who haven't had advantages," continued Mrs. Coates, warming to her topic, "know what they've lost, and they naterally give them to their offspring. When Mr. Coates became forehanded, says I to him, 'Mr. Coates,' says I, 'whatever we do let us give advantages to our offspring—the very best.' And we've done it. They say praise to the face is open disgrace, but I remember saying to him at one time, says I, 'Mr. Coates, look at Mr. Benson. See what he's done by improving his advantages and embracing his opportunities. He's a moddle man,' says I. Didn't I, Jenny?"

"I presume so," returned that annoyed young woman, in a tone that indicated that she presumed her mother had said every foolish thing that could be said.

The other ladies had heard it all, and were quite willing that Mrs. Coates should make herself and her daughter as ridiculous as possible but Mr. Benson did not care to have her made ridiculous at his expense; so he tried to change the conversation, and make it more general.

"We owe duties to our offspring, of course," said Mr. Benson, in his magnificent way, "and I presume that all of us recognize them; but our duties in this world are many."

"Oh, do talk!" said Mrs. Coates.

"Duty, you all know, perhaps," said Mr. Benson, quite willing to take the conversation out of Mrs. Coates' clumsy hands, "has been the watchword of my life."

"Isn't it grand!" interjected Mrs. Coates, smiling upon the group.

as if they had been caught in a shower of pearls without umbrellas.

"Duty," Mr. Benson went on, "I have found in a long and eventful life, to be the only efficient and safe guide and inspiration to action—duty founded in conscience and judgment."

"Conscience and judgment," whispered Mrs. Coates.

"Duty intelligently comprehended and conscientiously performed, to the utmost requirement, I regard as the only safe basis of action. The morning breeze"—Mr. Benson was on favourite and familiar ground, and delighted in his own eloquence—"The morning breeze is very sweet. It fans our temples, it stirs the trees, it drinks the dew," ("Isn't it lovely!" from Mrs. Coates, in a whisper) "but before the fervours of noon it dies. It is only the sun that keeps on and on, performing its daily round of service for the earth and its millions. Impulse and duty, as motives of action, are much like these. Impulse is short-lived, fitful, incompetent for the long, strong tasks of life. Duty only carries the steady, efficient hand. Mrs. Coates has kindly alluded to me, and I may say that to the careful performance of duty, as I have apprehended it, I owe all my reputation, such as it is, and all my successes."

"I hate duty," Nicholas blurted out, with an impulse that covered his face with crimson.

The ladies looked at him in astonishment. Mrs. Coates was aghast and shook her head, with her eyes on Jenny, who seemed strangely to enjoy the expression.

"The young hate a master," said Mr. Benson, without the least perturbation, and with a tone of compassion in his voice. Duty is a master—stern but kind. The young rebel, and find too late that they have missed the true secret of success."

"I hate success, too," said Nicholas. "Some men make a god of it, and worship nothing else."

Miss Jenny Coates was getting interested. Miss Larkin and Miss Bruce exchanged smiling glances. The other young ladies were bored, while good Mrs. Coates could only murmur:

"Oh!" and "how strange!"

Mr. Benson regarded the young man with a smile made up of benignity and superciliousness, and responded with the questions:

"*Why* do you hate duty, and *why* do you hate success?"

"I should like to know; wouldn't you Jenny?" said Mrs. Coates.

Nicholas found himself in what he regarded as a tight place. He had launched upon a sea comparatively unknown to him, and he had never accustomed himself to discussion, particularly with the eyes of twenty ladies upon him. He had only intended, indeed, to make a personal confession. He had not intended controversy at all. He knew that he

had no well-formed opinion upon the subject. He knew what he felt, and he believed that he saw the truth, but he was quite at a loss to construct his argument.

"Why do you hate duty, now?" Mr. Benson reiterated, as if he only waited for the answer to demolish it with a breath.

"Because it makes a sort of commercial thing of life," responded Nicholas, his colour rising. "Because it is nothing but the payment of a debt. I can see how justice has relation to the paying of a debt, but I don't see how goodness has anything to do with it."

"All action is good or bad, young man," said Mr. Benson, with a tone of mild reproof in his voice. "All action is good or bad. In which category will you place the paying of a debt?"

"All things are sweet or sour," replied Nicholas, getting excited. "What are you going to do with cold water?"

It was becoming interesting. Even the bored young ladies were moved to admiration of this cunningness of fence, and the distant Miss Coates, with her keen black eyes glowing with interest, moved nearer.

"That's right Jenny, come up where you can hear what Mr. Benson says," said Mrs. Coates.

Mr. Benson was exceedingly annoyed. Nicholas had surprised him, but he kept his air of candour, toleration and easy superiority.

"I did not think my young friend would indulge in such a sophistry," he said.

"I did not mean it for a sophistry," responded Nicholas. "I did not, I assure you. I was thinking,—if you'll excuse me for mentioning it—of my mother. I was thinking of what she did for me, and how she never dreamed of the word duty in all her sacrifices. From the time I was born, she did her duty to me, if you please, but it was only the natural expression of her love. And it seems to me that love is so much a higher motive than a sense of duty, that a sense of duty is a paltry thing by the side of it."

"Your filial gratitude and appreciation do you great credit," said Mr. Benson, patronizingly, "but feeling is very apt to mislead. The judgment and the instructed conscience, united with a sense of responsibility, are the only safe guides. A mother's fondness often makes her foolish. I have reason to believe that your mother was wise, which was a fortunate thing for you. A well-instructed sense of duty, however, might have induced her to do for you many things different from what she did. The fact is," and Mr. Benson lay back in his chair, and inserted his thumbs in the holes of his waistcoat—"the fact is, impulse has no hold upon wisdom, and without wisdom, conscientiously followed in all its dictates, man is like a ship, not only without a rudder, but without any steady and reliable propelling power."

"Did you hear that, Jenny?" inquired Mrs. Coates.

"Well, now I tell you how it seems to me," said Nicholas, excitedly. "A sense of duty is like a sailing vessel, that has to calculate which way the wind blows, and how to make the most of it; to tack constantly among contending forces, always getting out of the way by errors of judgment and miscalculation of currents, while love is like a steamer that goes with a sense of fire—goes through thick and thin by a force inside. That's the way it seems to me."

Mr. Benson was as well aware as the women around him, with the exception of the blindly admiring Mrs. Coates, that he was getting worsted. Not only this, but he was more uncomfortably conscious than he ever was before that there were weak places in his armour; but he simply responded:

"Sophistry again, sophistry again! The young are prone to it. Experience is a better teacher than argument. It is a comfort to feel that a life as long as mine will conduct my young friend safely to my conclusions."

The conversation was not one to which much could be contributed by the company of comparative strangers. The older ones were interested in it, in some degree, especially as it gave them an opportunity to study Nicholas. Their hearts were, with the exception already made, entirely with the young man. His frank and affectionate allusion to his mother had touched them. The difficulty which he had evidently experienced in overcoming his bashfulness, so far as to be able to talk in their presence, engaged their sympathy. They saw him get into the discussion accidentally, and go through it triumphantly, and they were pleased. Mrs. Ilmansee whispered her congratulations into his ear.

Not the least interested in the group were Miss Larkin and Miss Bruce. They had often heard Mr. Benson expatiate upon his hobby *ad nauseam*. They had never undertaken to controvert his notions, because of his relations to them, and the proud tenacity with which he held them. For a dependent, or any one living under his official protection, to doubt him would have been treason; yet Miss Larkin was moved to say, in the attempt to break an awkward pause:

"Mr. Benson, it seems to me that we haven't quite arrived at a comprehension of the difference between duty and love, as motives of action."

"Let us hear the wisdom of woman," said Mr. Benson, with a patronizing smile.

There was a spice of insult in the tone, and Miss Larkin felt it, and showed it in her colouring cheeks.

"It seems to me," she said, "that love gives outright what duty pays as a debt. One is a commonplace act, repeated over every tradesman's

counter every hour in the day, while the other is glorified by its own grace."

Miss Coates clapped her hands so heartily that everybody laughed, including Mr. Benson, who saw his way out of his difficulty only by playfully declaring it all a conspiracy.

Miss Larkin, having found her voice, continued:

"Now, Mr. Benson, tell me where the world would be if it had missed the grand enthusiasms which the love of liberty, the love of humanity, and the love of God, have inspired?"

"That is a pertinent question," he responded, "and here is another. Where would the world be if, when love had died and enthusiasm expended itself, a sense of duty had not remained to complete their results? That is precisely the point. Why, our very churches are supported three-quarters of every year by a sense of duty. The love and enthusiasm are gone, and what but a sense of duty remains? Do love and enthusiasm carry on a government after some great war in which liberty has been won? Not at all—not at all. That is precisely the point."

Mr. Benson was comfortably sure that he had gained that point.

"Would it not be better that the love and enthusiasm should remain?" inquired Miss Larkin, meekly.

"I don't know about that. We are obliged to take human nature as we find it. The ephemeral and permanent forces of society are what they are. I do not feel in the least responsible for them."

"Then it seems to me that we are obliged to use the sense of duty for something that we feel to be better," responded Miss Larkin.

"Feeling a thing to be better, my child, doesn't make it better," said Mr. Benson. "Feeling is a very poor guide. It is no guide at all. It is a will-o'-the-wisp."

Miss Larkin was put down. It was Mr. Benson's policy always to put women down.

Miss Coates had been aching to talk. She had been intensely interested in the conversation. She had drawn nearer and nearer the speakers, until she was in the centre of the group, very much to her mother's delight, who nudged her, and made little exclamations to her as the conversation progressed. Her black eyes flashed as she said:

"Excuse me, Mr. Benson, but I think—if a woman may be permitted to think—that I can tell you what is done, both in churches and governments, when love and enthusiasm die out, and done, too, from a sense of duty. The most horrible deeds the world has ever known were done from a sense of duty. The rack and the thumb-screw have been its instruments. Persecutions, tortures, murders,—these have all been perpetrated in obedience to a sense of duty. The sweetest Christians the world has ever known have been hunted down for heresy,—for using the

liberty with which love endowed them to think for themselves,—all from a sense of duty. It has blindly committed crime from which love would have shrank—deeds which love would have known were crimes. Of all blind bats that ever fluttered through the darkness of this world, it seems to me the sense of duty is the blindest. It assumes so many forms, it calculates, and weighs, and computes so much; it has so many objects, so many conflicting claims; it is so divorced from every touch and quality of generosity, that I hate it, I believe, as much as Mr. Minturn does."

Miss Coates had evidently had "advantages," and had made the most of them. She had seen Miss Larkin put down, had gauged the spirit of her guardian, and had entered the lists for her sex. She was full of fight. There was nothing for Mr. Benson to do but to join battle or retreat.

"Why, Jenny! I believe you are crazy," said Mrs. Coates.

"I presume so," she responded,

"Mrs. McGregor," said Mr. Benson to the lady with the diamond knobs, "I think our conversation must have grown insufferably dull to you. Suppose we try a promenade upon the deck."

Miss Coates knew that the "insufferably dull" was intended to apply to her own remarks, and that his leaving the group was intended to put her down, by indicating that those remarks were considered unworthy of a reply.

Grieving Mr. Benson was, to Mrs. Coates, the commission of a sin.

"I'm afraid you have grieved Mr. Benson," said her mother.

"I hope so," said Miss Coates.

"Why, I thought his remarks were very improving," said the mother.

"Yes, they quite moved me."

"How could you talk so?"

"I don't know, I'm sure."

Nicholas had found another girl who did not giggle. The mother was a pill, hard to swallow, but the daughter was a sparkling draught. He had been attracted to her from the first by sympathy. He saw at once that she was a sufferer from her mother's gaucheries, and he pitied her. Her little speech, rattled off excitedly, moved his admiration. He saw her snubbed by Mr. Benson. He saw the disgusted look on the faces of the older ladies, who seemed to regard her, not only as off colour socially on account of her vulgar mother, but as pert and unmaidenly. So, after Mr. Benson retired, and the little colloquy with her mother, which had been carried on in an undertone, was finished, he said:

"Miss Coates, I congratulate you."

"Thank you;" and she rose with her mother, gave a pleasant good morning to Miss Larkin, and a bow to Nicholas, and went down-stairs.

"Let's walk," said Mrs. Ilmansee to Nicholas; and Nicholas could do no less than offer her his arm.

"Will you go too, darling?" she said to her sister over her shoulder.

"No, I thank you, dear."

"Do go!" said Nicholas.

"Of course, if you wish it," said Miss Pelton; and Nicholas moved off with a stunning figure, almost affectionately leaning on each arm.

Miss Larkin saw the pretty operation, and smiled. She had already learned Nicholas too well to suspect that he could possibly care for either. Nicholas walked with them until they were tired, and then he captured the stately Miss Morgan, and succeeded in wearying her in a few minutes. Little Miss McGregor was quite lively enough for him, but she giggled incessantly, and he was glad to restore her to her seat. He looked for Miss Coates, and wondered at his disappointment when he ascertained that she had disappeared. He had shown no partiality, he had pleased them all; but he felt that he had rather a large job on hand. To be satisfactorily agreeable to half a dozen ladies within sight of each other, would have puzzled an older man than Nicholas; but he was sufficiently surprised with himself, and sufficiently conscious of rapid growth to look the future in the face without apprehension.

He had just turned away from Miss McGregor when it was announced that a strange steamer was in sight off the lee bow. In a moment, all was excitement, and everybody but Miss Larkin rushed leeward to get a view of her.

CHAPTER IV.

COMPANIONSHIP on the great sea is much like companionship in an adventurous and far-reaching life. Near the shore, there is plenty of it, —fishing-smacks, clumsy coasters, lumbering merchantmen, officious pilots offering to guide everybody safely into port for a consideration, tugs and tows, and showy little steamers, bright with paint, flaming with flags, and drawing much attention and little water. A thousand miles at sea, however, companionship is always a surprise and a pleasant novelty. A great ship meets a great ship in mid-ocean as a great soul meets a great soul in life. Both are seeking distant ports through common dangers. Each has its individual force, and its individual law, so that they cannot remain long together. A courteous dipping of their colours, an ephemeral sense of society, and they part, perhaps forever. Great ships that make great voyages are always lonely ships. Great men that lead great lives have always lonely lives.

It is presumed that pudgy Mrs. Coates never thought of this. It is quite probable that the thought did not occur to her sensible and sensi-

tive daughter. The passengers of a ship identify themselves with it in such a way that they cannot imagine a vessel lonely which has them on board. The lives that a great man attracts to him, or trails behind him, imagine that they furnish him with society, but he has no sense of it. It is only when another great man comes in sight, moved by the same ambitions and high purposes with himself, that he has a sense of grand companionship. He knows, however, that it cannot last long; but the mutual recognition is a help while it lasts, and lingers always as a pleasure in the memory.

The steamer discovered from the deck of the "Ariadne" was one of her own size, which had probably left port on the same day with her, and was bound for the same destination. She had sailed on a nearly parallel course, evidently, which was gradually approaching that of the "Ariadne." Her smoke lay in a long, dim line behind her, and to the naked eye, she seemed like a pigmy; but her appearance threw all the passengers into a delightful excitement. The somewhat grave conversation of the morning was forgotten in the new object of interest; glasses were passed from hand to hand; the captain was consulted, speculations were indulged in, calculations were made as to whether she was gaining or losing in her race with the "Ariadne," and all the talk was made about her that could possibly be suggested in a company that had nothing else to do.

She hung upon the edge of the horizon all the morning and all the afternoon, keeping, apparently, an even beam with the "Ariadne," though very gradually approaching; but no one on board expected to see her again as he caught the last glimpse of her light streaming towards him when he retired to his bed. It was deemed remarkable that she should have remained in sight so long; but there was not a man or woman of them all who, on arising on the following morning, did not at once seek the deck to learn whether she were still in her place. Indeed many of them rose earlier than usual, moved by curiosity with relation to her.

There, indeed, she was, just where they had left her, save that she was a little nearer to them. Her black hull stood higher out of the water; her smoke-stack was more plainly defined; her plume of smoke was blacker and larger. She sailed as if bound to the "Ariadne" by an invisible cable that shrank gradually, but perceptibly, from hour to hour.

Another incident had occurred on the voyage which had awakened a good deal of interest among the passengers. Forty-eight hours after leaving port, two birds had appeared by the side of the steamer, flying with it day and night, until it seemed as if they must die of fatigue. Some watched them with painful, pitying interest; others declared that

it was a common thing, and that the birds enjoyed it, and knew what they were about. Very soon, however, they became a part of the voyage, and speculations were indulged in concerning their power to keep up the flight across the ocean. Those who had keen sight and sensitive apprehensions saw that the birds were tired and that an end must come. They made occasional feints of alighting upon the steamer, and then flew away, evidently afraid of the tempting resting place.

On the day after the first appearance of the strange steamer, Mr. Benson sat alone upon the deck, occasionally raising his marine glass to look at her. Others were not far off; but, at the time, no one was with him. Miss Larkin and Miss Bruce were on the other side of the deck in their usual place, and the other passengers were promenading, or grouped here and there in conversation.

As he withdrew his glass from his eyes, he saw one of the birds fall into the water. It was dead. The other circled once around it, then made for the steamer, and alighted at Mr. Benson's feet. Whether it was from a feeling that the bird was unclean and might harm him, or whether it was from a sense of sudden annoyance, or whether it was from a superstitious impulse, it is probable that Mr. Benson himself did not know; but he kicked the half-dead, helpless little creature away from him. Many had noticed the fall of the bird, and its violent and ungracious repulse, and the exclamation: "Oh, don't!" went up on every side.

Nicholas started from Miss Larkin's chair upon a run, reached the bird before half a dozen others who had started for it under the same impulse, lifted it tenderly in his hands, and bore it to Miss Larkin, who took it in her lap, covered it, and poured out upon it a flood of pitying and caressing words.

It is curious how superstition springs into life at sea. Of all the monsters that swim the deep, or haunt the land, there is none so powerful as this, and none like this that is omnipresent. It can be fought or ignored upon the shore, but at sea it looks up from the green hollows of the waves, and lifts its ghostly hands from every white curl of their swiftly-formed and swiftly-falling summits. It is in the still atmosphere, in the howling wind, in the awful fires and silences of the stars, in the low clouds and the lightnings that shiver and try to hide themselves behind them. Reason retires before its baleful breath, and even faith grows fearful beneath its influence. It fills the imagination with a thousand indefinite forms of evil, and none are so strong as to be unconscious of its power.

Here were two steamers and two birds. One bird had sunk in the sea, the other was saved. The same thought flashed through a dozen minds at once, but no mind was quicker to seize the superstitious alarm

than that of Mr. Benson. He cursed the bird in his thought. He was tempted to curse himself for having repulsed it. It was a bad omen. He felt, too, that the deed was unlike him—that he had compromised his character for kindness and steadiness of nerve with the passengers. He felt this so deeply that he apologized for it, on the ground of sudden fright, and went over to Miss Larkin and inquired kindly for the little creature. He fought with his own unreasonable alarm. He put his strong will under his sinking heart and tried to lift it. He walked the deck, and threw his coat open to the cool wind, as if that might have the power to waft away the feeling that oppressed him, but the haunting shadow would not leave him.

His feeling was shared, in a degree, by the other passengers, and all mentally looked at him askance. He had been the author of the mischief, whatever it was. Was he a Jonah? Would the elements take revenge upon him for his cruelty? Were they to suffer for it because caught in his company?

From that moment the strange steamer became more an object of interest than before. Somehow she had united herself to their fate. That which had seemed a pleasant companionship was changed to a haunting spectre. The constant vision, the gradual approach, the even, unvarying progress, oppressed them like a nightmare. They wished that she would run away from them or fall behind. The lively promenading was stopped. The singing in the cabin was still. All amusements were set aside, as if by silent, common consent. There were no more groups engaged in lively conversation; but all day long men and women stood alone at the rail watching the companion vessel, that seemed less like a ship than the shadow of their own, only the shadow was shrunk in size and hung off in distance, as if afraid of the form of which it was born.

Mr. Benson retired into himself, and hardly spoke to any one during the day. It was reported among the passengers that the captain had said that he had never known such an instance of even sailing in an experience of thirty years, and this was fuel to the general superstitious feeling.

The bird, however, thrived. After a period of rest, it fed greedily from Miss Larkin's hand, and then tried to get away. It was restrained for awhile, but at last it grew so uneasy that she released it. Contrary to the general expectations, it did not leave the ship, but flew into the rigging, where it sat looking out in the direction in which the steamer was sailing, or preening its feathers, or casting its little pink eyes down upon passengers and crew.

The long day wore away, and still the bird remained upon its perch, and still the steamer hung upon the horizon, looking larger than before. As the passengers, one after another, left the deck for their state-rooms,

they went down with heavy hearts, dreaming of collisions, and wrecks, and strange birds, and filled with fears that they did not undertake to define. But the night passed away without disturbance, and when they went upon the deck the next morning it was to find the steamer nearer to them than on the previous night. It was a wonder of wonders; and there was the bird still in the rigging! Why did not the bird fly away?

But the bird did not fly away. He found himself safe, and he was refreshing himself after his long flight, with rest. Food was elevated to him, and he ate, much to the delight of everybody. Toward night, however, it was seen that he was becoming uneasy. He flew from perch to perch, and finally took up his position upon the top of the foremast. Here he rested for a few minutes, in a fixed lookout, and then spread his wings and flew away from the vessel, easily outstripping her in her own appointed track. As all eyes followed the retreating form, they saw in the distance, hull down, a full-rigged ship. The wind was on her quarter, all sails were set, and as she gradually rose, it was perceived that she was coming straight toward the steamer. The continued speed of the two vessels would bring them to a quick meeting and a quick parting. The bird had evidently seen the vessel, and, by its own instincts, had determined that it would be its guide to the land that it had so hopelessly left behind.

Mr. Benson was nervous. He looked behind him, and saw the ocean all aflame with the reflection of the reddest sun he had ever beheld. How could a pilot see in the face of such a fire? he questioned. He thought of the hundred stories he had read of mysterious wrecks from more mysterious blunders, and felt that he should be relieved when that vessel were once left behind.

The strange steamer was at once forgotten in the presence of a more immediate object of interest. Some of the gentlemen left their positions on the after-deck, and went forward, in order to rid themselves of the obstacles to close and constant vision which the upper works of the steamer interposed. All watched her with a strange, silent interest, as her great black hull was lifted more and more into view, and her magnificent spread of canvas grew rosy in the rays of the descending sun. It was not until the sun hung but a few minutes above his setting that her bow showed itself plainly, parting the waves before it as if her bowsprit were a wand of enchantment.

She was a beautiful vision, and many were the exclamations of admiration that went up among the passengers, but all had a secret feeling that her course was too directly in the path of the steamer, and watched her, momentarily expecting her to change her course. The steamer blew a warning signal. Whether it was wrongly given, or mis-

understood, nobody, in the absorbing excitement of the moment, could understand or remember; but both vessels turned in the same direction, and both were under a full spread of canvas. Collision seemed imminent. Every excited witness held his breath, and steeled his nerves to meet the impending consequences of the blunder. The steamer blew another warning signal. A terrible, insane confusion seemed to have seized the minds of those in control, for both vessels were again turned in the same direction. Then the steam was shut off, and for a moment that awful silence came which wakes the soundest sleeper at sea, when, after days of ceaseless crash and jar, and forward push and plunge, the great fiery heart of the steamer stands still. Then the screw was reversed, and slowly, at last, the huge bulk yielded to the new motion, but it was too late. A few seconds passed, during which three hundred aching hearts stood still, and then there came a crash so deafening, deadening, awful, that many swooned, and yells and screams and curses and prayers were mingled in a wild confusion that neither words can pourtray nor imagination conceive. The steamer was struck diagonally upon her bows. If she had been a living thing, and the ship had been a missile hurled at her, she might be spoken of as having received a wound in her breast.

The backward motion of the steamer and the recoil of both vessels from the cruel blow, dragged them apart, amid the crash of falling spars and the snapping of strained and tangled cordage; and then the ship, with the most of her sails still spread to the breeze, raked the steamer from stem to stern, and passed on. As she went by, the little crowd of pale-faced, trembling men and women, grouped upon the after-deck, a dozen eyes caught a glimpse of the well-known bird, flying in the face of the ship's pilot, as if protesting against his carelessness, or as if it had foreseen the danger of the accident, and had left the steamer to avert it.

There was running to and fro, shouting, praying, confusion everywhere, on board the steamer. Steerage passengers came out of their hiding places, and many of them were with difficulty restrained from throwing themselves into the sea. Stokers—begrimed, besooted, bathed in perspiration—climbed from their Plutonian depths, with ghastly eyes, like so many walking deaths, and wildly gazed around them. The captain, smitten with confusion at first, was the first to gain self-control. His voice was heard above the din, and men tried to be calm, and to fasten their hopes upon him. He sent the carpenter and some officers below to examine into the nature and extent of the damage. A long, impatient, murmuring silence followed, and then the men returned. It was not needful to ask what they had found. It was imprinted upon their faces, which seemed to have grown old and withered while they were gone.

Command was at once given to lower the boats from their davits. Then apprehension gave place to certainty, and all was confusion again, though here and there, there were men and women who rose from their fear into a calmness, such as only comes to some in the presence of death.

It was Mr. Benson's trial hour. He was then to show exactly what he was worth. Thus far, his life had flowed on calmly and undisturbed. Armoured all over with the pride of integrity, of self-sufficiency and self-control, he and all those who knew him were to learn whether his armour, like that of the steamer, was to be broken through, and he left to sink or float a hopeless wreck on the ocean of life. He realized this in such a degree as was possible to him under the circumstances; but even here his mind went to work automatically, as it were, to construct his duties. He owed his first duties to himself and the great army dependent upon him at home. It was for him to save his life. He could not forget Miss Larkin, however, if he would. There she sat in her helplessness —pale, anxious, looking at him with a mute appeal, but breathing not a word.

Mr. Benson's face was like that of a dead man. He started to go to Miss Larkin. Then he paused. Then he went over and wrung her hand.

"Poor child!" he said; but he did not say, "I will try to save you."

He was watching the boats as they were lowering to the water, and the frenzied crowd that were trying to get into them. Then, as if seized with a frantic impulse to save himself, he darted from her side, rushed into the thick of the struggling crowd, parted a way for himself with muscles that seemed hardened into iron, and as the first boat touched the water, precipitated himself among the struggling, cursing, men, who, wild like himself, had forgotten all the helplessness they had left behind them. The disgraceful flight and plunge had been effected within sight of Miss Larkin.

"Dear God!" she exclaimed. "How I pity that poor man!"

When Mr. Benson had righted himself, after his dangerous leap, and before the boat was entirely clear of the steamer, he came to himself, but it was too late. He looked up and saw Miss Larkin. From that moment of ineffable anguish and humiliation the Mr. Benson whom he had known and believed in, had honoured and been proud of, was dead. He had lost himself. His long self-circumspection, his careful preservation of his integrity, his unconscious nursing of self-love, had culminated in a sudden, stunning act of dastardy. He saw, in one swift moment, as in a vision of God, Mr. Benjamin Benson as a loathsome, painted sepulchre. Swift into the foul enclosure, swarmed a thousand fiendish

forms, against which he fought, and ground his teeth until he groaned in anguish. What if he should be saved? What if Miss Larkin should die? How could he manage to get the most out of her estate for himself? These thoughts were interjected between those which related to his own safety as if they had been darts fired at him from the damned. He could not quench or repel them. Wild, staring men were around him, struggling in the waters. The impulse came to cast himself among them, and share their impending fate, in the hope to hide himself from himself, in the depths that could so quickly quench his life; but the instinct of self-preservation was too strong for the impulse, and held him to his seat. He tried to believe that he had done his duty, but he was unsatisfied. The devil furnished him with a thousand apologies, that limped into his mind, and limped out again, as if ashamed of themselves, or disgusted with the place into which they had been sent.

He did not look at Miss Larkin again. The shame, the humiliation, the sense of immitigable disgrace, the discovery of his own hollowness, selfishness and cowardice, the realization of his loss of the estate of manhood, held down his head as if it had been transmuted into lead.

But strong men were at the oars, and helped by the wind, the boat rounded the prow of the sinking steamer and disappeared from Miss Larkin's sight. She caught one glimpse of his white, despairing face, saw him wringing his impotent hands, and in her heart bade him an eternal farewell. She saw it all without a throb of resentment. She had read, through her instincts, what the wise and experienced world had never been able to see—what Mr. Benson himself had never seen until this moment—and she was not disappointed.

The boats were quite incompetent to hold all the life upon the steamer, and one was swamped in getting of. The excitement attending their launching was uncontrollable, and helplessness had no chance within its circle. Meantime, the captain, notwithstanding his inability to quell the frenzy that reigned around him, had not only regained but kept his head. He had fired signals of distress. As the sun went down, he let off rockets that called for help. He had watched the ship that had collided with the steamer, and seen her rounding in the crimson track of the dying daylight, with the purpose of offering assistance. The companion steamer that had excited so many superstitious fears, had changed her course and was making for the wreck. All looked hopeful, and he went around, cheering the passengers with the intelligence. If the steamer would only keep afloat for half an hour, all would be saved. Courage sprang up on every hand. The boat in which Mr. Benson had embarked on was seen going with the wind towards the approaching steamer, and its inmates would doubtless be picked up.

Nicholas was on the alert, and saw that the wreck was sinking forward. He was hopeful and cheerful, and found, in the pale and frightened group around him, his lady acquaintances. He provided them all with life-preservers, gave them such directions as he could, in preparation for the anticipated emergency, cheered them with brave words, and behaved, much to his own surprise, like a brave and self-poised man.

Mrs. Coates went over to him, as he knelt by Miss Larkin's side, and with lips livid and trembling said:

"Mr. Minturn, save Jenny. Don't mind me."

"Bless you, my good woman, for that. If I live, I shall always remember it. I'll do what I can to save you both."

The women around were tearfully shaking hands with one another, or embracing each other silently.

Nicholas turned to Miss Larkin, whom he would not leave, and said:

"Miss Larkin, can you die?"

"Yes, if God wills."

"Can you die, Miss Bruce?"

"Yes, if I must."

"So can I, and by these tokens we shall all live. The calmness that comes of resignation will help us to save ourselves, and I believe we shall have need of it."

At that moment the incoming water found the fires of the steamer, and a great volume of hot vapour shot up through every opening and enveloped the ship. Men rushed aft, as they saw the bow hopelessly settling, until the deck was covered with a motley crowd of steerage passengers, engineers, stokers and sailors. Among them came the captain. People seized upon chairs, settees, everything that would float. Some brought doors with them, that they had wrenched from their hinges. One wild man, black with the dust of coal, among which he had spent the voyage, found nothing on which to lay his hand for safety, and advancing to Miss Larkin, sought to wrench the chair from under her. Nicholas felled him to the deck with an impulsive blow. The wretch picked himself up, apparently unconscious of what had stunned him.

The scenes that accompanied the few which have been depicted were too painful and too confused for description. The struggle of helpless lives in the water; the men and women who stood apart, stunned by the imminent calamity, and prayed; the swooning forms that lay around upon the hard planks of the deck; the fierce eyes that tried for the first time to look death in the face; the selfish, brutal struggles for the means of safety; the tender farewells, given and received, formed a scene to linger forever a burden of distress in the memory, but one which the pen is impotent to pourtray.

Nicholas looked up and saw the captain.

"My good fellow," said the latter, "you are all right. I am going down near you, and we'll do what we can to save these women."

There was something very hearty and reassuring in his tone, and the ladies gathered around the pair. The captain saw plainly that help could not reach them before the final catastrophe, which seemed to be rapidly approaching.

To those who have spent many and happy days upon a steamer, she becomes, or seems, a living and sentient thing. Her steadily beating heart, her tireless arms, her ceaseless motion, her power to buffet the waves, her loyal obedience to orders, form so many analogies to life that the imagination readily crowns her with consciousness, and endows her with feeling. To those who watched the "Ariadne," as her bows settled hopelessly in the water, she seemed reluctant to leave the light of the stars, and take up her abode in the awful profound whose depths awaited her. In the sore pity of themselves was mingled a strange pity for her. No power was strong enough to save her, and they might be saved. It was like parting with a friend who had sheltered, fed and served them.

She paused for a minute as if holding her breath; then as if her breath were all expired in a moment, and hope had taken its flight, she went down, amid shrieks and prayers and wild bewailings, that at one moment were at their highest, and at the next were as still as if every mouth had been struck by a common blow. In the sudden immersion in the cold element, many a heart ceased to beat forever, and many a life went out. Those who retained their consciousness, felt themselves going down, down, among eddies that twisted their limbs, wrenched their bodies, tossed them against each other, bruising and benumbing them, until all was still, and they felt themselves rising, with a delicious sense of buoyancy and triumph.

They emerged, some of them wholly conscious, some half conscious, and some unconscious, and without reason, but answering efficiently to the dictates of a blind instinct of self-preservation, each to appropriate the help of such pieces of drift as were within reach. The first voices heard were those of the captain and Nicholas, cheering the weak and struggling men and women around them. The first effect of the immersion soon wore away, and, under the awful stimulus of the moment, thought was active and expedient almost miraculous.

Miss Larkin had gone down just as she sat. Without concert or calculation, Nicholas and Miss Bruce had gone down on either side of her, and her chair, lighter than herself, had remained under her and buoyed her throughout the awful descent and the long passage to the surface. Nicholas found himself, on rising, with one hand grasping her chair,

and the other her arm. The young woman and her companion were both alive, and both could speak.

A huge piece of drift came near Nicholas and he seized it. It was not only large enough for three, it was large enough for a dozen. When the two immediately under his care had secured firm hold upon it, he and the captain gathered others to it. Nicholas was not a swimmer, but he swam. The emergency developed both power and skill. He had the unspeakable satisfaction of gathering to his buoy several of the ladies whom he knew. The action wearied him; but his long unused vitality stood him in good stead. He had resources that labouring men never possess in such emergencies. He assured them that the boats of the rescuers were close at hand, and all they needed for safety was to keep their heads above water. All grew wise and calm with every passing moment; and, in the common calamity, brave and mutually helpful. The selfish greed for safety disappeared. Twenty minutes—it seemed an age—passed, and then, while Nicholas and his group were deep down in the hollow of a wave, a boat appeared upon its crest above them. Oh! the fierce shout that rose, and the answering cheer! Soon the boat was near them, and strong arms were ready. It was difficult to lift in the poor women, amid the rise and fall of the waves, without bruises; but one after another was carefully raised from her hold, and placed in the boat, where they swooned or cowered together for warmth. Soon another boat appeared, and another, and another. Torches were flaming here and there. Reassuring shouts went up on every hand. Both the steamer and the ship were represented among the rescuers, and not a single life that could hold itself above the surface was suffered to go down.

The captain was lifted into one of the steamer's boats, while Nicholas, and those immediately around him, were rescued by one of the boats from the ship. They went different ways and were parted forever.

During the absence of the boats from the ship, she had drifted nearer to them, and sent up signals and hung out lights to guide the weary boatmen back to their vessel. The steamer's boats had the wind with them, and, as she, too, had crept nearer, their shivering, half drowned freight of men and women had but a short passage from their benumbing bath to the light and warmth of the cabin, and the ministry of tender and efficient hands. The steamer was at once transformed into a hospital, in which extemporized physicians and volunteer nurses spent the night in the long and tedious work of resuscitation.

Among those who stood upon her deck, as one after another the boats came in, and the victims of the great catastrophe were lifted through the gangway, was Mr. Benson. He watched with awful interest every face and form; and when the last boat-load was discharged,

he turned away with a pitiful groan, and laid his face in his hands and wept like a child. He had hoped she would come. He had hoped that she would help to save him from himself. Do what he would however his pecuniary interest in her constantly obtruded itself. He tried to get away from it and shut it out; but it would not leave him. After learning that the boats of the ship had rescued quite a number of the passengers, he wondered if Nicholas had saved her. If he had done so, and also saved himself, what would be the result? Then he felt a curious enmity in his heart springing up against Nicholas. All the forces, plans, purposes, prides of his life, were in wild confusion. Like a great god in marble, he saw the deity he had made of himself tumble from its pedestal, and broken into a thousand fragments.

He would forget. He would win back his self-respect. In deeds of mercy, in acts of service, he would spend his life to atone for the past. Impulsively he sought the cabin, and there, with strong arms and tireless hands, he devoted himself to the sufferers. When others slept, he watched. When others were weary, he supplemented their feeble efforts with his own frenzied strength.

The steamer only paused to start her boats toward their davits, then the engineer's bell rang, the sails were hoisted, and the great creature went booming across the waves into the night, to complete her five hundred leagues before she should again stand still.

Nicholas and his party were lifted on board the ship, more dead than alive. They found rougher hands to tend them, among the emigrants that thronged her decks, but they were moved by hearts as warm as those that throbbed under finer vestures in the cabin of the steamer. Though chilled and bruised, not one of all the rescued number failed to respond to the means of recovery.

A few pieces of drift, scattering every moment, and lifting themselves upon the waves that swept the great solitude, were all that was left of the huge organism that so lately carved her way across the all-embracing element. She went down with all her cunning machinery, her gigantic power, her burden of wealth, to sleep a mile below the waves, and wait until some convulsion of reforming or dying nature shall lift her from her bed,—but not a soul was lost!

Not a soul was lost. There must be somewhere, some One, who looks upon what we call calamity with a different eye from ours. The life beyond must be so much brighter than this that those who suffer death find payment for all their pain, and terror is forgotten in an overwhelming joy. Many went down and their bodies never rose; but something rose. No one saw the meetings in the air. No one witnessed the transition from pain to pleasure, from slavery to freedom, from darkness to

light; but he whose faith clings to the risen Master believes that because He lives, all these live also.

No pity for these, but pity for him who found in his selfish and cowardly experience a terrific meaning in the familiar text; "He that saveth his life shall lose it!"

(*To be continued.*)

CHRISTMAS CAROL.

In the starlight
And the far light
Of the dawn,
Glad bells ring it,
Nations sing it,
Christ is born.

King by weakness,
Lord in meekness,
This is He.
Heir to anguish,
Born to languish
On a tree.

He, the lowly,
Pure and holy,
Born to-day;
Let us greet Him,
Loving meet Him,
With a lay.

LYD.

EVENINGS IN THE LIBRARY.

No. 2. EMERSON.

THE next evening the little club met bright and early. There was a roaring fire on the hearth, and the snow was coming down handsomely. Baker's portrait of Bryant had come in from the bookseller's, and the trio expended much admiration over it. Certainly it is a clever performance. The portrait almost speaks. The expression is magnetic and attracts at once. Mr. Baker is a thorough artist, and his work always leaves his hands in a finished state. His Longfellow last year was very faithful; his Bryant this Fall is no less so. He seems to catch his subjects in their best moods, and his pictures resemble a perfect crayon. Every line is drawn with exquisite taste. "I wish," said the Professor, as he laid the print carefully away, "that Baker would give us Emerson next year. What a splendid face is his for a picture! So full of intelligence, so thoroughly human and sincere."

"Yes," said Charles, catching the old man's fervour, "Baker could do him full justice. I think, however, it is the intention to include him in this gallery of American poets. I am not quite sure, but I imagine Dr. Holmes is to be the one next Fall, and, after him, we may have Emerson. When the series is completed, it will form a very delightful set of portraits."

"We were speaking," said Frank, "at our last meeting, of Carlyle and Emerson. Do you believe that Emerson copies Carlyle, as some say he does?"

"No," said the Professor, "Emerson is an independent thinker. He has nowhere copied Carlyle, but has thought for himself; and though sometimes his ideas appear similar to the Scotch Thinker, on certain subjects, the analyst will find a wide difference when he comes to make a critical examination. Emerson's imagination is more delicate, his language is less harsh, his imagery is more rounded, more perfect. He is never common-place nor coarse. He never offends. He is never boorish, nor vulgar, nor ridiculous. His sentences are always carefully turned, and he never shocks us with a ribald jest. Like Higginson, he thinks that an essay may be thoroughly delightful without a single witticism, while a monotone of jokes soon grows tedious. Mr. Emerson is a philosopher,—a rapid thinker, not quite as deep or as ponderous as Carlyle, and a keen analyzer of the myriad works of nature. His is a

speculative mind, and his temperament is sanguine and warm. He is too fervent for some minds; and the man who reads Herbert Spencer looks coldly down on Emerson. He is not congenial in his atmosphere. The sun is too bright, and with a growl he hastens away, and seeks the shady side, and finds solace in the study of sociology and kindred topics. It is different with the ardent admirer of Swinburne, with his thousand graceful, glowing, floating images, for he meets with a responsive soul in the Concord dreamer. And yet Swinburne is in nowise like Emerson. They differ widely, rather. The Victorian poet is all sensuality, and his heroes and heroines are clothed in the thinnest gauzy fabrics, and his poetry is of the age of Edmund Spenser and the matchless 'Faerie Queene.' Emerson, on the contrary, exhibits no such traits in the witching verselets he has written. Then why should the same minds find so much that is common between them? Why do they yearn for each other?"

"Because, I take it, both men are so sincere in their work. Both present their own individuality in every page. Both are equally warm, hot-blooded if you will. Both treat their subjects with the same degree of vigour. They lift them up till they stand out boldly and prominently on their mental canvasses, like a portrait of Raphael's or a face like Rembrandt's. They stay in the mind. They remain fixed. We cannot banish them from our thoughts. 'Atalanta' lives in our memory like a pleasant, delightful dream, and we feel all the satisfying ecstacy which sweet music gives, as the mellow strain floats all round us. When Michael Angelo struck the marble block in historic Florence three centuries ago, and a figure filled with life sprang into existence, and astonished even old Rome itself, all the world proclaimed the tidings that a great genius was born among men. In a lesser degree that genius enters largely into Emerson's composition. His mind is surcharged with it. It must have vent. It must find an outgoing channel. If it be true that, according to Rahel, the world can be astonished by the simple truth, then Emerson has long ago accomplished this feat. He has astonished the world, for the simple truth, charmingly told, delights the reader of his voluminous works at every turn."

"I grant you Emerson has genius, but he has no passion. Swinburne possesses both genius and passion, but his passion is much the greater force. They differ too, in the mode of construction, in the building of those edifices which charm mankind. Emerson's structure is filled with libraries and quaint books. Swinburne builds only spacious halls and pretty alcoves; and rare bits of statuary meet the eye at every turn, and curious bronzes of curious pattern cunningly hid in nooks and out-of-the-way places, appear in view only at odd times. Emerson is

an instructor—an educator. Swinburne is only a sweet singer, a graceful bard, a nineteenth-century Minnisinger."

"Emerson mistructs a good deal. I think more so in his poetry than in his prose, though it deadens the pages of his otherwise beautiful essays somewhat. He is often hopeful, never quite gloomy, though many times distrustful, and I think suspicious. It is the one thing from which I would have his works free. He has no right to demolish the fanciful castle or the rich vase his delicious imagination conjures up for our enjoyment. He destroys the illusion at a blow, and the reader, after being lifted up almost to the very heavens, is let down again, not easily, but with a thud that knocks all the sentiment out of him for a twelvemonth at least."

"You think there is too much romance and reality about Emerson, then."

"Not too much, but enough. Emerson is in every respect a genuine American author,—the first to set at defiance Sydney Smith's query, 'Who reads an American book?' the first to direct his thoughts to his own country; the first to lay the foundation of a new English literature; the first to write about the things of his own land. He astonished everyone, and provoked some sharp ridicule, when he published his modest lines to a 'Humble Bee.' The subject and treatment were laughed at by the same people who giggled over Wordsworth's homely verses—by those who took Scott as their model, and recognized no one else. Emerson, however, whose mind was not as weak as Keats' or as sensitive as Byron's, heeded not his critics, nor the advice of Sir Fretful's good-natured friends, but continued elaborating and dressing up home incidents, home skies, home sky-larks and home nightingales, and home life. He did not expect to find in a new country those romantic and classic spots which abound everywhere in the three kingdoms beyond the sea, by the dull Rhone or sparkling Rhine. The rich scenery of the Hudson was as dear to him and to Irving as the legendary water of the great German river is to the Teuton. He took the commonest things which he found by the wayside, or the riverside, or the brookside, and he was artist enough to know how to lay on his colours with the best effect. It was hard to change the old ideas about poetry. It was difficult to upset the old theories about such things. Everyone read Byron and Scott. Few had known Washington Allston as a poet. Some remembered him as an artist, and all looked to the mother country for their reading. Even Irving is more of an English author than he is an American. Cooper's Indian tales were new, and had little acceptance at first. It took years to change the minds of the people; but a change did come at last, and then Emerson began to be understood. His readers caught his meaning. They realized all at once Emerson's position. The

half-forgotten 'Humble Bee' became an idyl; and if, as Halleck says, 'to be quoted is to be famous,' Emerson soon got to be famous, for the 'Humble Bee' was quoted from one end of the land to the other. Its position in literature to-day is undeniable."

"Have you ever seen that other poem of his, 'The Snow-storm?' I think it is singularly beautiful."

"Yes," said the Professor, "I once heard the poet Longfellow recite it. It was in the early autumn and the leaves were just turning, and the wind rustled the half-brown, half-green maple leaves across the lawn, in old Cambridge. The poet was sitting in his library, and the talk had been of Emerson, when the 'Snow-storm' chanced to be mentioned. The old poet leaned back in his library chair, and seemingly inspired, repeated slowly the marvellous lines in a rich, clear voice. The effect on us both was electrical, and for some moments afterwards neither of us spoke a word. It seemed to me like a new reading of an old familiar passage from some well-thumbed page. I saw new beauties that I had not perceived before, and even now I never look upon a snow-storm, as it comes down in its fleecy folds, whirling lightsomely through the air in delightful uncertainty of destination, but Emerson's grand words ring into my ears like the sound of silver bells, and I find myself going softly over the metrical numbers:

"'Announced by all the trumpets of the sky,
Arrives the snow; and, driving o'er the fields,
Seems nowhere to alight; the whited air
Hides hills and woods, the river, and the heaven,
And veils the farm-house at the garden's end;
The sled and traveller stopped, the courier's feet
Delayed, all friends shut out, the housemates sit
Around the radiant fire-place, enclosed
In a tumultuous privacy of storm.
Come see the north-wind's masonry.
Out of an unseen quarry, evermore
Furnished with tile, the fierce artificer
Curves his white bastions with projected roof
Round every windward stake or tree or door;
Speeding, the myriad-handed; his wild work
So fanciful, so savage; naught cares he
For number or proportion. Mockingly,
On coop or kennel he hangs Parian wreaths;
A swan-like form invests the hidden thorn;
Fills up the farmer's lane from wall to wall,
Maugre the farmer's sighs; and at the gate
A tapering turret overtops the work.
And when his hours are numbered, and the world

Is all his own, retiring as he were not,
Leaves, when the sun appears, astonished Art
To mimic in slow structures, stone by stone,
Built in an age, the mad wind's night-work,
The frolic architecture of the snow.'"

"It is indeed gorgeously set, and I do not wonder at your enthusiasm. Emerson appears to say more in a little space than any other American poet. Look for instance at his short poem of 'Letters.' The whole story is told in six brief lines. I admire that other bit of his, 'Brahma,' very much. It is fantastic, but very pretty."

"He never writes unintelligently or incomprehensively. His system precludes his doing so. He prunes and prunes, alters, amends and corrects. He labours hard to make himself thoroughly intelligible. He is a man of unwearied literary industry, of tremendous endurance and untiring patience. Thoughts which may have reached the public before, and through other channels, become new and piquant after they pass through the mental filter of Emerson. He adds a bit here, he lops off a bit there, and then develops the whole, till the thought becomes unmistakably Emersonian. He has been known to re-write a single sentence twenty times before he was satisfied with it. He retouches as much as Tennyson, and works as hard as Bulwer used to do in his young days. Everything which he publishes, therefore, is complete."

"He differs from Tennyson in that respect then, for the *laureate* is never complete. He is constantly altering, and every new edition of his poems is like an entirely new work."

"Though I have great admiration for Emerson as a poet, I think that it is in the capacity of an essayist that his fame will rest. He has been called the American Carlyle. This is unjust to Emerson, and hardly fair to Carlyle. Both, however, have been called Pantheists, and perhaps that is the similarity people affect to see in them. For my part I see a considerable difference."

"There is width in Emerson's thought, wisdom in the bent of his mind, and his style is epigrammatic and beautiful. He is not quick in humour, and he often appears listless and dreamy. This is more noticeable in his essays, which are models of elegant writing, and condensed thought. A good deal of discussion has arisen regarding Emerson's religious belief. He has been misrepresented a good deal, and some persons unhesitatingly charge him with being an unbeliever and little better than an infidel. He is a Transcendentalist, is he not?"

"Yes, he is a professor of the New Faith, a strong apostle of Transcendentalism in its wider sense. He was one of the famous circle of Boston scholars who followed the teachings of Kant and the German philosophy. They often met at good old Dr. Channing's for intellectual

intercourse, but the great preacher's health was breaking up, and he felt unable to take the lead in this "newness" of thought movement. He gradually yielded to the bolder students and scholars, and the sessions were then held at George Ripley's house. Ripley soon became prominent as a leader in Transcendentalism. His mind was acute and liberal. He was fettered by no dogmas or creeds. His culture was unquestioned, and his literary power was considerable. A good digester of books, he was an able and fearless critic, and his reviews were always distinguished by their comprehensiveness and breadth. He understood thoroughly the canons of criticism, and his opinions of men and books always ranked high. Ever kindly towards authors, he was just to his readers, and never uttered an uncertain sound. This humanity gave him power, and helped to make the fine reputation which he holds to-day among literary men of every shade. Ripley was the originator of the Brook Farm project. The plan was conceived in his library. Among the actual members was Nathaniel Hawthorne, who speaks of the Arcadian experiment somewhere in his note-books, and refers to it slightly in his delicate *Blithedale Romance*. Emerson visited the company frequently, and often talked over topics with them; and in almost every way he gave the idea countenance, but he never was a regularly enrolled member of the organization. He was *with* it, but not *of* it. Even Theodore Parker, whose sympathies were entirely with the Farm, belonged not to it, and Margaret Fuller was merely a guest."

"Poor Margaret Fuller! I remember once seeing a portrait of this ill-fated and brilliant lady, the most delightful conversationalist of her time. She was a friend of Carlyle, and for many years held the post of reviewer for Horace Greeley. The picture represented her as extremely haggard and worn. Her intellect was too soon developed; she was a prodigy in her early days, she grew to womanhood shattered in constitution and broken down in health. The likeness was a good one of the woman as she was, but it gave no idea of the fine mind which she possessed. Mr. Geo W. Curtis gave the portrait to Dr. Holmes, who knew Margaret Fuller well. She was thoroughly acquainted with Greek, Latin, and German, and her papers about Goethe won universal admiration. A wonderful mimic, she gained the applause of children, and the terror of grown persons. Her peculiar manner made a disagreeable impression on strangers, and she had many jealous rivals. Mr. Emerson's first meeting with her is described as curious. He was instantly repelled, and thought he could never like her. He was disappointed. As soon as the first impression wore off, and he began to perceive her extraordinary powers of mind, and intellectual superiority over other women, he was gradually drawn towards her, and for ten years their friendship remained firm and unbroken. She formed conversation

classes in Boston in 1839, and the most intellectual women of the city regularly attended. Miss Fuller, as president, opened every meeting with an extempore address, and then the conversation followed in the form of a discussion. Miss Fuller entertained lofty ideas of her own abilities. She once said, 'I now know all the people worth knowing in America, and I find no intellect comparable to my own.' For two years she edited *The Dial*—a quarterly journal devoted to recondite and transcendental literature—and then resigned her post to Mr. Emerson. She afterwards went on the *Tribune* as book reviewer."

"I always understood that Margaret Fuller was unfitted for that position, inasmuch as she could only write when she felt like it, and needed ample time for everything she did in a literary way."

"She was unfit, so far as rapid work was concerned, but she always wrote with a degree of polish and finish that was the delight of all readers, and her estimates of books were generally correct in the main. Horace Greeley knew she could do nothing hastily, and he humoured her accordingly, and allowed her to work in her own leisurely way. Emerson always maintained a profound respect for her, and wrote a life of her some years ago, in conjunction with Channing and Clarke."

"We were speaking of Emerson's religion, and you began by saying he was a Transcendentalist. There are several forms of this belief. What does he believe?"

"Emerson's religion is what might be called a 'reasonable' religion. It is severely intellectual, yet founded on a simple faith. He investigates the miracles of the Bible, and finds them to be merely a compilation. He takes nothing for granted, but examines everything for himself. He believes man's nature to be good, and only sometimes bad. He believes in the elucidations of science. His religion is partly scientific, but not altogether. He believes with Octavius Frothingham, that infidels of all times are earnest men, are conscientious students, are zealous inquirers after truth, and not merely scoffers at religious teachings. He is a liberal thinker. He loves the good which he finds in Voltaire, and in Paine, and in Carlisle, and in Bolingbroke, and rejects that which is not good in them. He does not worship the rising sun. He has praise and help for *endeavour*, if the *endeavour* be rightly-conceived. He admits with Talleyrand, that 'nothing succeeds like success,' but he has a good word to say to him who tries to do right, though he fail in the end, and fall by the way-side. The wish to do well receives his encouragement. He is a helper. He does not keep to himself his vast learning, but he opens wide the intellectual door of his mind, and gives freely to all who seek him, the great glorious truths and thoughts which come rushing from the teeming stores of his brainshop. He gives out what he

has taken in. He has digested the crude thought, and now it comes out and goes forward into the world, clad in the warm Emersonian garb. He has marked it for his own. It is bright in the wonderful colouring it has received. It is strong in a marvellous individuality. It is simple, for he has told the story in simple though earnest language. Emerson does not believe in infallible dogmas, nor the iron sways of any creed. He bases his faith upon knowledge, and motive forms a part of his religion. He ranks with those who believe in a rational religion, not an authoritative religion. He is as firm as Carlyle in his hatred of hypocrisy, deceit, and insincerity, and is as vigorous in denouncing every form of vice and fraud. He cultivates Sociality, and would form brotherhoods among his people for the development and fosterment of homelike meetings, where all could gather round the board and feast on intellectual preserves. He would impress all with the golden truth, 'love one another.' He respects the old theology because of its antiquity, but he does not believe in it. He holds Advanced ideas. And yet Emerson's ancestors for many generations, were sternly and inflexibly orthodox. He was the last one, and he broke away from the old school. He looked for 'more light,' he sought out new truths, he has discovered a new way, an untrodden path. He is the apostle of a new Faith."

"But wasn't Emerson a Unitarian Minister?"

"Oh, yes. That was in 1829. But he resigned his charge in two or three years. He differed from his congregation, and his views underwent a change on some points. He considers the whole theory of revelation to be incorrect. He is not dogmatic, narrow, or exclusive. He believes the world began at the beginning, and that a gradual development has year by year taken place, till events took a new shape. The seed grew into a plant, the plant put forth buds, and the rose blossomed and sprang into life in all beauty, loveliness, and strength. Supernatural interposition he considers obsolete. He wants in the place of old mysteries, darkness and superstitions, light, order, righteousness, goodness, and, as near as possible, perfection in individual man. He would have no one bigoted or dogmatic. He would have boundless charity and openness of heart for all. He would have liberality in its ample sense. He would nail down the prejudiced impressions of the narrow-minded Zealot who deemed every one who differed from him to be a scoffer and an infidel. He even places his faith before charity, for charity *is* secondary, and a man's charity sometimes is confined solely to his own Church. Out of that pale, his charity is uncharitableness itself. He cherishes the sentiment of brotherhood, and guards it with a jealous care. He takes every man at his best, and always looks at the motives which actuate the being. He does justice to all. He would put God in their

hearts. He believes in a bright religion. He peoples his faith with beautiful, delightful things. His imageries are always fanciful and pretty. He would not follow a man that was all sadness and sorrow. He wants *life* in the Church, LIFE in the sermon, LIFE in the preacher's life. He detests religious controversies. There is no christianity nor religion in them. They are only petty squabbles, and they breed malice and hatred."

"He holds high ideas regarding man and his future, too, I believe, and no religion, no matter what its tenets are, is infallible? All creeds are the necessary and structural action of the human mind. A new faith, purer than any which exists with us now, is to come, and in time will supersede all others. The French Transcendentalists admire Emerson very much, and some of his works have been translated into French, and circulate widely in France. I have even met some people who would not read Emerson, because they were told he was an unbeliever."

"The world is full of such people. Most of them are beings who are afraid to think for themselves; who must keep on in the old beaten track; who denounce every one who believes differently from them. They are generally ignorant men, who are filled with superstition. Some few, however, boast of a pretty fair education, and love the Georgics of Virgil and revel in the adventures of the pious Æneas, and the songs of the blind Greek, and yet reject Shelley because he was frail in his religious belief; because some who knew no better, called him an Atheist."

"Perhaps," said Charles, smiling, "they affect to read Homer in order to be counted among the learned men of the time. I once knew of a man who bought all the old classics, Æschylus, Thucydides, Sophocles, Euripides, Plotinus, and the like, and had them all bound uniformly, merely for show; some of them he did not even open after they came home from the binder's, and of the contents of those which he did open he knew absolutely nothing. He had Pope's Homer and Derby's Iliad in his case, and when Bryant's Translation came out, it remained for days on his library table, for visitors to look at. Some of the leaves were even turned down in places. He once imported an expensive set of Balzac, in antique French, but he was laughed at for his pains. It is fashionable, perhaps, to assume a virtue if you have it not; and it may be the correct thing to speak slightingly of Emerson, if you don't quite understand him. It *is* fashionable to call him an unbeliever and a sceptic. Even the great humanitarian, Charles Dickens, did not escape in this respect. His religion troubled a good many people; the beautiful prose poem of 'The Christmas Carol' did not make them quite change their mock devout views. They knew so well that he was not a Christian. And yet Dickens lived a pure, guileless life. The story of Tiny Tim and old Marley's Ghost, and the loving words in which Dickens speaks of

his Saviour, stand as proof against the aspersions of hypocritical howlers who helped so much to embitter the declining years of his life. No one escapes these 'goody' persons. Genial, whole-souled Thackeray suffered, Hazlitt was traduced, and some have been found who even doubt gentle Greenleaf Whittier, a man whose whole life is blameless. They are the insects who hide themselves in the blankets of society, and, in the words of the Satirist, 'feed upon better flesh than their own."

"Apart from his religious teachings, Emerson is a very pleasant Essayist. He delights in picturesque phraseology, and he seems to love to watch the growth of thought, as with exquisite fancy he develops his subject. I know of no book that pleases me more than the series of essays called 'Society and Solitude.' Emerson's most felicitous thoughts are here. His article on *Eloquence*, his paper on *Books*, his elegant treatise on *Art*, are of themselves gems of literary composition. One never tires of reading them. They are so thoroughly finished, and come with such grace and ease from the author, that to peruse them is like reading some favourite poem, Wordsworth's *Excursion* for instance, or Goldsmith's *Traveller*. His lecture on *Eloquence* concludes thus grandly."

'Eloquence, like every other art, rests on laws the most exact and determinate. It is the best speech of the best soul. It may well stand as the exponent of all that is grand and immortal in the mind. If it do not so become an instrument, but aspires to be somewhat of itself, and to glitter for show, it is false and weak. In its right exercise, it is an elastic, unexhausted power,—who has sounded, who has estimated it?—expanding with the expansion of our interests and affections. Its great masters, whilst they valued every help to its attainment, and thought no pains too great which contributed in any manner to further it;—resembling the Arabian warrior of fame, who wore seventeen weapons in his belt, and in personal combat used them all occasionally;—yet subordinated all means; never permitted any talent—neither voice, rhythm, poetic power, anecdote, sarcasm—to appear for show; but were grave men, who preferred their integrity to their talent, and esteemed that object for which they toiled, whether the prosperity of their country, or the laws, or a reformation, or liberty of speech or of the press, or letters, or morals, as above the whole world, and themselves also.'

"Doesn't Emerson resemble Thoreau a little?"

"Thoreau resembles Emerson you mean. He was brought up alongside of Emerson and Hawthorne in Concord, and his writings at first were undeniably cast from the Emersonian mould. They were a good deal like the philosopher's; they ran in the same groove, and appeared to be similar in every way. Unpleasant people said he borrowed largely from Carlyle and Emerson, and did so without credit. Any way he

did write remarkably like his neighbour; so much so indeed, that Mrs. Thoreau, the mother of the hermit, once said to a lady friend that "Mr. Emerson wrote very much like her son." This was exceedingly delicious, when it is remembered that the reverse of this was the case. Thoreau was something of a pretender, a semi-charlatan in literature. He was a good deal of the showman, and there was a vast amount of pretence about him. His life was a sham—a mockery. He essayed to be a hermit, and went off into the woods to reside. He wanted to study nature, away from the haunts of men. He wanted to commune with himself, so he shut himself up in the woods, and waited daily the hamper of toothsome provisions which his kind mother sent him. He had thus the life of a hermit without any of its inconveniences or discomforts. While in the woods he made some wonderful discoveries, some of them quite equal to Mr. Jack Horner's; the most notable of these were, the habits of the squirrel, which he was foolish enough to print. Thoreau, however, before his death, published some clever things, but few people believed in him, and he was always looked upon with suspicion. He held some 'advanced' views, and possessed some originality, but he was so affected and unreal with it all, that few were found willing to believe in him, or in his philosophy. He left behind a few admirers, and they pretend to think Thoreau was ill-used and misjudged, but the circle is very small indeed."

"He was a fair essayist, rather smooth in his composition, not always original, and a somewhat soured thinker. I cannot believe he was ever really in earnest in his life. He was a very insincere man, full of vanity and self-conceit. He was cynical and unjust, peevish and morose by times. He has done some pretty fair work I'll admit, but he has also done some things that are positively injurious as well."

"Now I rather like Thoreau, and think you are too severe on him, because he committed a few errors in his youth. He did not steal from Emerson, but only borrowed some of his thoughts. The language in which he framed them was his own. He had an original mind, and the writings of his latter days are exceedingly happy. His thought, too, is vigorous, and his style is certainly terse if not delightful. I think you are hasty in denouncing Thoreau in so wholesale a manner. He was a man of good parts, and he will be remembered as one of Concord's great men."

"Well, have it as you will, perhaps I am a little prejudiced, but I hate plagiarism in any form, and more particularly when the pirate brazens it out. And next to that, sin, I detest affectation, and Thoreau had that fault if he hadn't the other. In England Thoreau has few readers, while Emerson is almost as much appreciated as Carlyle and Matthew Arnold. Indeed the men of the Carlyle school of thought

rank Emerson as one of themselves. They hold some, though not all, characteristics in common. A few years ago Emerson went over to England, and visited a number of his old friends. His health was not good, and he appeared jaded and worn. His manner was still sweet and gentle, however, and his conversation was as brilliant as it was a quarter of a century before. He was with Thomas Hughes a good part of the time, and when the author of those glorious Tom Brown books was made President of the London Workingmen's College, Mr. Emerson attended the inauguration and made a short speech. He was greeted with a burst of applause so hearty and genuine that the building fairly shook. In the course of his remarks he made some excellent hits, and these were well taken by the audience. Here he met the sturdy stroke-oar of the Oxford crew, Mr. Darbishire, who pulled against the Harvards, and worsted them. This gentleman pleased Emerson very much. He was frank, off-hand, and highly cultured, and good-humoured withal. By a happy quotation in resonant Greek, he won at once the esteem of Emerson, who appreciated the saying, 'neither a ship nor a tower was strong unless there were men in it.' Mr. Darbishire was the Professor of Physiology of the Workingmen's College at this time. Hawthorne was the other great American who had visited this seat of learning with Mr. Hughes, during the Presidency of its founder, the Rev. Frederick Denison Maurice, brother-in-law to Mr. Hughes. The story-teller's speech on that occasion was in his felicitous style. Indeed he was more unreserved than usual, and spoke with epigrammatic pungency and fullness. He quite warmed up before his hearers, and every one seemed greatly pleased with him and his effort. His fame was then at its height, and his books were beginning to be read in England. When it was known that he was the author of the charming pen pictures which had interested so many, there was much enthusiasm, and the novelist received a perfect ovation at the close of his address."

"A little over three years ago Mr. Emerson returned home from his European trip, refreshed in mind and in body. A few days after his arrival he gave an informal reception at his pleasant home in Concord. The attendance was large, for all wanted to do him homage. All wanted to welcome the kindly poet, whose big, throbbing, generous heart took them all in. Little children sat upon his knee, and others played about him on that genial day in June. Boys and girls romped before him on the fresh grass, and happy men and women vied with one another in paying their respect. They saw not the philosopher and bard, but one of themselves only. A simple-minded man and true friend. It was a day not to be forgotten, but always to be remembered."

"On the lecture platform Mr. Emerson is sometimes eccentric, and his manner is apt to startle the stranger who is not familiar with his

peculiarities. If his audiences know him, it is all right, but if they do not, he very soon drives them into little fits of impatience, and every one speedily grows nervous and excited, not so much from what he says, but on account of the way in which he says it. His lectures are usually prepared on small slips of paper, and occasionally these become separated or entangled in some way. The lecturer, nothing daunted, stops short and deliberately proceeds to sort his papers out. When they suit him, he goes on with his discourse until another mishap occurs. This happens quite often, but no one seems to mind it, and the audience waits patiently till he is ready to continue on again."

"I should think an accident of this kind would bother him greatly."

"It does not appear to. At all events he keeps right on, just as if nothing had gone amiss. I love to hear him lecture. His voice is full and round, and his utterance is distinct and musical. He has always a pleasant way with him on the platform, and he is so earnest and real and convincing, that he has the audience with him from the start, and he keeps them till the end. He never gets flighty, nor soars upward with a burst of eloquence like Carpenter or Chapin, but is rather measured in his style, and depends more on his sincerity or the elegance of his phraseology than upon oratorical tricks. His lectures are properly talks, and are effective from their very simplicity. He is one of the most popular platform celebrities in New England, and his addresses at the Boston Radical Club are models in their way. Emerson's reasoning faculties are very great. He has many friends and disciples among all classes of society, and his influence in both hemispheres, among educated people particularly, is wide-spread. He holds liberal views on all subjects, and the vast amount of learning which he is able to bring to bear on them gives weight and effect to his opinions. He is one of the American authors who will live. He has such a happy way of saying charming things, that he is endeared to every heart, and every one loves him for the good and noble deeds which he is always doing. He is almost as many-sided as the wit, humorist, essayist, novelist and logician, Wendell Holmes."

"Let us consider Holmes at our next meeting. I have just been reading for the third time his 'Guardian Angel.'

"And I, his Autocrat, for the fourth—by all means let us have the Doctor."

"Very well, Holmes will occupy our third evening."

GEO. STEWART, JR.

NEW YEAR'S GREETING.

Canada to Her Children.

Hearken, children, to my greeting,
Borne upon the wild winds beating
Onward now, and now retreating
Back and forth o'er sea and strand;
Listen to the words they bring you,
Listen to the songs they sing you,—
Songs I taught the winds to wing you,
Bring you, sing you, through the land!

Floating o'er each frozen river,
Where the sunbeams glance and quiver,
Do the wild winds wail, and shiver
Out my greeting unto thee;
And across the misty meadows,
Shrouded now with snowy shadows—
Over mountains, moors, and meadows,
Do they sing this song for me.

Soft at first and sadly sighing,
While the old year, fainting, dying,
Gasps the last few moments flying
Ere it sinks among the dead!
Then with joyous notes outwelling,
Over hill and valley swelling,
Trills the wind triumphant, telling
Forth the greeting that I said:

"Gone the old year is forever,
Floating down Time's rapid river,
Back unto its ghostly giver,
With its freight of joy and woe
Printed plainly on its pages,
To be read throughout the ages,
By the criticising sages,
To the great world as they go.

And the new year now is living,
And its new-born moments giving
Unto ev'ry mortal living
Chances to redeem the past;
Let each one be up and doing,
And some noble cause pursuing,
That this year may bear reviewing,
Better far than did the last.

All and each of ev'ry order,
Dwelling now within my border,
Do I call to quell disorder,
With a never-failing aim ;
Though your hair be gray or golden,
Though your heart be young or olden,
Unto you I am beholden
For the honour of my name.

And the floating of my banner,
All depends upon the manner
That throughout my mighty manor,
You my children fight for right.
And my honour, and my glory,
And the glory of my story,
When the present time is hoary,
All depend upon your might.

Onward, upward ever going,
With my flag above you flowing,
Bravely on the breezes blowing,
Press your steadfast way along.
Armed with strong determinations,
High among the highest nations,
There to vent your aspirations
With the noblest of the throng ;

'Till a beacon, brightly beaming,
Of a rare and radiant seeming,
May Canadian glory gleaming,
Spread its splendour o'er the world ;
And with England upward scaling,
In the fight for right unfailing,
With a courage never quailing,
May my banner be unfurled !

And when life at length is ended,
And your bodies have descended,
And your dust with dust has blended,
May the New Year's Day above,
From all sin and sorrow riven,
Unto each and all be given,
Of the endless year of Heaven,
With a greeting full of love."

C. E. JAKEWAY, M.D.

Stayner, Ont.


A MERRY CHRISTMAS
AND A HAPPY NEW YEAR
WAES HAEL
SERVANT RIGHT
HERE'S GO
STUFF HIM & ROAST HIM
TURKEY IN DIFFICULTIES
A BUMPER AT PARTING
TURKEY RHUBARB TO FOLLOW
A PAIR OF GOBBLERS
WE WONT GO HOME TILL MORNING
A CHRISTMAS CAROL
THE MISTLETOE BOUGH
A STIRRING EVENT
ALONE IN THE DESSERT
A CHRISTMAS PIG
CHRISTMAS CHEER
BONED TURKEY
OH! PRESERVE US
PLUMS
CURRANT
EVENTS
DRESSING A GOOSE
DESIGNED AND LITHOGRAPHED BY ROLPH, SMITH & Co, TORONTO

WHEN THE SHIP COMES HOME.

A CHRISTMAS STORY.

BY WALTER BESANT & JAMES RICE,
Authors of "Ready Money Mortiboy," "The Golden Butterfly," etc., etc.

CHAPTER I.

RELEASE.

A CONVICT! That is what I was in the year 1851—a convict, with a sentence on my head of twenty years' penal servitude, fifteen of them still to elapse, for forgery and embezzlement, the crime having been committed under circumstances (as the Judge remarked) of the most revolting and exaggerated ingratitude—a convict in New South Wales.

It seemed to me at the time, and it seems to me still, but a small thing for which I received a remission of the unfinished term of years, compared with the thing for which I was found guilty and received my sentence. There was a rising, a sudden and purposeless rising, among the convicts, and, at a critical moment, Heaven in its mercy put into my head to do what they called an heroic deed. It saved the lives, they said, of the governor and one or two prison-wardens, and it gave me my freedom. Let us say no more about it.

My freedom! What did that mean to me? Let me try, bitter as is the recollection of that time, to recall something of what it meant, something of what my prison-life had been.

I was in prison for five years and three months. When my servitude began, I used to lie sleepless at night; sometimes stupidly wondering; sometimes moaning in agony of misery; sometimes praying for swift and speedy death; sometimes asking bitterly if prayer were any use, if there was anyone at all to hear and pity outside the white stone wall; sometimes meditating on some possible mode of suicide to end it all—because, you see, I was innocent.

At the beginning of my imprisonment, when I slept, my thoughts would fly back to the happy days of liberty. I saw myself at school; I was visiting my patron, master, and benefactor, Mr. Baldwin, to whom my dead father had been a faithful and trusted servant. He questioned me, according to his wont, on my progress in the classes; he patted me on the head when I showed him my prizes; and when, at sixteen, he took me away from the school, where he had paid for my education, it was to give me a desk in his counting-house, with the promise of advancement should I deserve it. As the years went on, I saw myself pushed up with as much rapidity as was fair to others. Responsible work was

put into my hands. At twenty I enjoyed such confidence as the head of a great City house could bestow on a young clerk, and I was allowed such a salary that I could live comfortably, and have my little sister Ruth—my only sister—to live with me. When my dreams reached this point I generally awoke with a start and a rush of thoughts, confused at first, but swiftly resolving themselves into the ghastly truth. For then followed the dreadful end—my good old master in the witness-box, telling, with sobs of a broken voice, how he had loved and trusted me; the immediate and unanimous finding of the verdict; the voice of the judge—cold, stern, never to be forgotten—stating that, in the face of the facts before him, he must make a signal example of as black a case as had ever been revealed in a court of justice. The sentence of the court would be twenty years of penal servitude. And after that my little Ruth—oh! my pretty, innocent, helpless little sister of ten—weeping before me, when she came to take her leave of me, and I not able to do anything—not the least single thing—not able to say any word, not the least single word of comfort—too miserable even to assert my innocence! I cannot bear even now to think about it. For I was innocent.

After a few months of prison-life I left off dreaming of the past. Then the present was with me, night and day—a present without joy, hope, or uncertainty; a present without pain, shame, or suffering, save for the leaden weight of degradation which never leaves a prisoner. Yet no open sense of disgrace, because there were none to look in my face and shame me with a glance. You do not feel disgrace before a warder or an official, and yet the shame is that part of the punishment which the judge always forgets; it comes after the sentence is worked out. There was no suffering, because the day's work brought the night's fatigue, aud there was no one at fall of evening in my solitary cell to keep me awake with reproaches; but always that heavy load upon the brain, and the present, monotonous and dreadful as it was, with me night and day. I ceased in a very few months to think, to feel, to look forward. I became a machine; even the thought of my innocence died out of me by degrees. I supposed that, somehow, I must have done it—perhaps in madness, perhaps in a dream; or rather I accepted the present, and forgot the past. I even forgot poor little Ruth, and ceased to wonder what had become of her; I forgot what I had been. I was a convict; there was nothing before me but prison all my life.

The seasons rolled on; the bright sun overhead beat down upon the bare prison yards; the moonlight streamed through the bars of my window. Summer followed winter, and was followed by winter again. Outside the prison, the world went on in its quiet colonial way. No doubt, within a stone's throw of my cell, women were wooed, children

were born; there were rejoicings and thanksgivings in families, with mirth of boys and girls, and smiles of mothers. Inside, I for one thought no more of such things as love and happiness; I thought of nothing. But for one happy change in my work, I think I should have drifted downwards slowly into that dismal slough of stupid madness, once plunged in which the patient can no longer think of anything, not even his own sorrowful life, or do anything, save sit and watch vacuously the hands of the prison-clock creep round, the shadows shift across the stone floor, and the whitewash grow dull as the night creeps through the bars. That change came when I had been at Sidney a twelve-month. They put me, because I was well-educated and intelligent, into the apothecary's room. There were a few medical books of reference, which I was allowed in the intervals of work to read. And so by degrees, a new interest was awakened in my brain, and in a draggled, broken-winged fashion, I began to live again. What I read in the day I thought over at night, until I knew all that the books had to teach me. The doctor brought more books, and I read them, and he taught me things not to be learned in books. Thus I became in some sort a physician and a surgeon. Once, when I showed the doctor what I knew he startled me into a long-forgotten hope. "When your time is out," said he, "you might become an apocethary, they always want them in the coolie ships."

Time out! I felt a sudden giddiness, as the blood rushed to my head. Time out! Ah! When? For there were fifteen years yet to serve; and even with a ticket-of-leave there were nine years before me. Twenty years of age when I was sentenced; twenty-five when the doctor spoke those kindly words of forecast; I might be forty before my release could be counted on, for they are hard on forgers. What sort of a life was there beyond that fortieth year, for a man who has to begin over again, and carry such a burden of disgrace as mine.

Enough about the convict-time. I received in due course a full remission of the remaining period. When I came away, the governor offered to shake hands with me, because he said I was a brave man. I asked him to shake hands with me because I was an innocent man, and he shook his head; then I thanked him, but refused to take the proffered hand. For the sense of my innocence came back to me strong and clear, on the morning of my release. Then the chaplain rebuked me, and rightly. Why should the governor—why should anyone—believe me innocent? Only the doctor stood my friend. "I have read your case," he said, "and it's the clearest case I ever did read; either you are the forger or the devil; and since you have worked for me, Warneford, I believe upon my honour that it was the devil. But no one else will ever believe that. Good-bye, my lad, and may God prosper you." So

that I had my little mite of comfort. In all this great world there was one man who thought my assertion true. Stay—there was another man; one who not only believed, but knew me innocent. The man who did it. But who was he? For I had no enemy in the world, and there was no one whom I could reasonably suspect.

I left the prison with an angry heart where I ought to have been most grateful, for I realized more bitterly when I breathed the free air again, that, for the rest of my miserable life, I was to be a marked man. Go where I would, fly to the uttermost parts of the earth, there was no spot so retired, no place so remote, but that some echo of the past might visit it, breathing my name and my story; there would be no moment when I should feel safe from the fear that some finger might reach forth from the crowd, and point me out as Warneford the Forger—Warneford the Convict. Why, the governor said that the papers were ringing with my "heroic deed." So much the worse for me, because it would make concealment more difficult. Grateful? Why should I be grateful, I asked, for being delivered from an unjust bondage, with the stigma of dishonour branded on my brow, plain for all men to read? Time enough to think of gratitude, when I could plead before the world a proved and manifested innocence.

The city of Sydney in those days was a quiet and peaceful place, not on the way to get rich, and with little to talk about. They wanted to make much of me and my exploit; offers of employment came in; people reasoned with me that, if I stayed there, I should certainly get on; they pointed out other men who had worked their term, and stayed in the settlement, and were now flourishing and respected citizens. But I could not stay; there was no rest possible for me till I was back in London. I wanted to see the old place again. I though if I could have a quiet three months on board a ship, I could put things together in my mind better than I could do in the prison, and perhaps get a clue. Because, you see, I never had been able, from the very beginning, to put things clearly to myself. Before the trial, I had but one thing to say—I did not do it; of that alone I was certain. When my case came on, I stood like one in a dream, while the circumstantial evidence piled itself up, and even my counsel could find nothing to say for me. After the sentence, I was as a man who is stunned.

And then another thought came over me as I stood outside the prison-wall, a thought which should have softened any heart—the thought of little Ruth. She was ten years old when I left her—fifteen now. What was become of her? It had been my earnest wish that I might bring her up to be a gentlewomen like her mother before her—a sweet Christian maid as her dead mother was before her—and strong in goodness, as her dead father had been. Now—what had become of her?

And whose fault—whose fault? It was mocking grace of sunshine and sweetness of spring, it was bitterness of beauty in flowers and tender grasses wet with dew, that I saw for the first time for many years. The free air that I felt around me could bring no salve or comfort to a ruined life; it could not drive away the thought of another whose wreck was due to my own.

So the freedom which was restored to me threatened to become a curse, and, with angry heart, I shook off the Sydney dust from my feet, and started for Melbourne. I would go there; I had a little money, which I had earned by my apothecary work. I would take the cheapest passage home under another name; it might be that no one would know that a convict was on board, and so I could sit quietly during a long three-months' voyage and think. Just then I could not think clearly, because I was mad and blind with reawakened rage; and in my bitterness, I cursed the day that gave me birth. A convict released before his time! Why, if people looked at me, I knew in their heart that they were saying, "That is George Warneford, the famous forger, let off for courage in the mutiny. But anyone can see that he is a convict; that is apparent from his face." "And whose fault?" I cried in my blind anguish; "whose fault?"

As I strode along the faintly-worn tracks and silent paths of that lonely country, there grew up in me a purpose and a hope. The purpose was to hide myself when I arrived in England—to get, if possible, some sort of occupation which would leave my evenings free for thought, and to devote all that thought to the steady following up of every clue that might present itself. My hope was to stand one day before the world—my prisoner in one hand, my proofs in the other—and demand revenge.

And all that follows is the history of how this purpose got itself carried out, in what manner my hope was achieved, and what sort of revenge I perpetrated at last.

CHAPTER II.

"MURDER ON BOARD!"

I WORKED my way to Melbourne on foot, hoarding my money, as if in some vague way it was going to assist me in my purpose. Heaven help me with my purpose! In the morning I was resolute and confident. I would get back to London; on the voyage I would set down all that I could remember, to the smallest detail—every little fact of that happy, bygone time before this evil thing fell upon me. No doubt I should find

a clue at last; somehow I would follow it up, step by step, till my proofs accumulated to irresistible evidence. I pictured myself, under the glamour of that bright sunshine of Australia, standing before the prosperous devil who had done the deed—he was always prosperous and happy in my dreams—and dragging him before justice. I was myself standing before the old man—my benefactor—denouncing his readiness to believe, his unrelenting persecution when he did believe; always hurrying onwards a full and complete revenge, till not one of those who had had a hand in my unmerited ruin, should remain without his share of a cup of bitterness.

In the night I saw things in their grim reality; I saw how weak I was; I saw the hopelessness of my task; and I foresaw how I was to creep back to my native country, pardoned, it is true, for good conduct, but branded till death with the gallows tree mark of forger and thief. And at such a time I was willing to go back to my prison, and serve out the rest of my life in the apothecary's room.

Lurid hope that seemed golden, or dark despair, it mattered nothing, because, in hope or despair, my miserable life was before me—life stretches long before the eyes at twenty-five—and it had to be got through somehow.

Always, in those days, the thought of myself and my wrongs! The wrong was so great, the ruin so overwhelming, that there was no room left in my mind for any other feeling. For instance, I arrived in the colony of Victoria in the days when the whisper of gold was running like wild-fire through its scattered hamlets, and along its giant sheep-runs; but when other men's nerves thrilled at the chance of boundless wealth waiting to be picked up, I listened coldly. Again, to this day I have no sense or recollection of what the country was like through which I toiled alone, from station to station, in my resolution to get to the place where my face at least, if not my name, should be unknown. I know I walked through wild and savage districts, where there were dangers of thirst, dangers of reptiles, and dangers of treacherous natives. I believe that I sometimes slept out for days together. I know that I was always alone, except that sometimes a friendly shepherd in an up-country station gave me tea and damper. What it was like, that great continent through which I journeyed on foot, I cannot say, because I walked along with open eyes which saw not, ears which never heard, and senses which never felt anything. Only, as I said before, the light and sunshine witched me into confidence, which the darkness tore away. And the agony was like the agony of Prometheus when the eagle tore away his liver.

I think in those days I must have been mad, for, if I had not been mad, I must have known that there was still one heart, somewhere in

England, beating with love for me, one voice going up in prayer for me day and night. But if I thought of Ruth at all, it was to remember how my ruin was hers, and it made me more fiercely mad.

It was not difficult at Melbourne to get a ship bound for London. The harbour was full of ships, whose crews had deserted and gone off to the gold-fields. Now and then the captains had deserted their ships as well. They all seemed bound for London, because the port of Melbourne was then a very little place, and its trade was small; the trouble was that there were no crews to carry back the ships. I had to cast about and wait. I was the only man, I believe, in all that colony who neither looked to find gold for himself in the diggings, nor tried to make money out of those who were starting for the diggings.

After a few weeks of restless waiting—each day that kept me from a visionary revenge was a day lost—I discovered that a vessel would probably sail immediately. I got this information, in an indirect way, from a man whose business it was to plunder the diggers at starting. He was a great scoundrel, I remember, and I used to compare him piling up money hand over hand by dishonest tricks and cheatings, with myself, the released felon of a blameless life. He asked me no questions, either where I was from or whither I was going. He took the money for my board, and he bade me hold myself in readiness for a start; and one day I got the word and went on board the clipper sailing vessel Lucy Derrick, bound from Melbourne to London. I was a steerage passenger, the only one, because no other poor man in his senses would leave Melbourne at such a time. There was only one saloon passenger, and she, was a young lady; of course no one but a lady would leave Melbourne when the very air was dry with thirst for gold. She was under the charge, I learned, of the captain, and was sent home in order that her father, a lawyer by profession, might go up to Ballarat and make his fortune in the gold-fields.

The captain was a gray-headed man of sixty-five or so, a man with a face scarred and scored in a thousand lines. It was a hard and stern face. This was well, because he had hard, stern work before him. The chief officer, a young fellow of five-and-twenty, on the contrary, showed in his face, which was mild and soft-eyed, that he was not the man to command a crew of roughs and rowdies.

I say nothing against him, and in the end he fought it out to the death. There was a second and third mate too—one was a boy of sixteen, not yet out of his articles, the other was a rough, trusty fellow, every inch a sailor. As for the saloon passenger—she was to be my queen and mistress. Helen Elwood was her name. Her father brought her on board half an hour after I embarked, and took a hasty leave of her. I noticed neither him nor her, because, in truth, I was still dazed

by the long dream, in which I had walked all the way from Sydney to Melbourne—my dream of a purpose. I sat in the bows, with my bundle beside me, hardly noted when the anchor was weighed, and presently the ship spread her white sails, and we slipped away out to sea.

Then I began to look about me. The first thing I noticed was that the men were drunk ; and I learned afterwards that if they had not been drunk they would not have been got on board at all. Then I saw the captain and officers drive them to work with blows. The men were like brute beasts, but I never saw brute beasts so knocked down and belaboured ; they were drunk, but they understood enough to turn round when the officer was past, and swear savagely. On the quarter-deck, clinging to the taffrail, and gazing at the receding shores, was the young lady, all alone. At the wheel stood a man with his legs wide apart, his eyes screwed up, and his head on one side ; he was an oldish man. I put him down as the quartermaster or boatswain, and I was right. Every now and then he jerked his head in the direction of the young lady, and I knew that he was encouraging her, but of course I could not hear what he said, if, indeed, he did say anything.

All that first day the captain and the officers drove and ordered the men about as if they were so many negro slaves. When night fell things were a little ship-shape, and the men seemed gradually coming round. When I turned in the watch was set, and though neither the captain nor the chief officer left the deck, it was manifest that some sort of order was established, and that the captain meant to have things his way.

His own way it was for a month or more.

I suppose there was never got together, since ships first began to sail the ocean, a crew so utterly blackguard as the crew of the Lucy Derrick. As a steerage passenger my place was forward, and I sat all day close to the forecastle, listening perforce to the oaths with which they interlarded their language, and the stories they told. Now, as an ex-convict returning from Sydney, there ought to have been nothing in the whole scale of human wickedness unfamiliar to me. Truth to say there was very little. He who has been in a convict-ship and has made the dismal voyage across the ocean with Her Majesty's felons, has had every opportunity of learning what a hell might be made of this fair earth, if men had their own wicked way. Somehow it might have been that my abject misery at the time blinded my eyes, and stopped my ears. The voyage, with its sufferings by night, its despair by day, and the horror of my companionship, was all forgotten ; so that, as I lay upon the deck, the imprecations and foul language of the crew of the Lucy Derrick, as they got together on the forecastle, awakened me from that stupor of thought into which I was fallen, as some unexpected noise at night falls upon the ears of an uneasy dreamer, and awakens him to reality. No

one in the ship said anything to me, or took any notice of me. "It is because I am a convict," I whispered to myself. It was not. It was because no one took the trouble to ascertain who and what the only steerage passenger was. I took my meals with the second and third mates, and we exchanged little conversation. I suppose they thought I was sulky. Between meals I went on deck, and stayed there; and for want of anything to do looked about me, and watched the men.

In a few weeks after leaving land I became aware of several significant things. The first was that the officers never went forward alone, and that they were always armed; then that they were gloomy, and seemed to be watching the men. I noticed too—being so to speak, among the sailors—that they whispered together a good deal. Among them was a young fellow of five-and-twenty or so, who seemed the leader in the whisperings. He never passed another sailor without saying something in a low voice; and when he passed me, he had a way, which exasperated me, of grinning and nodding. He was a smooth-faced man, with what seemed at first to be an upward twist of the right lip. This, which was the scar of a knife-wound, caught probably in some midnight broil, gave him a sinister appearance. His eyes were close together, and bright; his forehead was high, but receding; and he looked, in spite of his sea-going dress, less like a sailor than any man I ever saw afloat. Yet he was handy aloft, or on deck; and I have seen him on a windy day astride on the end of a yard, marline-spike in hand, doing his work as fearlessly and as well as the best of them. Whatever the men whispered together, I made up my mind that this fellow was the leader; and I read, out of my convict experience, in his face, that he was as reckless a ruffian as ever shook an unchained leg outside a gaol. Other things I noticed. The boatswain, who at first seemed to spend his whole time at the wheel, sometimes gave up his post to the fourth officer, and came forward. Then there were no whisperings; but the men kept aloof from him, all but Boston Tom, which was the name of the smooth-cheeked villain. Boston Tom always spoke to him, and spoke him fair, addressing him as "Mister Croil." Ben Croil, as I afterwards learned to call him, was a man of five-and-fifty or sixty years of age; short of stature, thin and wiry; his hair cropped close, and quite gray; his face covered all over with crows'-feet; his eyes, which he had a trick of shutting up one after the other while he looked at you, of a curiously pale and delicate blue. As a young man, Ben Croil must have been singularly handsome, as indeed he was proud of telling. In his age he had a face which you trusted; and as for his mind—but we shall come to old Ben's inner-self presently. For his sake I love and respect the race of boatswains, quartermasters, and non-commissioned officers generally of Her Majesty's navy, and of all the ships, steamers, and ocean-craft afloat. For if Mer-

chant Jack is rude and rough, drunken and disreputable, his immediate superior is, as a rule, steady as a lion, temperate as a Newfoundland dog, and as true as the queen of my heart.

There was a ship's boy on board—there always is. I have heard it stated that the bodies of ships' boys are inhabited by the souls of those who were once cruel ships' captains; other people think that they are possessed by the souls of ships' provisioners, ships' outfitters, pursers, navy agents, and crimps. I do not know which is the true theory. Both sides agree that the lot of all ships' boys is miserable, that none of them ever arrive at years of maturity, and that their sufferings, while in the flesh for the second time, are regulated by the evil they wrought in their former lives. Our boy was a curly-headed youngster of twelve; not a nice boy to look at, because he never washed, and was ignorant of a comb. I soon found out that he not only knew what was going on in the forecastle, but that he went aft, and told the boatswain everything he knew; so one day I got that boy alone, while he was coiling some rope, and I said to him: "Dan, tell Mr. Croil that he may depend upon me. I know what you pretend to be so busy at the wheel for; I guess what you tell him; and I have seen you listening among the men. You tell Mr. Croil that he may depend upon me if he wants me." The boy fell to trembling all over, and he looked around carefully to see if any of the men were within hearing. As there was no one, he told me in a quick, hurried way, that if he was found out he would be murdered; that there was a plot among the men, headed by Boston Tom; and that he told everything—that is, as much as he could learn—to the boatswain, also that the men knew perfectly well that the captain and the officers were all armed to the teeth; but that they were waiting for an opportunity, and would make or find one before long, for they were all mad to be back at the gold-fields.

Now this information, which corroborated my suspicions, served to rouse me altogether from my brooding, and I began to think what a selfish, heartless creature I must be to sit in the corner, and mope over my own misfortunes, when there was this danger hanging over ship and cargo. And being, as one may say, wide-awake again, of course I remembered the young lady we had on board; and my heart grew mad to think of her falling into the hands of Boston Tom and his gang of ruffians. So I was glad to think I had sent that message, and resolved to do my own duty. However, there was nothing to do just then but to wait until I should have a message from the boatswain; so I sat in my usual place and waited.

The boy took my message, but no answer came that day at all. In the night a strange thing happened. It was fair-weather sailing, with the trade-wind blowing nearly aft, so that all sails were set, and the ship

slipped through the water without so much as rolling. I was sound asleep in the bunk, when I heard voices, as it seemed, in my ear. They were brought to me, I am sure, by a special act of Providence, for I never could understand, otherwise, how I managed to hear them. First, there fell a faint buzzing on my ear, which I, being drowsy and heavy to sleep, did not much listen to ; then I heard words plain, and I listened ; the conversation came to me in bits, but I made out enough. It was evident that the crew intended to mutiny—to choose the very next night, as I gathered (but I was wrong), for their purpose, and to carry the ship back to Australia, when they would scuttle her, and land as near the gold-fields as possible. Once there they would separate ; and so, every man for himself. And then I heard my own name mentioned, but I could not hear what was to be done with me. After that the voices were silent, and I lay awake thinking what to do next. Now, this sort of talk was not likely to make me sleep, therefore I got up, dressed quickly, and was ready, as well as broad awake, when, half an hour later, just after one in the morning, I heard steps and a whispering of men outside the door of my cabin, which was unlocked. "I'll do it at once," I heard a voice say, which I thought I knew for that of Boston Tom. "I will do it at once ; and if anybody asks after him, say he must have fallen overboard. Where's the spike ?" One of the two went away ; I heard his bare feet on the boards. I stepped lightly out of the bunk, and put my hand upon my knife—such a knife as diggers and up-countrymen used to carry—a knife that would do for any purpose ; at all events, I would sell my life as dearly as I could. The door opened, and I slipped to the side of the cabin, which, as in most old-fashioned sailing-ships, was of a good size, though, of course, not a state cabin. I could feel the breath of the murderer, as he pushed his head in, and called me. It was afterwards that I remembered how strange a thing it was he should know my real name, because I had shipped under another. "You, Warneford," he said, in a hoarse voice, "get up and come on deck. Wake up, do you hear ? Come out, forging convict, and see the captain. Sulkin', are you? Then this will wake you up." I heard a blow—two blows—on the pillows of the bunk, and stepping swiftly behind him, I found myself on the forward companion in total darkness. I knew where I was, however, and the way. As quick as thought I ran up the ladder and over the deck, breathing more freely. Here I was safe, because it was not the watch of the men below, and at least there were three hours left for consideration.

There was nothing unusual in my appearance on deck at night. The air was hot and oppressive below ; on deck it was cool. I had often stretched myself on such nights on the tarpaulins, and slept as soundly upon them as in my cabin ; no one among the conspirators would think

it strange to find me thus. Presently I pulled myself together a bit, and made up my mind, things being as they were, to go straight to the officer of the watch. He was walking up and down, a boatswain's whistle hanging round his neck. When he saw me, he held it in readiness.

"Murder on board, sir," I reported as calmly as I could.

"Ay, ay," he replied. "Very like; go aft and see the bo's'n."

It was a strange reply, but I understood, later on, that it had been already resolved to accept my services, and to trust me with firearms. So when I went aft, the boatswain pulled out a revolver, a knife, and some ammunition, which he had ready for me.

"There," he said, "do your duty by the ship, young fellow; we shall want you to-morrow night belike, or maybe sooner. But go below and turn in."

This I would not do. I waited for the officer, and begged him to listen to me again, while I told him my story.

"I take it, sir," said the boatswain, "that they may try it on to-night. It isn't a bad dodge, you see, to get the day altered a bit in case of treachery; and if you'll allow me, sir, I'll tell off the passenger for the young lady."

"Six pistols against twenty-five men," said the officer. "I think we can fight it out without waking the young lady."

But the boatswain urged that he had got everything ready for her; that she would be frightened down below, and might come up on deck in the thick of the fight, and get harmed; so that it was finally resolved to awaken her, and bring her up on deck.

"Now, mister," said the boatswain to me, "you look like a man who's got his eyes open, and his head set on right end up; you listen to me. When the young lady comes on deck, I shall put her in this boat.' There was a gig hanging to the stern davits; these were turned round in readinesss for the boat to be lowered. "If things go wrong, as they will sometimes go in this world's gear, lower away," (he showed me the rope) "and sling yourself in after her; then, if no one else comes, cut her adrift, because we shall be dead. When I whistle, or the chief officer whistles, don't wait not even for a parting shot, but lower yourself away with her, and take your chance."

The prospect of a fight steadied my nerves, and, after a careful examination of the rope, on which all might depend, and looking to my revolver, which was fully loaded and capped, I began to feel excited.

All this took time, the fourth officer was giving orders to the men on watch, which prevented them noticing me talking at the wheel; and it struck six bells, which was three o'clock in the morning, when I saw the young lady dressed, and on the deck.

"What is it?" she asked; "tell me what is wrong, Mr. Croil."

"Be brave young lady," he said; "nothing is wrong, I hope, but plenty may be. Here's the captain."

I noticed the captain's stern face as he came slowly aft, and I thought that, if the attack was made that night, some lives might be sent to a sudden reckoning. He was as steady as a rock.

"Miss Elwood," he said, "we expect a little mutiny, and we are quite ready for it; but we have asked you on deck to keep you as safe as possible. They have got no firearms, but we may have an ugly tussle. Let me help you into the boat—so. There are rugs and wraps, and you must make yourself as cosy as possible. To-morrow morning, if we get safely through the night, we will have them in irons; but if they try it on to-night, we must fight them."

The young lady obeyed with a shudder, but said no word. The chief officer with the third officer, was forward; with himself was the second mate, and behind him was the boatswain, steering the ship.

"How's her head, bo's'n?"

"Nor'-west by west, sir."

"And the trade straight as a line; the ship may navigate herself for half an hour. What's that, for'ard?" he asked, pointing.

"Mutineers," said the boatswain quietly.

"Steady all," said the captain. "You, sir"—he turned to me—"remember your post."

In the dim twilight of the starlit night, for the moon was down, I saw creeping up the companion for'ard, one, two, three, half-a-dozen black forms. With the others I watched and waited, my pulse beating quicker, but my nerves, I think, steady. Then there was a shout and a rush. We heard the crack, crack of the pistols of the two officers forward, and we saw them retreating before the twenty desperadoes, who, armed with knives stuck on sticks, marline-spikes, and hatchets, pressed onwards, with a roar like so many escaped devils. The boatswain pushed me back as I made a movement with the captain.

"To your place, sir," he said, "and remember the whistle;" but I fired my pistol once—for in the darkness I saw a figure creeping under the shade of the taffrail towards the helm. Perhaps it might be the leader' Boston Tom; but I could not see. I fired and he dropped; a moment after I heard the whistle of the boatswain. In an instant I let go the rope, and the boat dropped swiftly into the water.

In all my life I shall never forget that scene on the deck which I caught as I sprang over the side and lowered myself hand over hand into the boat. The pistol-shots were silent now, and it seemed as if, with a mighty stamping and mad shouting, there were a dozen figures fighting one, while the battle raged over the agonised forms of the dying

and the dead. Like a photograph the image was painted on my brain, and has remained there ever since. Sometimes still, after all these years, I awaken at night to hear the cries and oaths of the sailors, the crack of the captain's pistols, and to reproach myself for not having done more to save the ship. But I did my duty.

The young lady was crouched, trembling, in the stern of the boat. I reassured her with a word—there was no time for more, for almost as soon as I reached the boat another form came hand over hand down the rope, and I sprang up, pistol in hand, to meet him. But it was the boatswain; he had a knife, as he descended, between his teeth, and he held the rope for a moment in his hand. Half-a-dozen faces appeared in the blackness peering over the taffrail at him. The night air was heavy with oaths, shrieks, and groans. "Villains, murderers, cut-throats!" he cried; "you shall be hanged, every mother's son. I know your names—I've got your record in my pocket." He severed the rope with a dexterous sweep of his knife; instantly the great ship seemed half a mile ahead of us, as she slipped through the water before the strong trade-wind. The boatswain shook his fist at her, as if the men on board could see and hear.

"There goes the Lucy Derrick," he said, "as sweet a clipper as ever sailed the seas, lost through a crew of mutineering, cut-throat villains. They shall hang, every one—that's settled—they shall all hang, if I hunt them round the world."

"Where are the officers?" I asked.

"Brained, all of them—knocked on the head, and murdered. There, my pretty—there, don't cry—don't take on. If the captain's gone, he died in defence of his ship—gone to heaven the captain is, with his three officers. In heaven this minute. They've no call to be ashamed or afraid. Done their duty like men. No call; else what good expecting of a man to do his duty? And as for us, we've got a tight little craft, in the track of the clipper ships, or near it, with a supply of provisions and water, and plenty of room on this broad ocean, in case bad weather comes on. Now, mister—what's your name, sir?"

"My name is Warneford."

"Good, sir. You'll allow me to command this craft, if you please, through my being bred to the trade—not a gentleman, like you."

"Yes; but perhaps I am not a gentleman," I replied.

"Then you are a brave man!" cried the girl. "I watched you from the boat. I saw you shoot that man creeping along on the deck like a snake. And I owe my life to you, and to Mr. Croil. But, oh! it seems a poor and selfish thing to thank God for our lives, with all those good men murdered."

"Look!" cried Ben—I shall call him Ben for the future—"they're

'bout ship, the lubbers! Who'll teach them to navigate the vessel? Well, they can't sail over us, that's one comfort."

It was too dark for me to see more than the shape of the ship herself, standing out a black mass, with black masts and black sails, against the sky; but Ben's practised eye discovered that they were endeavouring to alter her course, for some reason of their own.

We were tossing like a cockleshell on the water, which was smooth, save for a long, deep swell. We were all three very silent; and presently I heard a noise.

"They are cruising in search of us," said Ben; "see, they've reefed all. Well, it is too dark for them to see us before daybreak, and if they cruise about till then—Mr. Warneford, you have your pistol!"

There was but one chamber discharged in mine; Ben looked to his own. "We shall be able to speak a boat," he said after awhile, "at far-off quarters or close; and speak her we will to a pretty tune; but, on such a night as this, they might as well look for King Pharoah's chariot as for the captain's gig. Heart up, my pretty! We'll stand by you; and in the morning we'll be off on another tack. Heart up!"

Then a curious thing happened—unlucky, as it seemed then. I have learned since—for my dear girl has taught me—to look on it as a special grace of Providence. Suddenly—having been before in a black darkness—we became as it were the centre of a great light; all round the boat there burst from the darkened bosom of the water lurid flashes of fire, the short, crisp waves, as they rose to a head, broke not in white sea foam but in liquid fire; the swell of the ocean was like an upheaval of dull red lava; the sea was crossed and seamed with long lines of fire-like lightning, but that they remained or seemed to remain constant. As the boat rocked on the heaving deep the flames, red and blue, shot from her sides; the skies, which were now overcast, reflected the light; the winds had dropped, and nearer and nearer still we could hear the dropping of the oars from the boat in search of us. It was the phosphorescent light of the Indian Ocean.

"Seems as if the Lord meant to have another life or two out of them murdering mutineers," said Ben. "Kind of beautiful, too, ain't it, miss? Lord, I've seen it off Peru, when there was no pirates and mutineers in chase, as bright as this! That was on board the Conqueror, hundred-and-twenty-gun man-o'-war; and the chaplain preached next day on the Lord's handiwork. Here they come, Mr. Warneford. Steady, and aim at the bow-oar; I take the stroke; fire when I give the word, and get the sculls ready in case of a miss."

They were about a quarter of a mile astern of us, pulling up hand over hand; because we never attempted—being in such bright light—to escape by rowing.

I sat in the bows, pistol in hand, Ben was in the stern, and the young lady amidships.

They hailed us to stop rowing. We were not pulling at all, so that no answer was necessary.

"A hundred yards, as I judge. Sculls out, and pistol ready in hand, Mr. Warneford. Don't let them run us down. Now give her headway; so, when I say 'Port,' pull with your left as hard as you know, ship the sculls, and let the bow-oar have it. Sit down, my pretty, shut both eyes, and say your prayers for me and Mr. Warneford, 'cos both on us needs them badly this very moment."

"Boat ahoy!" It was the voice of Boston Tom. "You, Warneford! You, George Warneford, convict and forger; 'vast rowing, and give us up the bo's'n and the girl, then you shall go free; if you don't, we will murder you as well as him."

We made no answer.

The boat came near. It was rowed by four oars, and—as I supposed—Boston Tom was in the stern.

"Run them down!" cried one of the crew, with an oath. All the time I was pulling quietly, so as to keep a steady way upon her.

"Port!" said Ben, suddenly.

I obeyed orders, and pulled my left. Instantly the gig swung round, and the heavy ship's boat shot past our stern; and, as she passed, Ben's pistol fired once, and a yell of anguish told that the shot had taken effect.

As for myself, I could not recover in time; but one of the four oars was disabled.

"Surrender!" shouted Boston Tom. "Easy, bow; pull, two; we'll run them down. Surrender, you convict Warneford! If you won't take those terms, I'll give you better. Come on board with me, and I'll show you who really done it, and put you ashore safe and sound. I'll give you your revenge; I'll establish your innocence; I'll——"

This time, as they were turning, I let fly without orders, aiming at the bow-oar; and I hit him somewhere, because there was another yell.

They were within three-oars' length, but lying broadside on.

"Pull back to your ship," said Ben, "pirates and murderers, lest we take more lives! We've shot enough here for all your crew. Leave us, and wait for the time when I will hang you all!"

In their haste, they had forgotten to bring the officers' pistols with them. Perhaps they could not find the powder and shot. Anyhow, there was not a sign or sound from the other boat, but the groaning and cries of the wounded men; and, after a pause, we saw the two who were left row back in silence towards the ship. That fight was over, at

any rate. They passed away from the circle of phosphorescent light in which we lay, and so into outer darkness.

Then we were silent for the space of an hour or more. The phosphorescence died away, and the stars came out again. Presently in the east appeared the first faint streak of dawn, and Ben Croil broke the silence.

"What was them words as Boston Tom addressed to you, Mr. Warneford!"

"He called me convict and thief; and he said—— No!" Here a sudden rush of thought filled my brain as I comprehended, for the first time, all the force of what he did say, and I could speak no more.

"Convict! Thief!" Ben cried. "And you as steady as the best man of us all! Done your duty like a man! Well—after that—— theer——"

Miss Elwood raised her head, and looked round in the gray of the dawn. She saw my shameful head bowed between my hands. Convict and thief!

I felt her gentle hand in mine as she murmured, "The night is far spent and the day is at hand; let us thank God for our lives, and for His great gifts to man of courage and fidelity. Let us pray to Him never to let us forget this night, to forgive us all our trespasses, and to help us to forgive them that trespass against us."

So, in the lone waters of the Southern Indian Ocean, when the sun climbed up the rosy waves, the light fell upon a group of three in a little boat, kneeling together, and glorifying God through the mouth of that innocent girl; and of the three there was one at least whose heart was humbled and softened.

"Amen!" cried Ben Croil, clearing his throat. "And now we will look about us."

CHAPTER III.

ST. PETER'S ISLAND.

WE looked about us. The day was upon us, and the sun, just risen, was already hot in our faces. The sea was calm, with a light breeze blowing from the trade quarter. The ship had disappeared.

"No sail in sight, nor any shore," said Ben Croil, looking at a pocket compass. "Heart up, pretty." That was what he always said. "There's water on board, also provisions, though not what we might wish for the likes of you. I thought it might come to this, and I victualled her. There's land on the weather bow, if the Lord let us reach it. Land—an island. St. Peter's Island, where we'll be picked up when we get

there. Mr. Warneford, sir, help me hoist the sail." We carried a mast, and one small sail: Ben managed the ropes, while I steered under his orders. But first we rigged up, by means of the spare oar, some rough kind of covering to protect our passenger; and then we sailed on in silence, wrapped in our thoughts, while the boat danced upon the waves, leaving its little track of white foam behind it. A peaceful, quiet, and happy day. Helen tells me that she was not afraid all that time, nor was I. We were in a little open boat on the open sea; we were dependent for our safety on the continuance of calm weather; we were dependent for landing anywhere on old Ben's knowledge of the seas, and recollection of the chart. He knew the latitude and longitude of the boat, making allowance in dead reckoning for the time when we left the ship, and he knew the latitude and longitude of the nearest land. I drew a rough chart from his information on the back of a letter which Helen had in her pocket. It had two places marked on it—the position of the ship Lucy Derrick at noon, September 15th, 1851, and the island of St. Peter.

It was a rough-and-ready way of reckoning, but I managed to place the position of the ship as near as possible where we left her, and Ben began to study the chart.

"Now, whether to put her head nor'-west by nor', or give her an extra point in a northerly direction, beats me quite. And there's currents which, in these little, fair-weather crafts, we ain't able to guard against, and the wind, which beats her on and off like. But St. Peter's lies over there. Heart up, pretty. We'll fetch land to-morrow, with the blessing of the Lord."

It was Ben who served out the rations and the water, of which we had a keg, besides a bottle of rum, and two or three bottles of wine, which had found their way among Ben's stores.

The sun went over our heads, and began to roll down into the west, but there was no life upon the waters except ourselves; no birds, no great or little fish, nothing to break the solitude. At a little after seven the sun went quite down, and in half an hour we were in darkness. The breeze freshened, but Ben kept up the sail, till I told him that I was dropping to sleep from sheer weariness. Then he took in the canvas, and resumed his place in the stern. Like a thoughtless and ungrateful wretch as I was, I threw myself into the bottom of the boat, and should have been asleep in five minutes, but for our passenger, who called the crew to prayers.

She was our chaplain, as well as our guardian angel; her sweet voice went up to heaven for us all as she sang the evening hymn. Then came over me—the first time for five years—that old feeling which is always new, that whether I lived or whether I died, all would somehow be

well; and with the feeling upon me I laid my tired head upon the boards, and was asleep in a moment.

It was far advanced in the night when I awoke to relieve Ben. He had stripped himself of his coat, and laid it over the shoulders of the sleeping girl, and was sitting in his shirt-sleeves. As I stepped lightly over her form to take the strings from his hand, he whispered me:

"Mate, was that true—them words as Boston Tom spoke in the boat?"

"I have been a convict," I replied.

"How did he know that?"

"I cannot tell you; I wish to Heaven I could."

"What did he mean by saying he would tell you who really done it? Done what?"

"Done the forgery for which I was condemned. I am innocent, Ben Croil. Before God, I am innocent."

He was silent awhile.

"I can't see my way plain. One thing's got to be said. We may toss about in these seas till our water's gone; we may get cast away; we may be wrecked. I ain't so old but I can make a fight for life yet; and I ain't so young but what I may look to be called first. You may be innocent of that there forgery, or you may be guilty. No concern of mine. Innocent or guilty don't matter now; and whichever way it were, Mr. Warneford, the guilt of puttin' another man's name to a bit of paper is like the guilt of a baby crying at the wrong time, compared to the guilt of ill-treating the sweet young lady."

"I pray God," I returned, "that He will deal with me in His wrath if I should deal with her unworthily—that He will punish me afresh for the deed I never committed, if I prove myself unworthy of this charge."

"That will do," said Ben; "and now we understand each other, I think I'll turn in. Keep her head so. Steady."

I let him sleep till the day was high. When the first cold breeze of the morning touched our lady's face, she opened her eyes, and presently sat up beside me, and we talked.

That is to say, she talked. She told me about herself, how her mother was dead in England, and her father had taken her out to Australia five or six years ago. He was a barrister by profession, but he had no practice, and a very little money. So he went to Melbourne, bought a little piece of land with a log-house on it, and tried to practice there; only no clients came to him, or very few, and it was an uphill battle he had to fight, then came the gold fever, and, like the rest of the world, he would be off to the diggings to make his fortune, while his child was sent off home out of the way.

All this history took a length of time to tell, and before it was done old Ben woke up with a start. He looked round the sea, as if to make quite sure that we had not gone to the bottom in his sleep; and then nodding cheerfully to his charge and to me, began to scan the horizon to the north and north-west.

"Land!" he cried, pointing to what seemed a little bank of cloud, as big as a man's hand, rising out of the circle of which we were the centre. "Land ahead of us. Land thirty miles off. Heart up, my pretty, and a double ration for breakfast. Now, Mr. Warneford, the breeze is light, but we'll up sail and make what running we can. Maybe by noon we must get the sculls out."

Our captivity in the boat had been too short for us to feel any of the sufferings or disappointed hopes, which make the story of a shipwreck so often tragic. We had suffered nothing beyond exposure on a summer sea for four-and-twenty hours. But the certainty of a speedy deliverance paled my cheek, and brought the tears to Miss Elwood's eyes.

"Let us have morning prayers," she said; "and thank God for this deliverance."

Ben Croil nodded. At the same time he cut an inch or so of tobacco for a fresh filling, and winked at me as much as to say that we were not out of the wood yet.

We were not, indeed.

The land, as we drew nearer, seemed a long and low islet, without any hills, and covered with some sort of low-lying vegetation. It was less than thirty miles from us, because while it was seven in the morning when it became visible, by ten we were within a mile, beating about for the best place of landing.

"The island of St. Peter?" said Miss Elwood. "I never heard of that island; tell me about it, Mr. Croil."

"No one ever heard about it," said Ben, "except them as made the charts, because no one never goes there. But they pass by, do the ships, and they will pick us up. It may be to-morrow; it may be in a year's time. It may be in ten years. The whalers have been known to touch there, so there must be water; and where there's water there's birds, and where there's water there's fish; and so what I says again is, Heart up, my pretty. Luff, Mr. Warneford."

There was a little creek, up which Ben steered the boat; it opened into a round bay or harbour, capable of holding half the ships in the world. On either side was the land, not in cliffs or hills, but in a low table-land. In one place a little cascade, ten or twenty feet high, fell into the blue water, with a rainbow hanging over it, and in another we saw the remains of a rude log-house, built out of boat-planks. To this spot

we steered, and landed on a point of gray sand, up which we two men pulled the boat high and dry above the tide. There we disembarked our young lady. The first thing was to visit the log-house. The door had fallen from its rude hinges, which had been of leather; there had been a rough kind of window-shutter, which now lay on the ground; and the roof, which could never have been weather-tight, was built up with planks, of which half-a-dozen had been blown off.

We looked inside.

On the floor lay a skeleton. Dressed in rough sailor's clothes, the hands in gloves, the feet in great boots—a skeleton. He lay with his head upon his arm, as if he had given up the ghost painlessly. Beside him were a chair, a rude sort of table, and a bed. Shelves had been rigged up in the walls of the house, and on these stood stores. There were bottles still full of rum, tins of provisions, cases of biscuits, cases of candles—all sorts of things.

We stood looking in horror at this spectacle of death, which greeted us on our landing, as if it were a bad omen.

"Dead," said Ben Croil. "Dead this many a day; and no ships touched here all the time. Well he's left his house to us, Mr. Warneford; we must bury him somehow."

"And are we to live here—here—in the same house?" cried Helen. "Oh, it will be like living in a charnel house."

So it would; but what were we to do?

Finally we hit on a compromise. We would take down the framework, when we had buried the skeleton, and rebuild the house farther off. We looked in the dead man's pockets—there was not a scrap of paper to identify him by, not any morsel of writing anywhere, to show who he was, and what had been his history.

Ben Croil took the boots, the overcoat, and the gloves, as well as a watch and a purse, containing some English money. Then we dug, with the aid of a two-inch board, in the sand, and laid the poor bones to rest until the Last Day. When we came back from our dreary job we found that Miss Elwood had been weeping; at least the tears stood in her eyes; but she brushed them away, and made herself helpful running backwards and forwards to the boat and bringing up everything that she could carry.

Our house was not finished for several days; but we made a tent for her, and slept in front of it ourselves, so that no harm might come to her except over our own bodies. In the day time we were busy building. We found a bag of tools, part of the bequest of poor Robinson Crusoe, which came in handy, as you may believe; and on the fourth day we had as neat a house, twelve feet high, and in the inside fifteen by ten, as you could expect to find. There was but one room; but we made

two at night, by a curtain made out of the boat's sail. And when the house was finished, we sat down, and asked ourselves, What next.

Miss Elwood, while we were building, explored the whole island. There was not much to explore. It was, as near as we could make out, a mile long by half-a-mile broad. There were two springs in it, one of which formed the little stream which poured its water into the bay where we landed. There were multitudes of sea-birds running and flying about the place, whose eggs we took for our food. There was a sort of wood in one place, the trees of which were so blown down and beaten about by the wind that none of them were more than ten feet high, while the branches were interlaced and mingled together in inextricable confusion. The middle part of the islet was, in fact, lower than the edges, and covered with grass ; and at the western point there stood, all by itself, a rock, about forty or fifty feet high, round which hovered and flew perpetually myriads of birds.

I found a way to the top of the rock, and planted there our signal of distress—a long white streamer flying from the mast of the boat, which we managed to stick pretty firmly into a cleft of the rock.

This rigged up, we settled down to our new life.

The manner of it was as follows :

We began with morning prayers, said by our chaplain. Then breakfast. Then in fine weather, Ben and I went fishing in the bay—not far from the land, you may be sure, because Helen begged us, with tears in her eyes, not to risk being carried out to sea, and leaving her alone upon the island. When we had luck, we would bring home enough fish for dinner and breakfast too. On such days we were sparing with our stores. Then for dinner, besides the fish, we had sea-birds' eggs, strong in taste but not unwholesome, boiled or fried ; and sometimes, to vary the diet, we knocked down the birds themselves and roasted them. For firewood we had our little coppice to hack at. Our supper was the same as our dinner ; and, as the evenings soon grew cold and chilly, we used, after supper, to sit all three together round the fire of logs, and talk till Ben gave the word to turn in. Then evening prayers and sleep till dawn.

Sitting before the fire in these long evenings of winter, when we did not care to waste our little stock of candles, it was natural that we should get to know each other, and it stood to reason that I should be asked to tell my story over and over again. At first I could see that old Ben distrusted me. A convict, he thought, must needs be a thief. Else how should he be a convict ? He trusted me, however, with the young lady ; he could depend upon me for my share of duty. But that story of innocence was, for a long time, too much for him ; and it was a joyful moment for me when, one evening, Ben held out his hand to me.

"Theer," he said, "I can't help it; I've tried hard to help it, but I can't. My lad, you are as innocent as I am. You could not steal if you were to try. Show me the man as says you could!"

I went through it all from the beginning, picking up a thread here and a forgotten detail there. Miss Elwood, listening, was putting it together, until she knew as much as I knew myself.

Ben Croil, taking small interest in the details, contented himself with the main facts. It was enough for him that a great crime had been committed, and the wrong-doer never punished. While we talked in those long winter evenings, he sat silent in his own corner, with his head against the wall, until the time arrived when he could smoke the one half pipe which he allowed himself for a daily ration.

And the story came to this. I tell it here because it was told so often during our stay on the island.

On Friday morning, August 18th, 1846, I went as usual to the office in Lower Thames-street, being then a clerk in the firm of Batterick & Baldwin, of five years' standing, getting on for one-and-twenty years of age, in the receipt of a salary, handsome for my age and standing, of a hundred and twenty pounds a year. I lived just south of the Borough, between the church and Kennington-common, having my little sister Ruth with me in lodgings. Ruth was at school all day, but had tea ready for me when I reached home, which happened, unless a press of work kept me longer, not later than six. After tea I went through her lessons with the child, and at nine o'clock she went to bed. In those days it was reckoned a bad sign for a young City man to be out late at night, or to smoke, or to frequent taverns; and there were no music-halls or such places. Day after day that was my simple life. A week's holiday in the autumn gave me a run with Ruth to Herne Bay or Gravesend, just to smell the sea. There were a few old friends of my father's whom we visited at regular intervals. I knew nothing of the dissipations and vices of the great city, and was as unsuspicious of them as if they did not exist. That was my life. The life of a hard-working City clerk, hoping by long years of patient work to rise to the higher levels of good salary and complete confidence. As I have said above, I had already risen above the heads of some, my seniors in point of age.

Friday morning, August 18th, 1846, I was at the office door when the City clocks began striking nine. I was at my desk before the last stroke of the last clock had ceased. At ten I was sent for; Mr. Baldwin, the chief partner, wanted me. He was busy when I went in, and hardly looked up. He had a message of some importance to give me, which it would have taken time to write. He explained the circumstances at full length, and instructed me as to the form in which I was

to set them forth. He was a precise gentleman, and liked to have things put in language as definite as possible. When I quite understood what I was to say, and how I was to say it, I asked him if there was anything else I could do for him. He looked round, and taking an envelope which lay at his elbow, half opened it and handed it to me.

"You may cash that little cheque for me, Warneford, if you will be so kind," he said. "I will take it in gold."

I took the envelope, without looking at the contents, and went away.

After executing my first commission, and receiving a satisfactory answer, I returned to the office, and my foot was on the threshold when I suddenly remembered the cheque. It was lucky, I thought, because Mr. Baldwin was in the clerks' office, and with him a gentleman, who I remembered afterwards was one of the partners in the firm of Sylvester, Cayley & Co., our bankers. I ran to the bank as fast as I could, threw the envelope across the counter, and said, "Gold, please," as I pulled out my handkerchief and wiped my forehead, for the day was hot.

The clerk opened the cheque, looked at me with surprise for a moment, and then left the counter, while he went first to the door, and said something to the porter, and then walked into the inner room. He came back to me after two or three minutes, and said, "You must go inside, please; go quietly. It's all up at last."

Now I declare that I knew no more what he meant than a child, but I supposed there was some message for Mr. Baldwin, and I went into the inner room, filled with clerks, where the real business of the bank was transacted. Everybody looked at me oddly, as I walked to the end at which the partners and managers were to be found. One of them seemed to be waiting for me; he pointed to a chair.

"Sit down," he said, "and wait."

The tone of his voice was not encouraging, but I obeyed and waited. Not a thought crossed my brain that there was or could be anything wrong.

In ten minutes or so a policeman appeared, and I understood I was to go with him.

I thought it must be as a witness, and it was not till I was at the Mansion House that I knew I was arrested on a charge of forgery.

I laughed; it was so absurd that I laughed.

"Send for Mr. Baldwin," I said.

They put me in the dock for the preliminary examination. Mr. Baldwin gave evidence. He was shaken and agitated; he would not look me in the face. He broke down once or twice with emotion, but his evidence was clear. It had been discovered a day or two before that a system of embezzlement, by way of forgery, had been in practice for

some months. The signature of the firm had been forged by some one who knew how to imitate the handwriting of Mr. Baldwin. A sum—in all amounting to upwards of nine hundred pounds—had been thus fraudulently obtained. To stop the forger, Mr. Baldwin had been asked by the bank to add a private mark to his name. On this morning he had placed in my hands, he said, an envelope containing a cheque for twelve pounds, with his signature having the private mark, and he had asked me to cash that cheque at the bank. He swore positively that he had drawn that cheque, and no other, the day before—the counterfoil proved that—yet the cheque I presented was for eighty pounds, and it had not the private mark.

Observe, now, how the evidence grew more and more circumstantial. I had one cheque given me; I presented another. Doubtless I must have torn up the first on the way. Then an important circumstance. I came back from executing my commission, but did not cash the cheque. I got as far as the door of the office; I was seen to look in and retreat hurriedly. Mr. Baldwin was in the clerks' room, with one of the partners of the bank. I walked fast, or rather ran, to the bank. I presented the cheque for eighty pounds in a quick, anxious way, and I asked for the whole amount in gold. Naturally it was assumed that I was going to abscond with the proceeds of my last forgery. In fact, no question at all was raised as to my guilt; that was concluded from the very beginning. The Lord Mayor refused bail, and I was sent at once to the prison, which I only left in order to be tried and convicted.

That was the story. I told it again and again, while the wood fire crackled on the hearth. Miss Elwood asked me for every detail; she talked the matter over and looked at it in all its lights, but she always came back to one point.

"Mr. Baldwin gave you a cheque which he had drawn the day before. How could he swear that the envelope had not been changed by someone else?"

And there was another point. It was assumed, though the charge was not pressed, that I had been the forger in the preceding frauds. Now no clerk could swear that I had presented any other of the forged cheques. Also it was proved in the defence that my life was quite quiet, innocent, and simple. Every hour of my day was laid open for the jury. No motive was discovered for the circumstance, no secret source of extravagance was ascertained; and it was found that the frauds had been committed by means of a cheque-book—got Heaven knows where—not that in the possession of Mr. Baldwin. No attempt was made to find out how I could have obtained another cheque-book.

But these were trifles light as air in comparison with the weight of the circumstances against me.

Always Miss Elwood came back to the same point.

"Who could have changed the envelope with Mr. Baldwin's cheque?"

I do not say that the discussion of my story occupied the whole of our time on the island of St. Peter. We had work to do all day, and were often glad to turn in soon after dark. In the summer we walked and talked outside, and we were always looking for the ship that was to give us our release.

At first we looked with certainty. Every morning I climbed up the rock, and looked round on the broad bosom of the sea. Every morning I made the same gesture of disappointment. In a few months we got to look upon deliverance as a thing possible, indeed, but far off. After two years we no longer dared to hope. In the third year we sometimes looked at one another with eyes which said, what the tongue dared not utter, "We are prisoners here for life."

Our stores by this time had well nigh vanished, save a few bottles of wine kept for medicine, the only medicine we had. Old Ben was fain to smoke a tobacco compounded of herbs which he gathered and dried. We had learned by this time the resources of our island, and knew exactly what variety it afforded, and what was best for us to eat. There was plenty, such as it was. The birds did not desert us, nor the fish; there were eggs, there was a kind of wild lettuce, there was an abundance of fresh water, and there was still a tin of biscuits for Miss Elwood in case she might take a dislike, as happened once, to the simple food of our island life. We fell into the way by degrees of arranging our days, as if there was never to be any change. For myself I almost think now that, but for one thing, I did not want any so far as I was concerned. The one thing was that I had come to an understanding with Miss Elwood. It grew up by degrees. It was long before I ventured to tell her what I felt. The words were forced from me one night when, old Ben being asleep on his stool, with his head against the fire, my sweet mistress was more than usually kind—if it were possible for her to be kinder at one time than at another—and I was more than usually forgetful of my condition. I remember—as if I should ever forget that moment!—that I took her hand as it lay upon her lap, and held it in mine while I looked in her soft, sweet hazel eyes. I saw by the look in those eyes that she knew what I was burning to say, and I waited for the least token, any hint, that I was not to say it. It was a night in our winter, the English July; outside the hut, the wind whistled and the rain fell.

I told her in three words what I had to say, and I was silent again. She said nothing, and I kissed her hand.

"Speak to me, darling, speak!" I whispered; "if it is only to forbid me ever again to tell you what I feel."

"George," she replied, bending low towards me, so that I felt her

sweet breath, and caught the glow of the fire upon her blushing cheek, "we have been together more than two years; we have learned to read each other's souls. My beloved, if you have learned to love me, who am I that I should not learn to love you in return? Tell me what is right to do. No, not now—not to-night; think it over and tell me to-morrow."

I passed that night in sleepless thought. Had I done wrong in speaking my mind? And yet if we were to spend our lives in this forlorn and castaway condition! Could Helen marry me, if we were back in Melbourne or in London? With what face could I ask it; how go to her father; how dare even to lift my eyes towards her? But here it was different; and in the morning I came to some sort of conclusion. I told her what I thought was right for us both to do. I would not accept the great sacrifice of an engagement from her. I had been wrong, perhaps, in telling her my love, but it was too late to retract that. If relief came to us speedily, she should be free; if none came within a year, we would marry on the island; but should we before that time be taken from the place, we should only marry should it please God to make my innocence plain before all the world.

She accepted my conditions. She said that she would marry me when and where I pleased, but for the sake of her father. If we got safe to England my character should be cleared, if that might be, for my own sake. She knew me, she said, and that was enough.

We were happier, I think, after that. I began almost to hope even that no ship might come before the end of the year; but one day—it wanted but a month of the time—I saw, with a heart full of conflicting emotions, a whaler steering straight for our island. Ben Croil rushed up to the signal-rock, and began waving his streamers with frantic shouts.

Helen and I looked at each other, and the tears came into my eyes.

"Helen," I said, "I am going back again to the world as a returned convict. I have lost you for ever."

"No, no!" she cried, throwing herself into my arms. "Never, George. We will work together to solve this mystery; and if it is never solved, my love and my husband, the Lord will find out a way. Only wait and trust; and if the worst comes to the worst—if we are never to marry—we shall be brother and sister always. But in all this wide world, do not forget that there is only one man whom I can ever love."

And here I lay down the pen, and leave another to tell the story of how the sword of honour was restored to me.

CHAPTER IV.

DANCING AND DEPORTMENT.

So far in the heart of the City as to make one doubt whether it has not got clean beyond the heart, and gone over to the other side, stands a street of private houses, at sight of which the rare and casual stranger wonders what manner of people they be who dwell therein. Their only knowledge of London squares and the aristocracy must be derived from America-square, to which the street is a near neighbour. Their knowledge of life must be taken from the Docks hard by, and from the Thames, which bears, within a stone's-throw of their doors, its fresh freights from India and far Cathay. They have the Tower of London for a subject of perpetual contemplation; and by penetrating Thames-street they may sometimes make acquaintance with the exteriors of those who come from the unknown glories of the western land—from the golden Belgravia and the ducal meadows of fair Tyburnia. But wherever they fare in search of the unknown and the picturesque, their lives are settled where there is a steady calm in the midst of turmoil. The outer world seems not to belong to them, nor its troubles; its fiercer joys they know not; the battle rages round them, but not in their midst; and the citizens who dwell in Yendo-street are a peaceful folk, mostly poor, and nearly all contented. Half way up the street, on the left-hand side, is a house which, exactly like the rest in all other respects, differs from them in a look of extreme cleanliness, which, with a freshness of green paint, makes it stand out from the neighbours as a house which claims the attention due to respectability of a high order. On the door is a large brass plate, on which is inscribed, "M. Lemire, Professor of Dancing, Calisthenics, and Deportment;" and on a large card in the front window appears the same statement, followed by the daring assertion that "References are permitted to the highest Nobility, Gentry, and Proprietors of Schools in the Kingdom." Side by side with this placard was another of smaller dimensions, with the simple word "Lodgings" upon it; for Professor Lemire added to his artistic pursuit the business of letting lodgings, whenever lodgers should be induced by the voice of fame, or by a calm consideration of the advantages of the situation, to settle for a time in the neighbourhood of America-square. It is proper to explain that hitherto—that is, since the hoisting of the placard, which was in a manner a flag of distress—no lodger had yet knocked at the door except one, and he had been, financially speaking, a failure. So the professor, albeit retaining the placard, thought little of his lodgings, and looked to his art for daily bread.

Art, however, at the East-end of the City makes a precarious liveli-

hood; there were a few private schools, where the professor's services were required at a very moderate remuneration, and a sprinkling of pupils could be got together to form a winter class, to which he yearly looked forward with hopes always doomed to disappointment. The dapper little dancing-master made out of all a very slender income indeed, and the family table was frugal all the year round. The professor was, in this year 1855, of which we write, between forty and fifty years of age. His father and his grandfather had been dancing-masters before him, in the same neighbourhood, when there were yet wealthy merchants living there, and dancing was a serious accomplishment. His son Rupert, he said, should try other fields; but for him—his lines were fixed. Professor Lemire was of Huguenot descent, and among the family treasures was the old sword which had been drawn at the great siege of La Rochelle; but all the warrior blood must have been exhausted at the period when the professor saw the light, for a more soft-hearted, tender, and sympathetic creature did not exist. He was a small, thin, and wiry man; he had a clean-shaven face, bright black eyes, and black hair; he dressed in black too, with clothes fitting tight to his elastic limbs; and he had one pet vanity—he was proud of his irreproachable linen. Madame Lemire was an Englishwoman, who had conquered the youthful professor's heart by an extraordinary devotion to his own art, in which, however, her success was but moderate. She was taller, and a greater deal heavier than her husband, whose genius she worshipped; she was also as tender-hearted. And she was prolific; no fewer than twelve children graced the board on which the family meals were spread, and often spread in a unsatisfactory manner. The children were all named in accordance with ancient Huguenot custom—either after old leaders of the cause, or after the Bible. The boys were Rupert, Gaspard, Moïse, Elie, and so on; the girls were Antoinette, Charlotte, Rebekah, and Marie. They were carefully instructed in the religion and language of their ancestors, so that they were bilingual, and talked French as well as English. They were also trained to consider that the queen and empress of all arts was the art of dancing; that to dance well was a gift given to few, but to be aimed at by all; and that their father was the greatest living master of the mystery. The eldest of them, Rupert, promised to surpass his sire. Before he could walk he could dance. Before he could talk he showed capabilities with his legs, which brought tears of joy to his father's eyes. Long before he knew that speech may be represented, for purposes of persuasion, history, deceit, or love-making, by certain symbols called the alphabet, Rupert Lemire could reach a foot and a half above his own height with either toe, right or left; could lift either leg—not one leg only, mind you—over the head of every boy his own height; and could treat every limb in his body as if it were an independent organ; free to

act exactly as it pleased, and unfettered by any of the ordinary laws of anatomy. He was taller by four or five inches than the father. He was eighteen years of age. There was nothing in the whole mystery of dancing which his father had to teach him; there was no harlequin at Christmas pantomimes at whom he did not secretly scoff in considering his own powers. He regarded dancing as the highest of all the arts, as has been said; and yet there was one thing wanting. Much as he loved the art, he loved the ocean more—that is, he burned to love it more, because he had never seen it; and it went to his parents' hearts to see the boy of so much promise rejoice in putting off the tight professional pants, and rush to the docks among the ships and sailors, clad in a suit of blue flannels, trying to look like the oldest of salts.

The second in order to Rupert was Antoinette. If it may be spoken of Mademoiselle Lemire with all respect, she was for elasticity and mastery over her joints almost the equal of Rupert. She was seventeen, and her function was to go to the lady's school with her father, and help in teaching the girls. She was a great favourite, because, when she could get a clear stage, and no eyes but the girls' to watch her, she would execute all sorts of impossible things in dancing by herself. A clever girl, she had received from nature a mobile and sympathetic face—a face which exactly reproduced that of the first Lemire, hanging on the wall, the banished Huguenot; this old fellow, with the face which tried to be grim and was brimming over with fun. In fact Antoinette, who was like Rupert, a dancer born, resembled Michel Lemire, formerly merchant of Saintes, as much as a daughter can resemble her father. As for the other children, they were like each other, in being one and all passionately fond of dancing. When ordinary children would have played games, the little Lemires played at dancing. When there was no school, the professor taught his children; all day long the sound of the kit was heard from the class-room, and the beating of the childish feet upon the floor, as one after the other practised, and was instructed.

There was one other inhabitant of the house, a young lady, a girl of Rupert's age, that is one year older than Nettie Lemire, and three years older than poor little Charlotte—the cripple of the family—a bright-faced, brown-eyed, brown-haired maiden, of tall and lissom figure, bright of eye, ready with speech and smile, happy in little things, the real sister of the children, the real daughter of the professor, the hand of madame. Her name was Ruth Warneford. Eight years before this date, when she was a child of ten years old, she was brought to the house by a servant, who said he came from the house of Batterick and Baldwin, that this was the child about whom the correspondence had taken place, and that the box contained all her things. So she was left. At that time a dreadful thing had happened to the child, but she was too young yet

quite to realize how dreadful a thing it was. She had lost her only brother. When she grew older and began to understand things, she comprehended that he had disgraced himself and was sent to prison; but no one told her the story. It was Mr. Baldwin, the man whose name George Warneford had forged, who took her, friendless and deserted, from the lodgings in Kennington, and sent her to Professor Lemire to be brought up with his children. He left her there because he found she was well treated and happy; and when she grew older he gave her a caution, which appeared to the little girl harsh and stern—never to breathe a word of her brother, never to think of him, and never to hope to see him again. The child obeyed, and among the other children only spoke of her brother, if she spoke of him at all, as one who had "gone away." She was grown up now, and she knew, alas! whither he had gone. He had not passed away from her heart, but he was become a name, the mention of which touched some forgotten chord, and brought a feeling of ineffable sadness upon her soul. But that was seldom.

Ruth was at work now. She was a governess, earning her own little income, and paying the good people who were her second parents her own share of the household expenses. Mr. Baldwin wished her to be independent. "You will be happier so," he said; "work is good for the soul. I hear nothing but good of you, young lady; work hard, and eat the bread of industry. If you fall into ill-health, if you meet with any bad fortune, if you fail through any misfortune, come at once to me. I wish to help you, for the sake of your father, and of one"—here the old man's voice faltered for a moment—"one who was dear to me years ago, and who promised great things; but the promise was not kept. God bless you, Ruth Warneford!"

The girl understood that it was her brother—he who was gone—whom Mr. Baldwin had once loved, and she went away shamefaced. So that the shadow of this crime rested on many hearts. The wreck of one poor human ship upon the ocean of life sometimes drags down with it so many others; the sudden storm in which George Warneford went down disabled half-a-dozen gallant craft.

So Ruth Warneford became a visiting governess. The neighbourhood of America-square would not at first sight appear to offer the most desirable opening for such a profession. But then, if your ambition is bounded by the sum of eighteen pence an hour at the outside; if you do not mind trudging a mile or two from house to house; if you are ready to begin work at eight, and to leave off at six; if you do not look for pupils more genteel than the children of respectable tradesmen; and if you have youth and hope;—you may find America-square by no means a bad place as a base of operations. Ruth not only toiled all day

when clients came, but, when business was slack, filled up her time by teaching the younger members of the Lemire family; and the earnings of the girl were useful, and helped out the income of the family. Indeed, had it not been for Ruth, the dinner of soup and vegetables must have been exchanged for the dinner of dry bread; for times were growing very hard with the professor. A dreary life for the girl! hard work from morning till night; and yet she endured it, and was happy. She had no holidays, and never went anywhere; still she was happy—happy until one day which shattered her little Castle of Delight.

It happened through her taking the post—which she thought great promotion—of organist to St. Ethelred's Church.

CHAPTER V.

MY BROTHER'S SIN.

As organist of St. Ethelred's, Ruth had the privilege of practising in the church on such afternoons as were available. She used to secure the services of one of the younger Lemires, generally Charlotte, as blower; and it was at such times her rarest pleasure to sit before the grand old organ for long hours, playing till the evening shadows turned the obscurities of the old church into deep blackness, and softened the stiff outlines of the kneeling marble figures. St. Ethelred's is a church spared by the Great Fire, and half forgotten when it was a mark of grace to destroy the images of the dead. Here lie the mortal remains of many a dead lord mayor and alderman; here, kneeling gravely opposite each other, are the effigies of knight and dame; here is a crusader with his legs crossed; here is the mitred abbot, the crozier turned away from his face to mark that he was no bishop, but greater than bishop in the administration of his immense revenues; here are monuments of all the centuries, from the fourteenth, stiff and mannered, but with lace-like delicate tracing, and once with bright colours, now all faded and forgotten, to the sprawling, tasteless tomb of the last century. There will be no more monuments in the old church, and, in course of time, the desecrating hand of the City architect will remove the venerable stones and the monuments, to make room for a new street, or to build new city offices. But foremost among the tombs at present, is that of old Alderman Sowerbutts. St. Ethelred's is, as an uneducated describer might fairly put it, two churches side by side. The scanty congregation sit in the right-hand church, which faces the altar, and in the north side stand the tombs, except a few of the older ones, which are in the south wall. The tomb of Alderman Sowerbutts occupies a large part of the

north aisle to itself. It is a striking monument, containing many tons of marble, and surrounded by gilt railings. The worthy alderman died in the year 1691, just about the period when benevolence, as shown in the establishment of almshouses and institutions of charitable education, was invented. By his will he directed that the bulk of his fortune should be expended in the maintenance, first, of houses for the reception of twelve widows of liverymen from his own guild; and, secondly, of a school where twenty boys and twenty girls, born in the parish of St. Ethelred, should receive a sound Protestant education, free of all charges. This was very noble, and pleased everybody, except the lawful heirs of Alderman Sowerbutts, who, for some generations afterwards, gnashed their teeth when they passed the church of St. Ethelred. There was another provision in the will of the testator, by which it was directed that the rector of the parish, accompanied by his churchwardens, one of his trustees, the clerk, the schoolmaster, and six of the boys, should, once a year, visit the church, open the tomb, and satisfy themselves that he—the deceased alderman—was actually there in the flesh, and not removed. Why this mortal dread of being taken out of the grave assailed the alderman, it is impossible to explain. But the fact is so, and until a very few years ago the annual procession was made with great solemnity.

The church, old as it was, standing two feet below the street level, and four feet below the level of its little churchyard, piled high with the dust of five-and-twenty articulately speaking generations, was Ruth Warneford's private sanctum, when she could spare an hour. She and little Charlotte, the lame girl, would sit in the quiet old place by themselves, alone and silent, watching the light from the painted windows play upon the deserted aisles, or talking in whispers, or the child would pump the bellows while Ruth played. They let themselves into the church by the vestry-door, and were secure against any chance visitors, while the busy city rushed to and fro among the alleys outside. No rural corner of green England, no country churchyard in the wildest country district could match the solitude and loneliness of this old City place of worship, on any afternoon in the week.

Stay, there was one visitor. Ruth Warneford kept her Saturday afternoons for organ practice; any other day's freedom was a holiday, to be sure, but a holiday which made an inroad into her slender purse. Twenty years ago the Saturday half-holiday was a thing just beginning to be talked about. Shops would not hear of it; merchants, as a rule, thought it a robbery of time due to them. Clerks hardly hoped to get it. But there was one clerk at least, John Wybrow by name, a member of St. Ethelred's choir, who must have got his Saturday half-holiday regularly. He never missed looking in at the church at four o'clock on

that day, when Ruth was playing over the hymns for the next day's service, and poor little Charlotte sat behind, plying the pump-handle, with an attentive eye to the position of the little ball at the end of the string, and listening while the roll of the mighty music echoed along the walls, and high in the rafters of the roof.

John Wybrow came every Saturday for nearly a year. It was natural that he, being a member of the choir, and their most useful tenor —in fact their only tenor—should like to try his part over beforehand; and who so able to help him as the organist? The visit might therefore be regarded as official, and performed in the discharge of duty. So far it was praiseworthy. Ruth, who was not yet eighteen when she became organist, at a salary of twenty pounds a year, at first regarded the appearance of the tenor, who was then about twenty-two, entirely in this light, being in no way put to confusion by the fact that he was young, good-looking, and of the opposite sex. Ruth had nothing to do with the foolish thoughts which such a fortuitous concurrence of qualities too often engenders. Her life was full of real business. Then, when the exercises were finished, when Ruth had played over two of her pieces, while John Wybrow sat beside her and listened, what could be more in accordance with the dictates of natural politeness than that he should walk home with her, and help little Charlotte, who had to walk with a crutch, across the streets? It was not far to the professor's, and John Wybrow having succeeded somehow in getting inside the house, grew to abuse this privilege, by staying to tea every Saturday evening. The whole family of the Lemires liked him except one. Rupert, the eldest, for some reason of his own, chose to take offence at his coming, and in confidence to Antoinette, expressed his conviction that Mr. Wybrow was a puppy.

On those evenings this simple family got through their bread and butter and tea with mirth and merriment.

And after the tea, of course, they would have a dance.

None of your meaningless scampers à deux temps, as was then the new fashion in frivolous England. Not at all. The professor, with grave air, assumed a violin in place of the usual kit, took up a position in the corner, and looking solemnly round, named the dances and the dancers.

"Minuet de la Cour—Mr. Wybrow and Miss Warneford."

Then would John Wybrow, with Castilian courtesy, lead Ruth, as grave as if she were dancing before a court, to her place, and with her go through the stately steps, while the children seated round criticised, not unkindly, but with severity. This was not a rehearsal, but a performance, and the professor permitted himself no observations. The minuet concluded, the performers sat down, amid a chorus of remarks and commentaries.

"Pas de fascination—Mademoiselle Antoinette Lemire."

Then would burst upon the ever-delighted gaze of the children, their eldest sister, in a miraculous robe of white muslin, clad in which, as in a cloud of glory, she displayed miracles of art. There were no criticisms upon her, only a rapturous round of applause, when, with parted lips, bright eyes, and panting breath, she finished the last pirouette as gracefully as Fanny Elsler herself.

"La Tarantula—Monsieur Rupert Lemire and Mademoiselle Antoinette Lemire."

"Danse des Exilés, Souvenir de la Rochelle."

This was a dance invented by the first Lemire who took to the dancing profession. It was executed first in solo, and then in full chorus, by the family altogether, assisted by Ruth and John Wybrow. Perhaps this finished the performance; perhaps there was a simple waltz; perhaps, too, at this juncture John Wybrow remembered that he had taken the liberty of ordering a few oysters for supper, and so on; the party finishing, as it began, in simple mirth and happiness, for Ruth was yet in that dreamy state of uncalculating happiness—a happy Fool's Paradise of innocence—to waken out of which is to realize one's humanity, with all its complicated forces of past, present, and future, its dangers and its passions. John Wybrow, during all these times, never told the girl that he loved her. Yet his hand-pressure grew always warmer, his voice grew always softer, his eyes rested always longer upon Ruth's fair head, and he became every week more and more the brightness and joy of her life. If this does not constitute love on both sides, what does? Yet the girl never thought of anything being said to alter the sweetness of this innocent pastoral; and the young man, for some reason, refrained from speaking the word which should break the spell.

But the spell was broken, and rudely.

It was a Saturday afternoon in early autumn. The splendour of the season showed itself on country-sides in waving fields of ripened corn, in apple orchards ruddy with their fruit, in woods where the trees seemed to hang down their heavy foliage in the still heat, as if weary with excess of pleasure. In London it showed itself by hot and glaring streets; by announcements of cool drinks in public-houses; and by a smell as of an immense bakery, where all the children's mud-pies, the cabbage-stalks, the orange-peel, and the general refuse of a great city were being cooked in one large oven. In the church of St. Ethelred it showed itself by an unwonted splendour of the painted glass. The colours which fell on the tombs and monuments were brighter than usual; the knight and dame who knelt opposite to each other, with hands clasped at head and foot of their common grave, received the crimson rays upon their heads, and lost for a while the rigidity by which

their sculptor had tried to represent dignity. The sunlight played upon the organ beside the altar, and fell in a cloud of colour upon the patient face of poor little Charlotte Lemire, who was left there alone thinking On the steps of the organ-loft sat, side by side, John Wybrow and Ruth Warneford. Mark, that he has not spoken a word of love; nor has she thought of love; yet they sit like lovers, only not hand-in-hand.

The young man had been telling the girl of places which he knows, not far away, where stretch meadows, covered with flowers from spring to late autumn—the golden buttercup, the meadow-sweet, the wild convolvulus, and the cowslip—where there are woods, and streams, and corn-fields.

"Some day, Ruth, we will go and see them. Some day, when I am my own master." He added the last words under his breath.

"Ah!" she sighed, "I have no holiday. It is wrong to be always wishing for things; but, oh! John, I do sometimes long for a little change—just a few days in the country, such as I used to have when I was a little girl, before——long ago. It would be something to think of in the winter evenings, you see, especially if I thought I could go again."

"Poor Ruth! poor child! I wish I could do something for you; but I cannot——yet. I am only a clerk now. Will you have a little more patience?"

"Now, you will think I am complaining. But indeed, indeed, I am not. I am very happy. I am sure I ought to be. Only now and then, when the sun is hot and the streets are close, and when young gentlemen like Mr. John Wybrow tell me of beautiful places, where rich people can wander and see sweet things——why then, you see, it is hard not to feel a little, just a little discontented. And if I am discontented what ought poor little Charlotte to be?"

"Poor Charlotte!"

"Look at her, John. She will sit there as long as I let her. To be in the quiet church soothes her nerves; she cannot bear the noise of the other children—she is happiest here. If I were a cripple, do you think I should be as patient as that poor child?"

Ruth shook her little head with a gesture of self-reproach.

What further line the conversation might have taken cannot be safely asserted, because it was then interrupted by a great trampling of feet, and noise of men in the church porch.

"It is the alderman's day," said Ruth. "Let us sit here quietly, and we shall see it all. The railings of the tomb are opened."

The doors were flung open, and there marched up the aisle a procession. First came the beadle, with the gold stick of office. He was followed by the rector in full canonicals. After him, somewhat mar-

ring the effect by an ignoble limp came the clerk. After the clergy followed the laity, consisting of two trustees, the schoolmaster, and a tail of six boys. A stray gentleman, not belonging to the procession, came in after the rest, and at sight of him both the spectators on the steps of the organ-loft started, and one of them, the young man, changed colour.

"There is Mr. Baldwin, my benefactor," said Ruth quietly. She did not look up, or she would have seen John Wybrow turn pale and then flush crimson.

Mr. Baldwin, leaning on a stick, seemed to be watching the ceremony at the monument. This took ten minutes or so, when the procession re-formed, and marched solemnly out of the church again.

An old woman, one of the almshouse widows, left the doors open for the stranger who remained behind.

Mr. Baldwin, who did not appear to be in any hurry, began to look round the church, taking the monuments one by one.

"I must wait till he comes this way and speak to him," said Ruth.

John Wybrow bit his lips, but said nothing. He stood upright, arms folded, in an attitude which might have meant defiance.

The old gentleman, adjusting his glasses, came slowly along the north wall, reading the inscriptions, and looking at the tombs. Ruth watched him with a smile of amusement.

"How surprised he will be to see me here," she whispered.

He was surprised. In his surprise he looked, when he came upon the pair, from one to the other, dropping his glasses.

"John! Ruth Warneford!" he said, "what is this? what is this?"

Ruth stepped forward with a pretty laugh. "You are in my church, Mr. Baldwin," she said, "I am organist here."

He looked more surprised than ever. Angry too.

"Explain this, John," he said, without answering the girl.

Then Ruth began to feel that there was something wrong.

"There is nothing to explain, sir," said John. "This is Miss Warneford, whom you know. She is organist at St. Ethelred's. I sing here in the choir."

"So," said Mr. Baldwin, "that is all, is it?"

John Wybrow hesitated for a moment. Then he stepped forward to where Ruth was standing.

"No, sir," he said, "this is not all. This young lady knows me by my name, but she does not know that I am your nephew—that fact I have never told her. She learns it now for the first time."

"You learn it," repeated Mr. Baldwin to Ruth, "for the first time?"

The words rang in the girl's ear like a warning.

"In your presence, sir, and in this sacred place, I venture to tell her, also for the first time, that I love her."

"That you love her!" repeated Mr. Baldwin. He took a seat on the steps of the pulpit, and looked at the girl with eyes of pity. "That you love her! Poor girl! Poor girl!"

"And in your presence I ask her if she will marry me. Ruth, dear Ruth, forgive this rough speech, but my uncle forces it upon me. I know your goodness, your patience, and your trials. Come to me, my darling, and forget your trouble in a husband's love. Ruth, come!"

He had taken her by the hand and would have drawn her towards him, but she looked in Mr. Baldwin's face.

"Your nephew?" she faltered.

"My nephew," he replied.

"Ruth, my darling, come!"

She might have gone—she might have taken that single step, and fallen upon the breast that was yearning for her, but for the look in the old man's eyes.

"Remember!" he said solemnly.

Ruth snatched her hand from her lover.

"Do not remember," cried John passionately. "You have remembered long enough. It is cruel to remember longer. What has the past to do with the present?"

"Everything," said Mr. Baldwin, sadly—"everything. Ruth Warneford, I do not blame you. It is not your fault that my nephew has met you. It is his that you did not know what kind of conduct his has been towards you."

"What conduct his has been!" repeated the young man fiercely.

"Ask that in ten years' time, if I am living, and if you have found time to reflect. Girl! between you and my nephew there stands a ghost—the shadow of a great wrong."

"Alas! I know it," sobbed Ruth, "I know it."

"There is no ghost. It is the dream of a morbid brain, dwelling too much on things long past and forgotten," said the young man. "Ruth, come out of the shadows into the light."

"What was done by one of your blood eight years ago, separates you from me and mine unto the third and fourth generation," said the old man.

"What was done yesterday matters nothing to-day," pleaded the young man. "Ruth! do you think that I have not known your story? Long the tale of George Warneford has been familiar to me—since I was a boy at school. What has it to do with you and me, and with our love?"

"It stands between you," said his uncle.

All the time Ruth looked steadily at the old man. There was no hope there, only a stern justice, before which she trembled.

"I have been kind to you Ruth Warneford," he said; "what the world calls kind. But let that pass. Remember, however, that it pains me, even to hear your name pronounced. I shall not relax in whatever help you may want; but, I ask you in return—it is a little thing—to send this young man away."

A little thing! Why, all in a moment, when John took her hand in his, she knew that it was her life, her happiness, her all, that she was asked to give up.

She made no reply.

"The idle attachments of youth," Mr. Baldwin went on, still sitting judicially on the pulpit stairs, while the guilty pair stood before him, "the idle attachments of youth are quickly made and quickly forgotten. You will laugh at this in a month, Ruth."

"Ruth!" the other pleaded, "Ruth! remember our happy days together in this old church; our evenings at your home; the sweet talk that we have held together—are these to go for nothing?"

"What is love," asked the old man, "that is to override the most sacred obligations, and make duty a mockery? Children, could you prosper with the memory of the past ever before you?"

"The past! Oh! the past! Let the dead bury its dead," cried John. "Ruth! if you will be mine, we will turn our backs on this city and its hateful memories; we will go to a new country where no one can reproach us; we will live where the firm of Batterwick and Baldwin is not known."

"Think of it, young lady," Mr. Baldwin said bitterly. "He is prepared to sacrifice his future and his own happiness—to say nothing of me—in order to gratify his whim. Yes, sir, a whim; the fancy for a pretty face. Pshaw, sir! what do you know about goodness? Do you think I don't know that this is a good girl! Do you think I should treat her like this if I did not know it?"

Ruth took the old man's hand. He stood up as if to receive her, and she laid her head upon his left arm; perhaps it was to hide her tears.

"My mind is made up," she said; "John, Mr. Baldwin is right. I can never marry you. Heaven knows that until this day, even when I did not know that you were his nephew, I never thought of marrying you or anybody. What I feel now—that matters to no one;" she stopped herself proudly. "The disaster that fell upon me, eight years ago, is between us; we can never pass that barrier. Farewell, John, and try not to think about me any more—never any more."

"Ruth," he said, "hear me again. It is not my fault that this disaster fell upon you. It is not yours."

"No," she cried; "it is the will of heaven, and we must bear it."

He turned fiercely upon his uncle.

"You have robbed me of my wife, sir," he said, "and you have lost your nephew. This day I leave your firm. The partnership that I was to have had on my next birthday—that partnership, on which I hoped to marry the sweetest and noblest girl in all the world, you may give to whom you please. Leave your money where you wish. I will never see you nor speak to you again, unless it be to take my bride from you." He walked half down the church, leaving the girl clinging to his uncle's arm.

Suddenly a thought struck him, and he returned.

"Ruth," he said, with softened voice, "in this sacred place, before this altar, I have one more thing to say. In the years to come I shall wait for you. This foolish fancy, the persuasion of this selfish old man, who would keep alive the miserable past to poison the present, who sacrifices two lives to gratify his revenge, will pass. I shall wait for you alone, till I hear that I may come. Remember, I can marry no one but you."

He waited a moment for an answer.

The girl left her hold of Mr. Baldwin's arm, and moved to the altar. There she fell upon her knees and prayed. John Wybrow still waited. When she rose again her face was lit up by the light of the western window, which poured full upon her, by her hair lying loose about her head like an aureole, so that she looked as a saint might look.

"When what is impossible becomes possible, John; when George Warneford's guilt is changed into innocence, I shall be free to marry you. And not till then."

John Wybrow knelt at her feet and kissed her unresisting hand. Then he turned and strode out of the church.

"Brave girl! brave girl!" cried Mr. Baldwin.

"Leave me in the church," she replied faintly. "I go in and out of the vestry door. Leave me here. I have to think—to collect myself a little."

The old man looked at her with eyes full of pity.

"Forget that headstrong boy," he said; "he will be sorry afterwards for what he said to you as well as to me. We cannot undo the past, Ruth, but we may fight it down. We must bear our punishment, but we may bear it worthily, until it becomes a crown of glory. You are a good girl."

He left her. And as he walked down the aisle Ruth might have noticed, had she looked up, that his form was bowed, and that he trembled as he went. But she did not look up. She stood still, clasping her hands before her; and, when the church-door shut with a clang, she fell down upon the steps weeping and sobbing aloud. The echoes of the many-raftered roof took up her crying, and from among the silent

tombs, from the dim recesses of the darkening church, there arose a voice and a whisper as of the dead, who weep with one that weeps.

Then little Charlotte Lemire, who had been forgotten all this time, crept sorrowfully from her nook within the organ-rails and sat down beside Ruth's head, waiting.

Presently Ruth felt her little fingers about her, soothing and petting, and she looked up.

"Ruth, dear Ruth; oh! Ruth, what can I do?" cried the child.

"Nothing, Lotty." Ruth arose and put on her hat. "Let us go. Please tell nobody anything at home, only that Mr. Wybrow will not come here any more, and that I have got a headache and am gone to bed."

That Saturday night there was silence at the professor's. The violin was not brought out; nor was there any dancing; and the children were sent to bed early. Also Nettie and Lottie spent the evening, as did their mother, in tears.

CHAPTER VI.

THE PROFESSOR LETS HIS LODGINGS.

It was almost two months after the dreadful day in St. Ethelred's, when the quiet of Yendo Street was disturbed by the clattering of a cab on the stones. It stopped at the professor's, and the occupants, consisting of a lady and gentleman, with an old man of seafaring aspect, knocked at the door.

To Madame Lemire's intense surprise they asked for lodgings.

Lodgings! She remembered their first venture in that line of business, and went in search of the professor. The professor, then engaged in teaching the youngest, aged two and a half, his earliest steps, also remembered that disastrous episode in their life, and hesitated.

The lady, who was a young lady, spoke for the party.

"We are easily satisfied," she said. "We shall want three bedrooms and a sitting-room, but we require very little attendance. We will give you a reference to a respectable lawyer, and we will pay you the rent for three months in advance."

The professor looked at his wife—here was a chance—and the rent three months in advance! In five minutes the party was upstairs, and madame, with Nettie, was devising means of stowing away the displaced children.

Meantime the professor went in search of the lawyer referred to. As for his lodgers—who gave the name of Mr. and Miss Elwood and Mr. Croil—the lawyer knew all about Miss Elwood. The young lady's father

had died in Australia, at the diggings. But his little house and garden, now in the centre of a city, suddenly became great, and sold for a large sum. Yes, Mr. Lemire might depend on Miss Elwood. It was odd that he named Miss Elwood and never spoke of her brother; but that, after all, was nothing; and the professor went back with a light heart, and a full assurance of his rent for a whole year to come.

He found Miss Elwood sitting among the children, and at home with all of them; and it was very funny, the children said, that wher Ruth came in she knew her at once, and said, "You are Ruth Warneford," and then shook hands with her. Because, they said, how should she know Ruth when she did not know Nettie.

In a few days the new lodgers were so far settled in the house, that they seemed to form part of the family. The elder man, Croil by name —who slept on the second floor, and took two of the boys to share his room, when he found that they would otherwise have to sleep on the landings—was clearly an ancient mariner. He dressed in navy blue, and wore a fur cap of curious and sea-going cut. He was a little man, with soft and dreamy eyes, of a light blue; and with a very quiet manner of speaking. He generally carried in his left hand a cake of tobacco, with an open knife in his right; and he cut the tobacco slowly as he went.

At regular intervals he smoked: once before breakfast, once after, once on the point of eight bells, once after dinner, once towards tea-time, and once after. "But not," as he remarked to young Rupert Lemire, the eldest-born, "not to be for ever with a pipe in your mouth—as if you might be the stove of a lighter. That's not the way, my lad, for them as earns their bread upon blue water."

He used the pavement of the street—at such times as it did not rain —for a promenade or smoking-saloon; when it was wet, he betook himself to his own room—a place which the children soon learned to regard as the home of all unimaginable delights; and they called him, after the first day, Ben, by his special request. The last pipe of the day Ben took in the first floor front, with the other new members of the party.

They were a quiet pair. The man, about thirty years of age, looked older, by reason of the scattered grey hairs in his full brown beard, and the crow's-feet round his eyes. Across his forehead nature, or some trouble, had drawn a long deep line; the hair had fallen from his temples, leaving a wide and open brow; his lips were flexible and mobile, but they were hidden by his heavy moustache and beard; his eyes were hazel, and had a dreamy, far-off look, with a gaze as of one who waits and expects; his voice was low, and he spoke seldom.

His sister, unlike him in face—so much unlike him that you would not have been able to trace even a faint family resemblance—resembled

him in one respect, that her eyes, which were large, and of a hazel tint, had the same far-off look, and in repose gazed out upon space like her brother's, as if waiting and expecting. She was tall, and of such a figure as the Graces love; her head, crowned with its glory of brown hair, was of such a shape as Canova would have desired for a model; her face outlined as if by some poet inspired with the sister art of painting.

It was a face born for mirth and gaiety; but the gaiety had gone out of it, and left it prematurely grave. A look of care dwelt upon it forever, save when she turned her eyes upon her brother, and then the sweetest smile lit up her features, and effaced the lines of trouble round her mouth.

Observant members of the Lemire household made out, in addition to their personal note, a few other prominent facts as regards their lodgers. One was, that they seemed all three utterly careless as regarded their food. On washing days, that is, on Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday, when the mother of the family and the maid-of-all-work were engaged with the linen of the household, they accepted, not murmuring, as weaker brethren murmur, cold boiled mutton, with or without potatoes; they drank nothing but tea, coffee, or milk, except Ben, who, once a day, towards the evening, visited the nearest public-house, with an empty pannikin, which he brought back full. They went out, the brother and sister, a good deal in the day-time, and at night they always sat side by side, with joined hands before the fire, looking into it. Ben Croil at such times sat with them, his legs gathered up under his chair, his head against the wall sound asleep. Sometimes in the morning too, the pair would sit silently for hours together. Once Rupert Lemire, the eldest son, heard the lady say, after one of their long silences:

"George, if Boston Tom is living anywhere in the world, we must find him. If he is dead we must find who and what he was."

And on another occasion, Nettie Lemire, going to make the lodger's bed, saw her on her knees by the bedside, in an agony of tears, crying passionately, "Oh Lord! how long?"

There was only one other thing remarkable about the new lodgers, which was the way in which Miss Elwood sought Ruth Warneford's society. Now, at this time Ruth was melancholy, by reason of her shattered love-castle, and would fain have sat in silence; but she could not decline the invitations which Miss Elwood showered upon her, to dine with her, to take tea with her, to sit with her, to walk with her. And it was difficult to resist the kindness with which these invitations were offered, and the sympathy with which the girl was gradually encouraged to respond to these advances. Little by little Ruth found herself talking with Miss Elwood—Helen as she called her—as if she had been her oldest friend. Besides, the room upstairs was a retreat

from the chatter of the children, and a quiet evening with her new friends rested her after a day's hard work at teaching.

They got into the habit of sitting together, talking in a low voice to each other, while Mr. Elwood, a restless man, paced up and down the room in silence; and they talked as if he were not there, because he never spoke, and never seemed to listen.

And one Sunday afternoon Helen Elwood told the girl a thing which made her heart leap up, and brought such joy to her as she thought could never come again.

It was a very quiet Sunday afternoon. After dinner old Ben might be heard marching up and down the pavement of the street, on the sunny side, where the east wind was not felt. With him was Rupert Lemire, and they were discoursing—that is, Ben was discoursing—on ships, and storms, and sailors' lives afloat. Helen and Ruth sat by the fire, the latter lying with her head on the elder girl's knees. Mr. Elwood sat in the window, silent and grave, looking at the group of two.

"And you are quite alone, poor child?" Helen asked. "No brothers, no sisters?"

"I had a brother once," said the girl, colouring painfully. "But he he—went away eight years ago, and I have never seen him since. Poor George—poor dear George!"

She laid her cheek on the hand of her new friend. Helen felt the tears fall fast.

"Do not speak of it, if it pains you," she went on, glancing at her brother, who sat rigid, pale, and with trembling lips.

"Yes, let me tell you all, and then you will not say that I have deceived you. Listen. We were so happy, George and I together—only we two, you know. In the evening he came home from the City and I used to make the tea, though I was such a little thing. There never was so kind a brother, nor such a good man; because now, you see, I know what young men sometimes are. Oh, me! How cruel it all is to think of! For our happy life was suddenly stopped."

She paused a moment while Helen soothed and caressed her.

"They said he forged Mr. Baldwin's name, and robbed him of his money. How can I believe it, Helen? If it was true, what did he do with the money? And yet—and yet—I once went to a place I heard of in the City, and looked in a file of *The Times* till I found the report of his trial; and it was all so clear! He must have done it. And still I cannot believe it of my brother; for he was so steady and so true."

"And you have never heard anything of him at all?"

"Never anything at all," the girl said. "I do not know where he is, or if he is living."

"His name was George—George Warneford?" Helen replied slowly. "My dear, I think I can tell you something—not much—about him. And that little is good. There could not be two George Warnefords in Sydney at the same time. It is three years ago and more that I knew of a prisoner of that name—he was a young man of five-and-twenty——"

"George's age—he is ten years older than I."

"A prisoner for forgery——"

"Yes, yes."

"Who obtained his release and a full pardon for a noble deed he did."

"Oh, George—my brother—tell me what he did."

"He risked his life to save the lives of others; there was mutiny in the prison, and murder. Desperate men, made more desperate by the knowledge that their revolt was hopeless, had the lives of the prison warders in their hands; in a few minutes it would have been all over with them. This prisoner—this brave man who was convicted by a unanimous jury, after five minutes' consultation, for a wicked and treacherous act, my dear—faced almost certain death to save them. He did save them, and they released him for his reward."

Ruth seized her hand and kissed it.

"Go on, Helen; tell me more."

"I have very little more to tell you. But if it will comfort you, I can tell you what the prison doctor said to him when he left. He said, Ruth, that his trial showed the clearest case against him that ever was made out against any man, but that his life and character belied the circumstantial evidence. He said he believed him innocent."

Ruth gave a great gasp.

"Innocent? Oh, if it were only so; what would matter all our sorrow and all his suffering, if only he were innocent?"

"Mind, George Warneford always said that he was innocent. The doctor was the first to believe it. Afterwards, I have heard that others also believed him innocent."

"Why does he not write to me? Why does he not come home to me?"

"Perhaps he does not know where you are; perhaps he does not know how you would receive him. For, Ruth, your brother has lost the most precious jewel of life—his honour."

"But since he is innocent——"

"How does he know that his sister loves him still? Who has written to him out there to tell him so?"

"Can I ever cease to love him? Oh, Helen, if he were to stand

before me this very moment, and hold out his arms, I should be more happy than I have been all these eight years that I have lost him."

In the window, in the shades of the early December evening then darkening the room, the very man of whom they spoke sat still and upright. But his hands trembled and his face was distorted by some violent passion. Helen looked towards him and made a gesture of invitation. But he shook his head. Then she spoke again to the weeping girl.

"If he came to you a beggar in reputation, an outcast of society, heavily laden with the weight of these years of disgrace——"

"Unmerited disgrace," she said.

"With nothing to say to you, but that he was innocent—you would love him and cling to him against all the world, against Mr. Baldwin, against the kind people of this house?"

"Ah!" said Ruth, "I have but one brother. You have told me that he is innocent and brave. I am proud of my poor brother."

"And if he came to you, bearing in his hand the proofs of his innocence, what then, Ruth?"

"It would be too much happiness," she sighed. "Helen, why have you sought me out to tell me this story. I know—I know—that you are keeping something back. You have come to this poor lodging to see me—me. I am sure of it. You have come with a message from my brother. Tell me all—tell me all."

"Yes, dear, you have guessed. We have come—my brother and I—from Australia to see you. We come in your brother's name, and in your brother's behalf. We have a task before us—to establish, if we can, his innocence. There is but a slender, a very slender hope, of our doing that. But, oh Ruth! believe it with all your heart; cling to it as to an anchor; thank God for it every morning and every night. He is innocent—George Warneford did not commit this wicked thing. We are trying to prove it, but we may not succeed. And whether we succeed or not, you shall be restored to your brother."

Ruth was silent again—thinking. Then she lifted her eyes, bright with tears.

"You know him, then?"

"I know him, dear Ruth."

"Tell me what he is like."

Helen glanced at her brother.

"He is greatly changed from what you remember him. To begin with, he is eight years older, and he has suffered. You would not know him. Try not to fancy what he is like, but think of him now and always as a good and honourable man, who has had to endure a grievous wrong."

"I will—I will. And, Helen, why do you and your brother do him this great service?"

Helen did not blush as she replied, taking the girl's face in her hands and kissing her:

"Because, my dear, I love him, and I hope to be your sister."

"My sister? You will marry him? And he loves you? Oh Helen!"

"Yes," she replied, looking at her brother; "he loves me. The most patient, the most deeply-injured, the most honourable man, the kindest and most noblest heart in all the world, loves me. Ought I not to be a proud and happy woman, dear? And you must love me too."

Ruth threw herself into her new sister's arms, crying and laughing. It was too much for her, this great and new-found happiness.

"Hush, dear! Hush, my dear," said Helen. "I have told you too suddenly. There—lay your head upon my shoulder and calm yourself."

She went on talking in a soft voice at intervals.

"We must keep our secret to ourselves. Not even the professor must know. Only you and I must work at this difficulty ourselves—you and I, and my brother; we three. I will tell you, to-morrow, what we have to find out, and you must help us. We shall be very happy in the years to come." She looked again at her brother. "You and I and George—all three together. Happy, whatever happens; happy, if we have to keep all to ourselves the knowledge of his innocence; happy, if the world never restores to him his honour again. We must live for one another, dear. You must think of meeting him, Ruth, as if you were meeting a soldier coming home from victory. For he has had a fierce fight, and has escaped unwounded. He has been in the very depths of sin, among the most evil men in the world, and has come out pure of heart. We are here, we three, to win back his honour or to sustain him; and you will do your part?"

As the girl lay with her face buried in Helen's bosom, and her arms round her neck, the man in the window rose and stepped noiselessly to bend over the pair, his eyes full with love. Helen turned her face upwards and met his lips with hers, while with a hand that trembled he stroked the long hair which lay on Helen's shoulder, and belonged, not to her, but to Ruth Warneford.

Then began a cling-clanging of the City bells for evening service. From almost every street there came the ringing, loud and discordant, or sweet and musical, of the multitudinous City churches—a voice of invitation to tens of thousands where there were only hundreds to hear it.

Then Ruth lifted her head, and rose. She looked about her strangely, trying to bring her thoughts back to their usual channel.

"I must go to church," she said, "I play the organ at St. Ethelred's. I must go to church."

She did not look fit to go to church, for her eyes were dazed, and her hands trembled.

"I will go with you," said Helen. "Let me play for you to-night."

"Yes, yes," the girl cried, "we will go together. I shall be able to play as soon as I begin. The organ soothes; and we will pray together, you and I, side by side, oh my sister! for George." She turned to the man. "You will come too, Mr. Elwood, will you not? You know him, and you love him, or else you would not have travelled all this way with Helen. Come with us to the church."

"I will come," he answered. Why did he bow his head, and sink upon a chair?

"My mind is full of my brother," Ruth said; "George is everywhere to-night. I heard his voice in yours, Mr. Elwood; his voice that I thought never to hear again. Let us go to the church."

CHAPTER VII.

THE MISSING LINK.

It had been easy for Helen Elwood to find Ruth Warneford, for happily, the people with whom George Warneford had once lodged were still in the same house, and knew whither the child had been taken. Also the position of the place suited them better than any other could have done, for they were near the Docks, and it was at the docks—either of London or Liverpool—that they hoped to find some clue to the men of whom they were in search. Where Mercantile Jack mostly finds his way, there Ben Croil told them they would some day or other light on one of the mutineers of the Lucy Derrick. "Granted," he said, "that they got safe ashore— which isn't likely for a set of drunken swabs—they would make for the diggings; and, after a spell there, get back one by one to the port of Melbourne, and so on board again, and make their way to London." It was a slender chance, but it was their only one; and so old Ben went down regularly every day, and hung about, boarding the ships as they came in, and stepping forward for a look round; but he never found any of the Lucy Derrick men. When Ben was not hanging round the St. Katherine, the Victoria, or the London Docks, he was to be met with in the neighbourhood of Limehouse, Stepney, or Poplar, and, in the evening, he would be seen as far afield as Ratcliff-highway, always going round with his cake of tobacco in one hand and his knife in the other, whittling away, and looking about with his mild blue eyes, to see how they got along on board without him. On board the ships he always asked after a roll of names,

which he carried in his pocket, but knew by heart. The list ended with the name of Boston Tom. Some of the men were known, but they had not been seen or heard of for years; but no one knew anything of Boston Tom.

One day as Ben was cheapening a bandanna in the High-street of Whitechapel—the part of London where that costly article can be most readily obtained—there passed him a long, lean, and slouching lad of sixteen. The boy was going slowly, with eyes bent on the ground. Ben dropped the bandanna, and seized Rupert, who generally accompanied him in these excursions, by the arm.

"Now," he said, "if you want to do a good turn for Miss Warneford, you've got a chance. Step behind and follow me. I know that boy, and he won't, likely, tell me what I want. If I leave him, you follow him quietly. Find out where he goes, and where he lives. Don't let him out of your sight for a moment; and if it's a week, you go after him; and you stay with him."

"Ay, ay," said the mercantile-marine aspirant; "I understand."

"Got any money?" asked Ben.

"How should I have any?" returned Rupert the penniless. "Did I ever have a shilling in my whole life?"

"Five shillings will do," meditated the sailor. "There would be suspicion if it was more. You follow him up, and stand drinks to the extent of that five shillings; and find out somehow—without asking, you know—where Boston Tom may be. 'Boston Tom,' mind—that's the name you've got to stick to. That's the important thing. Now drop behind, and watch."

The old man hurried after the youth, who was now a dozen yards ahead, and, catching up with him, put his hand upon his arm, holding that limb tight.

"Ship-boy of the Lucy Derrick, Dan'l Mizen. I've lighted on you at last."

The lad turned ashy pale, and tried to drag his arm away.

"You—Mr. Croil! Oh Lord!"

"Ay, my lad, and glad to set eyes upon you again. No, Dan'l Mizen, you don't get away from me. See that bobby over the way? I've only got to call him; and it's murder on the high seas."

"Oh don't, Mr. Croil!" he whispered; "don't talk in that awful way. I was down below all the time, I was; and I give you information, I did."

"You did; and what I always says to myself is this: 'Young Dan'l,' says I, 'give that information, and it come in handy. When the trial comes on, if I'm there I shall up and let 'em know that the information was given, and how handy it came in.' Your neck's safe, my lad, if

I'm there. If not, why, then, o' course you'll have to swing with the rest."

"The rest!" echoed Mr. Mizen, with a half laugh. "There ain't any rest."

"What! All gone but you?"

"All gone but me and Bost—— and one other of the crew."

"Swear to that, boy; and if you tell me lies, I'll rope's-end you till you'll wish you'd never been aboard any ship in all your life; that blue you'll be all over."

The boy, whose face showed him to be what he really was—the most arrant cur and coward in existence—burst out blusterously, "Rope's-end me, will you, Mr. Croil? Wait till you try that game on."

"Ay, will I! And I'll begin on the spot, if you jaw me. Why, you dirty, measly——. There, go on with your story! All the pirates is drownded, then? Pity, too!"

"I'll tell you all the truth, Mr. Croil—s'help me, I will. We lost in the fight—that is, they pirates and mutineers lost—eight men in all, out of five-and-twenty; that left seventeen, and six of them were wounded; that left eleven. Well, they used me orful, they did. All your latherins, Mr. Croil, was pancakes and plum-duff compared to the latherins I got all round from them devilish murderers. Things went bad with the navigation too, and they couldn't keep her no course no-how."

"Lubbers all!" said Ben. "Go on, my boy; steer as truthful as you know."

"Then we got weather; and then, you see, we had to take to the boats. There was two boats, but one stove in; then there was only one left. We hadn't time for any provisions; and after the fifth day they began to eat each other. Gawspel truth, Mr. Croil!"

"Sarved them right! Worse than being hanged, but I'd rather ha' hanged them."

"Last, there was only left four of us."

"One of them four was Boston Tom?" said Ben.

The boy hesitated.

"Well, one was—I remember now—one was; but he was nearly dead when we were picked up; and he was one of them two that died two days afterwards."

"That's a lie," thought Ben; but he said nothing. "So now, only two are left," he asked, after a pause. "Who may the other be?"

"He was Maltese Dick, Mr. Croil," the boy replied, very quickly. "Him with the black hair and the arm tatooed all over; and where he's gone I don't know, and can't tell you."

"Ay, ay! And where do you live now, you Mizen boy?"

"I've left the seafaring trade, sir. I'm just come to London to look round like; got no home to go to yet."

There was a malicious twinkle in the young man's eye as he spoke. Ben looked up quietly—he still held him by the arm—and watched him.

"Then you don't live anywhere handy about here?"

"Laws, no, Mr. Croil! Certainly not, not by no means. Whatever made you go for to think that I would live about here?"

They passed, at that moment, a low sort of lodging-house and sailors' tavern, with a bill in the window: "Lodgings for single men and mariners."

Unless Ben Croil was grievously deceived, the lady at the door of this hostelry made a sign of recognition as the lad passed.

"So," Ben thought, "that's the crib, and that's where Boston Tom is to be heard of."

"Well, Dan'l Mizen," he said aloud, "you'll find me most days down at the Docks. You mind, come to see me, and no harm shall happen to you; you forget to come, and as sure as my name's Ben Croil, you'll swing for your share of the Lucy Derrick mutiny. Swing is the word, Dan'l Mizen!"

He made mental note of the house and number, and turned back.

Mr. Mizen looked after him, with a countenance full of perplexity and dismay; and, after first scratching his tousled head, and then shaking it ruefully, pursued his own way in the opposite direction, with a dejected, not to say a hangdog, expression in his very shoes. Presently there passed him a lad of about his own age, dressed in blue flannel, and looking—although the flannel was shabby—a gentleman. He had long legs and a springy walk. As he went along—sometimes a little a-head and sometimes a little behind Mr. Mizen—he stopped occasionally, and looked about him, as if in search of something. Mr. Dan'l Mizen contemplated this waif—a gift of Providence, evidently fallen quite into his hands—for a quarter of an hour or so; and then, Mr. Croil being quite out of sight, he shouldered up to the stranger, and jerked out, looking the other way:

"Lost your bearin', mate?"

"That is it," replied the stranger; "lost my bearin.' I was told by a party in the country that I was to come to a house in the Whitechapel Road—but I've forgotten the number—where they'd take me in and do for me, and find me a ship."

"That's lucky, now!" said Mr. Mizen. "Why, I'll take you to the very place, and it's close by; you come along o' me."

Daniel Mizen led the way. Oddly enough, his steps took him to exactly the very house where Ben Croil had noticed the lady at the door, and had remarked besides, that she seemed to know his young com-

panion. It was indeed the truth that the ex-ship-boy lived in this place of resort. How he lived, on what honest industry, or by the exercise of what native wit, was not immediately apparent.

He conducted Rupert to the door, and introduced him to the landlady—a woman with a red face, and dressed in a cotton gown, looped up so as to show a rich amplitude of petticoat underneath. She stood, with arms a-kimbo, contemplating human nature as it passed with eyes of hungry defiance. Men and women walked along, children ran by, but they were not her prey. Of all kinds and conditions of men, Mother Flanagan—not an Irishwoman by birth, although of illustrious Irish descent—loved a sailor, and especially him of the mercantile marine. She extended her affection beyond the narrow limits of party and country, embracing in one comprehensive sweep, and gathering to her breast, Englishman, American, Negro, Lascar, Malay, Greek, German, or Norwegian. All alike were dear to her, and she was dear to them—in the long run, very dear. She housed her favourites; she provided them with food, society, amusements, and drink; and when they left her hospitable house, it was, the censorious said, with empty pockets, and with "coppers" so hot, that it took a week of sea-breezes and compulsory temperance to cool them.

"Yes, I can take him," said Mrs. Flanagan, "if the young gentleman will pay a deposit."

"I've got five shillings," said Rupert.

"Hand it over," said Mrs. Flanagan.

"Mrs. Flanagan," called a voice from the inside room, "send that boy in here, five shillings and all."

The voice was hoarse and strained; it was followed by a chest cough which lasted long enough to tear the patient to pieces, and also was followed—a thing which was quite natural in that horrible den—by a volley of oaths.

Rupert Lemire thought himself in very queer company, but he reflected that they would not probably murder him for the sake of five shillings; and he obeyed the invitation to enter the house. By the fire, in a low room, reeking with tobacco, there sat in an arm-chair, a man of singular appearance. He was decorated with a scar on the right side of his mouth, which made it look as if it had been twisted up on that side. He had bright black eyes, very close together, and a long, receding forehead; his face was smooth and hairless, and his cheeks were hollow and sunken. His empty pipe lay beside him on a table, which was also graced by a half-emptied glass of rum and water.

"Come in, youngster. What's your name? Where do you hail from? What do you want? Now then!"

Rupert thought of the initials on his handkerchief.

'My name is Robert Lumley," he replied, with a little hesitation, taking a name which belonged to the family butcher—an importunate person, who was always bringing sorrow upon the household by demanding payment. "I come from—from Manchester, and I want to go to sea."

"How much money have you got?"

"Five shillings."

"Give it to me to keep for you. I live here. This house belongs to me, not to Mrs. Flanagan. I'll take care of your money for you. I hope it's honestly come by. We're very particular in this house, ain't us, Dan'l Mizen?"

Daniel made no reply.

"And if we can't get you a ship all at a day's notice, young shaver, I suppose you could find some more money by writing for it, couldn't you? Guess you'd better come to me for advice. Five shillings, you see, it won't go fur. Two days, or, thereabouts, if you don't drink. To be sure there's the 'long-shore clothes; you can make a good swap out of them, and nick a trifle into the bargain."

He had another fit of coughing, followed by another volley of oaths. Then he proposed a game of cards, and they sat down to a friendly hand of all-fours, in which Mr. Mizen took a hand. Rupert was not astonished when, after half an hour or so, he was informed by the man with the cough that he had lost all his money.

"Five shillings," said the host, jingling the two half crowns. "It's a trifle, but there, it's something to pass the time. Young feller, you've cleaned yourself out pretty sharp, you have. You'd better write that letter for more money at once; nothing like coming to the point. You, Dan'l Mizen, go and fetch the ink, and some paper. S'pose you have got a father?"

"Yes."

"And a mother? Yes? That's good. I like a mother. We'll pitch it strong. You just write what I tell you, and nothin' else."

The paper having been brought, Mr. Pringle—for this, Rupert had learnt in the course of the game, was the gentleman's name—proceeded to dictate: "'My beloved parents.' Got that down? 'Beloved and justly offended.' No; easy a bit. Let me think. Now, then, 'My beloved parents, I made my way up to London after leaving home, and arrived here yesterday. I am deeply sorry for the trouble that I have caused you in running away, which I intended for to go to sea, but am now fully persuaded of the folly of my conduct, and will go back home, to do what you please. I am staying with truly Christian people, and have spent my all. If it were not for their charity, I should now be starving. I owe them two pounds already, and shall want three more

to get my clothes out of pawn, which I am in rags, and to get home again—third class parliamentary—which is better than I deserve. So please send me a post-office order for five pounds, payable to Thomas Pringle, at the Whitechapel post-office, the same to be called for. Your affectionate son, Robert Lumley.' "

This was Mr. Pringle's dictation. The following, however, is what Rupert Lemire really wrote :

" DEAR OLD BEN,—I'm in the queerest crib. They've robbed me of my five shillings, and a fellow here thinks I'm writing for five pounds more to my parents in Manchester. What a game ! My address is 1344A, High Street, Whitechapel, and my name is Robert Lumley, but you must not write to me. The name of the proprietor of the crib is Thomas Pringle. He is a cut-throat-looking villain, with a scar on his right lip, and two eyes close together. If he had any hair on his face he would be like a wolf. I like the fun.—Yours ever, R. L."

" Is it all wrote ?" asked Mr. Pringle.

" Yes," said Rupert, quickly folding and placing the letter in an envelope, the only one on the table.

" Let me look at it."

" Can't, now it's folded and gummed up ; give me a penny for a stamp. I say, Mr. Pringle, what fun it is ; what shall we do with the five pounds ?"

" We'll have a spree, my boy, you and me together, in this blessed little crib. Now go and post your letter, and come back when it's done. You can't get into no mischief because you've got no money."

That was true ; but Mr. Mizen, nevertheless, seemed to think it desirable to attend him, unobtrusively, to the post-office, and to escort him, after the letter was duly posted, back to No. 1344A. There they found some sort of meal in active progress, and two or three other guests, although the appearance of the food did not, as in some circles, cause the disappearance of the tobacco. On the contrary, those who had fed, or were about to feed, went on smoking ; those who were feeding kept their pipes by them, and between helpings attended to the preservation of the spark. The cloth removed, so to speak, every man ordered what liked him best, and the evening sports set in with the usual severity. Other guests arriving, of both sexes, the tables were cleared away, and dancing began.

Rupert sat quietly enough, watching and listening, until the fiddle began. Presently his legs began to twitch. An elephantine performer was occupying the floor with a step made up of the cobbler's dance and the sailor's hornpipe. Rupert stepped up to him.

" Let me show you how to dance," he said, smiling superior.

He did show them how to dance a hornpipe ; then he showed them

the sword-dance with the poker and tongs; then he executed a figure all of his own invention, in which he lifted his legs over the head of every lady and gentleman present, to their unmixed joy and rapture; and then, snatching the fiddle from the hands of the inebriate musician, he threw himself into his place, and played a country dance for them till they danced as if they had been the rats of the Pied Piper himself.

Never before had Mrs. Flanagan witnessed such dancing, such excitement, or such thirst.

Said Mr. Pringle to the worthy landlady, upon retiring to rest: "The boy's worth a mint of money. We'll keep him. When he gets an answer to his letter I'll fix him up right away. There shan't be such a house as this not this side of Lime'us. There, old gal!"

CHAPTER VIII.

HELEN PLAYS A TRUMP.

"THERE was a fellow-clerk at the office," said George Warneford, after reading Rupert's letter, "named Samuel Pringle; I remember him well."

"A fellow-clerk!" cried Helen, "and of that name. What kind of man was he?"

It must be owned that, in the further examination of the Warneford case, by far the most intelligent and active investigator was Helen Elwood. Whether his long confinement had dulled his brain, or whether he despaired of success, George Warneford himself was mostly irresolute, and sometimes, as if a cloud rested over his brain, he was silent and apathetic.

"Try to think, George, what manner of clerk was he."

"We were in the same room," said George. "He was my junior by a few months in point of years, but he had entered later. I do not know what his family connections were, nor anything of his habits, because he lived in a different part of London—somewhere up the King's-road, I think; but I know his name was Samuel Pringle."

"George, if this Thomas Pringle, whom the men call Boston Tom, knew your face—if he knew your story—if he knew, as he said, who did the thing—what other clue is more ready than the connection of Samuel Pringle with Thomas Pringle? And if Thomas knows, then Samuel knows as well."

"I believe you've got it, miss," said Ben. "How can we find out about this Samuel Pringle?"

"They could tell us at the office; at least they could tell us if he is there still," said George. "But who is to ask?"

Helen thought a little.

"I will go," she said, "I will go and see Mr. Baldwin myself. George, we had better take Mr. Wybrow into the same confidence as your sister; with Rupert and John Wybrow both working for us we ought to do something."

George sighed.

"Have faith, dear friend"—how many times had poor Helen said these words, as much to strengthen her own faith as to sustain his—"have faith and hope. We are nearer now than ever we were before. We have found out the man who knows, and now we have only got somehow to make him confess."

Rupert's letter arrived of course in the evening. Helen Elwood had a busy time. She had first to represent to the professor and Madame Lemire that their eldest-born, though he would not return for a few days, was in reasonable safety, and might be expected to take care of himself, and was engaged in a matter requiring secrecy and confidence, which might be of great advantage to Ruth. She had to calm down the boiling fury of old Ben, who, now that his enemy was within his grasp, longed to bring him up, and saw himself, in imagination, reeling out the evidence that was to hang him. She had to find a correspondent in Manchester, a matter effected by means of a gentleman of the seafaring persuasion—friend of Ben's—who would send Rupert the five pounds asked for, with a suitable letter. She had to calm the eagerness of Ruth, who wanted a posse of constables at once to arrest the man, and make him confess then and there. Also George showed, when once he was alive to the situation, unusual agitation and excitement.

"I will go myself, Helen," he said, "to Mr. Baldwin."

"No, George, you will stay quietly at home; I can go, because I can talk without excitement. Let me go alone; keep quietly at home."

But all night she heard him pacing backwards and forwards in his room over her head.

The end at hand! It was too much to hope for; it was a thing of which he had never dared in his heart to look forward to. Much as Helen loved him, even she could not altogether understand the revulsion of feeling which the new prospect of his rehabilitation caused him. After eight years of suffering and disgrace—after returning to England with an assumed name, in hiding, so to speak—after the agony of knowing that his sister was suffering with him and for him, and yet he could not take her to his breast, and tell her who and what he was! And then another thing; he had schooled himself to expect disappointment. How was an eight-years'-old crime proved upon himself to be transferred to another man? How could the proofs be collected? From what quarter should they come? And who would put them together?

And now, suddenly, he was asked to face a solution in which the impossible was to be made possible. Within a mile of himself was the man who knew all about it. It only was left to discover if that man would be ready, or could be made to confess.

Towards morning, George Warneford dropped upon his bed and fell into a heavy sleep. Helen below heard his footsteps cease, and fell asleep herself. At nine o'clock he was sleeping still when she set forth with a beating heart on her mission.

She knew the office of Messrs. Batterick and Baldwin so well, through George's frequent descriptions, that she knew the way right through into Mr. Baldwin's private room. She passed, unchallenged, and without hesitation, through the three rooms. The clerks looked up from their work for a moment at the strange apparition of a young lady in the office, but the young lady did not belong to them, and they went on with their writing. Helen turned the handle without knocking, and entered. Mr. Baldwin was alone at his desk.

"I am a stranger to you, Mr. Baldwin," said Helen, in answer to his word of inquiry, "and if I give you my name you will be no wiser. There is my card, however, and I will write on it the name of my lawyers for your reference, if you wish."

"Pray take a chair, young lady."

Mr. Baldwin read the card, and waited for further information.

"I will come to the point at once, Mr. Baldwin. I believe you had a clerk named Samuel Pringle."

"I have still."

"Is he a useful clerk—one whom you could trust?"

"Really, Miss"—Mr. Baldwin looked again at the card—"Miss Elwood, I hardly see the way to giving you the character of my clerks."

"Mr. Baldwin, believe me, I have no idle motives in asking that question; and if you will answer it I will tell you beforehand why I asked it."

"There is no reason, after all," said Mr. Baldwin, "why I should not answer it at once. Pringle has been in my employ for about fourteen years. I once thought he would turn out a smart, active clerk, but he has disappointed me. He is not sharp, and he suffers from fits of nervous abstraction which will prevent his advancement in the world. But he may be trusted."

"Do you know his family?"

"We never take a clerk into this House without knowing his family.

"Then you can tell me if he has a brother."

"I daresay I could have told you years ago, but I have forgotten now."

Helen played her trump card.

"Would you allow me to ask him, in your presence, a single ques

tion? It is not impertinence or curiosity, Mr. Baldwin; indeed—indeed it is not. If you only knew how much depends upon that question!"

Mr. Baldwin touched a hand-bell. "Mr. Pringle," he said.

A moment later Mr. Pringle appeared. He was a tall young man, with stooping shoulders, and a quick nervous way of looking about him. Also, as he spoke, his fingers played with whatever was near them. His eyes were too close together, which gave him a cunning appearance, and his forehead was low and receding.

"Pringle," said Mr. Baldwin, "this young lady wishes to ask you a question."

Mr. Pringle bowed; the lady's face was strange to him.

"I wish, Mr. Pringle," said Helen, "to ask you when you last heard from your brother Thomas?"

The pale face of the clerk turned white, his fingers clutched convulsively at the back of the chair behind which he stood. He trembled from head to foot, his mouth opened but his tongue refused to speak.

Mr. Baldwin looked at his clerk with a kind of distress; what did it mean, this terror at so simple a question?

Helen repeated it, never taking her eyes off his face.

At last he spoke.

"Not for five years or more. Tom went abroad."

"Do you know where he is?"

"No, I do not," he replied firmly.

This was a point gained. The man clearly did not know that his brother was in England.

"Had your brother any distinctive mark by which he might be known?"

The man hesitated.

"I cannot give information which might injure my brother," he said.

"Very well," replied Helen; "there are other people who may be injured by your silence; you had better think of yourself first."

The trembling began again; then he plucked up courage.

"I need not think of myself," he said, "not in that way, but Tom had enemies; however, there was a mark on the right side of his mouth—the scar of a wound he got from a knife; he may be known by that mark."

"Thank you, Mr. Pringle," she replied; "I know all I want to know except your address. I shall perhaps call to see you in the course of a day or two."

"That will do, Pringle."

Mr. Baldwin dismissed him and turned to his visitor for explanation.

"I think it will be best to tell you something, Mr. Baldwin," said Helen. "Do you remember St. Ethelred's Church four months ago?"

"Surely."

"Ruth Warneford told her lover there, in your presence—that she would marry him when the impossible proved possible—when George Warneford's guilt was proved to be innocence."

"What has that to do with your visit to me?"

"Everything! Mr. Baldwin. I am here in England to make the impossible possible. I am here to prove a convicted forger a wronged and innocent man!"

Mr. Baldwin looked at her in silence. It was in a harsh, constrained voice that he answered:

"That is a fool's errand. Time was when I would have given ten years of my life to have proved George Warneford guiltless, but that time has gone by."

"We shall see, Mr. Baldwin," said Helen smiling; "meantime, do you want to know where he is now?"

"In prison, wretched boy, at Sydney."

"You have not heard, then—you have not read in the papers that he has long since obtained his release?"

"No."

"Shall I tell you for what reason?"

Helen told. In her narrative the heroism of her lover lost nothing. Her eyes sparkled, her voice trembled with emotion, her bosom heaved.

The old man, catching little of her enthusiasm, only sighed.

"Why do you come here," he asked, angrily, "to raise doubts when I had certainties? Why, if I had had the least, the smallest spark of hesitation about the lad's innocence, I would never have rested, night or day, till I had proved it."

"You would not," replied the girl. "Oh, I am sure you would not! But there was no room for doubt, and the plot was too deep; the accidental circumstances were too conclusive. But think, Mr. Baldwin, can you wonder, if you would have done all this for a doubt, that I——"

"But what is George Warneford to you?"

"He is to be my husband," she said. "If you, for a mere doubt, would have known no rest till that doubt was cleared, what should I, his affianced wife, do, who have no doubt but a certainty—no hesitation, but a conviction, that my lover is innocent?"

She burst into tears, but only for a moment.

"Bear with me, Mr. Baldwin. You loved him once yourself; you will love him again yet."

She drew down her veil.

But the old man rose before her, his hands out, feeling, as it were, in the darkness for support.

"Tell me," he cried, "tell me—George Warneford innocent? Is it a truth?"

"It is a truth, Mr. Baldwin. It is the whole truth, and in a few days, with the help of God, who has helped us so far, I will give you the proofs of his innocence. Meantime give me, please, Mr. Samuel Pringle's address. Thank you; and help me further by taking no notice of what I have said, and by keeping to yourself all that has passed."

Mr. Baldwin promised.

An hour afterwards a messenger went into the chief. He found him sitting at his table doing nothing, looking straight before him. He spoke twice to him without getting an answer; and then Mr. Baldwin turned to him, and said, in an agitated voice:

"Innocent? Then God forgive us all."

CHAPTER IX.

FULL CONFESSION.

MR. BALDWIN'S words were conveyed to the outer office, and, being curious and inexplicable words, were repeated among the clerks. To them the story of George Warneford was an old and almost forgotten thing, so that they did not connect it with Mr. Baldwin's expression, One of them, however, when he heard them trembled and shook. He was so nervous and agitated that he could do no work that morning. His hands could not hold the pen. His mind would not take in the meaning of the words which he had to read, the figures danced before his eyes; and, amid the buzz of those who came and went, he heard nothing but the voice of Mr. Baldwin, which repeated, "Innocent. Then God forgive us all!"

Forgive whom? Samuel Pringle's cheeks were white, when Helen asked him for news of his brother; but his very lips were white when he thought of what these words might mean to himself.

Might mean? Did most certainly mean. There was no doubt in his mind at all that the young lady was come to Mr. Baldwin's about that old business of George Warneford's, a business which had ruined his own life and destroyed his peace. If the innocent man had suffered, much more had he, the guilty, endured tortures of repentance and helpless remorse. There was no way out of it now, except to confess and take the consequences.

He sat out the dreadful hours, full of unspeakable terror, from ten till one, and then, taking his hat, went out when his turn came to take his dinner.

One thought always comes to the guilty—the thought of flight. As he emerged from the office where he had expected all the morning to feel the hand of arrest, it occurred to him that he might escape. He looked up and down the crowded thoroughfare ; no one, he thought, was watching him ; he would hasten to his lodgings, pack up a few things, and be off, somewhere—anywhere—out of danger.

Excellent thought ! He was a thrifty young man, who did not spend the whole of his small salary, and had a little money with which he would pay his fare to America. He would write to the office and say that he was called away on urgent business, but would be back in a week ; then he would not be missed. Once in America—once on the way to the West, he would be safe from pursuit, and they might prove whatever they liked about himself and George Warneford.

Excellent thought ! He lived at Islington. He took a cab, and drove to his rooms in hot haste, mad to be away from this dreadful fear which stung him like a hornet. And not only to be rid of this fear of detection and arrest, but also of the slow devouring fire of remorse, which had never left him for one moment, since the day when George Warneford was sentenced for a crime which he never committed.

So good and wise a plan did it seem to him, so practical and so original a method of shaking off the inconveniencies of remorse and anxiety, that, when he stepped out of his bedroom, portmanteau in hand, and saw who were waiting there to frustrate his manœuvre, he fell fainting on the floor.

His visitors were John Wybrow and the young lady he had seen in the office. For Helen lost no time. She drove from Mr. Baldwin's straight to John Wybrow's chambers, and, in as few words as she could, told him what was necessary for him to know.

Said John Wybrow promptly, "I know that fellow Pringle. He is a cur and a sneak. I always thought he was capable of villainy, and now I know it. He is the man who did it ; not his brother at all. Now, Miss Elwood, the first thing he will do is to run away."

"Run away ?"

"Just that. They always do it, fellows like Pringle. He hasn't got the pluck to stay and brazen it out. The mention of his brother's name will make him suspect that the worthy Tom has let it all out. He will run away, and we must stop him."

John wasted no time in going to the office of Batterick and Baldwin, but drove straight to Pringle's address, rightly judging that, if he was going to escape, he would probably take the very first opportunity of getting away from the city. So it came to pass that, when Samuel had finished his packing, and was joyously bringing his portmanteau from

his bedroom, he found his pair of conspirators ready to receive him, and the shock was so great that he fairly swooned away.

When he recovered, he found himself lying on the horsehair sofa which decorated his apartment. His head was dizzy and heavy, and it was some minutes before he remembered what had happened, and where he was. Then he sat up and realized the position.

"Innocent? Then God forgive us all!"

The words rang in his brain. Who were those who chiefly needed forgiveness? And by what suffering was that forgiveness to be arrived at? He clutched the head of the sofa, and groaned in his misery.

Before him stood John Wybrow, looking hard, stern, and pitiless, and at the table sat the young lady he had seen in Mr. Baldwin's private room, and her eyes too meant punishment.

"Now, Pringle," said Wybrow, "you had a fright at the office; you have come here with the intention of running away to escape arrest; we have caught you in the act of packing your portmanteau; and we do not intend you to run away. Not yet."

The miserable man's lips were parted, and his tongue clave to the roof of his mouth.

"Not yet," repeated John.

"What—what am I to do? Why do you stop me? What business is it of yours?" asked Pringle, hardly knowing what he said.

"Surely you know what you have to do?" said Helen, in her low, steady voice.

Pringle shook his head.

"Here is paper." John opened a desk and took out some sheets. "Here is ink. Here is a pen. Will you write a full account of it, now, at once, or shall I send for a policeman?"

"Spare me!" cried the abject criminal. "Mr. Wybrow, what business is it of yours? Young lady, what have you got to do with an old story, eight years old? It all happened when I was a boy, very little more than a boy. I have never been happy since, not one single day. Is not my misery enough punishment? Other clerks can go about and be cheerful, and enjoy their victuals. But that thing never lets me alone, not once, not one single day. Why should I suffer more?"

It never occurred to his disordered brain that they really had no proofs of his guilt. He assumed at once that all was known, and they had the power of giving him into custody on the charge of forgery, aggravated by the fact that he had allowed another to be convicted of his own crime.

"We shall not spare you," said John. "We know now the reason of your nervousness and hesitation. Spare you? Samuel Pringle, of all men living on this earth, there is not one who is not worthy to be spared before you. In all the prisons of the world there is not a criminal so

blackhearted as yourself. They have done the things for which they are in prison; you have not only done the things, but you have deliberately sent an innocent man to gaol for your crime."

Samuel buried his face in his hands.

"The convict's dress you have made George Warneford wear, you shall wear yourself; the misery you have brought on him, you shall feel yourself, and worse; the disgrace which lies upon him and his shall be transferred to you and yours. Your name shall be a by-word of execration and reproach. People who bear it shall be ashamed to have such a name."

Then Samuel Pringle cried and wept; he rolled his head upon the pillow and wished he was dead; he moaned and whined; he declared that he repented, that he always had repented, that there was no man in the world more repentant than himself; and then, because no answer came, but every time that he raised his eyes he met the relentless gaze of John Wybrow and the steady look of Helen Elwood, he crawled on his knees to the latter, and seizing her hand, implored her to forgive him, and to let him go.

"You are a woman," he said. "Women are tender and pitiful. They always forgive. What good will it do George Warneford if the story does come out? He is out of prison. I learned that from my brother some three years ago. Tom saw him at Melbourne, walking about. It won't do him any good; and oh! think of what it will be for me!"

Helen drew her hand away, but made no response. What, indeed, could she say.

"Mr. Wybrow is hard and cruel. Oh, much harder than I should be if Mr. Wybrow was in my place." He looked up furtively at his enemy, who stood motionless, with the pen in his hand. "Many a time have I done Mr. Wybrow's work for him in the office, and said nothing about it. Speak to him, young lady. You've got a kind heart, I know you have. Speak to him for me. Tell him that I will go straight away out of London, and he shall never see me again, since he hates me so. Straight away at once I will go; and as for George Warneford, if he has got out of prison, what more does he want? Putting me in won't do him any good. Besides," he threw this out as a last shot, partly, perhaps, as a feeler, "besides, he's dead, I'm sure he's dead. Don't persecute a poor repentant sinner—don't be unchristian. Think of your own sins—not that you've got any, but perhaps Mr. Wybrow has—little ones, not big ones like mine—and then think how you'd feel if you had such a crime as I have weighing on your mind, and taking the taste out of everything you put into your mouth."

"Now, Pringle," interrupted John Wybrow, "we have had enough whining; stand up and write at this table."

Samuel obeyed, so far as standing up went. It was a groggy sort of standing at the best, and he felt, if he felt anything at all, that he hardly looked his best, for his long legs bent beneath him, his thin and sandy hair was hanging over his forehead, his lean arms hung helplessly at his sides, and his eyes were red and swollen. He looked at his portmanteau and at the door, but between the door and himself stood the stalwart form of John Wybrow. Samuel Pringle was neither a strong man nor a brave man. If the thought of forcible departure entered his head it was dismissed at once.

"Sit down," said John, peremptorily.

Samuel sat down.

"Take the pen."

Samuel took the pen, and mechanically drew the paper before him.

"Now write."

"What am I to write?" he asked.

"Write the truth," said Helen.

"Write what I dictate," said John.

Samuel made a last effort.

"If I write," said he, imploringly, "give me a chance of escape afterwards."

Helen looked at John Wybrow. The criminal caught the glance.

"Only a single chance; give me a day to get away if I can," Pringle pleaded.

"Write first," said John Wybrow. "I will make no conditions till I have got a confession."

Pringle dipped the pen in the ink.

John began to dictate.

"I, Samuel Pringle."

"I, Samuel Pringle."

"Will you kindly look over his shoulder, Miss Elwood?" John was trying to frame a form of words which should at least be binding. The difficulty was that he really knew nothing to go upon but his own strong suspicions. After a few moments of hesitation he began again. Helen stood behind the trembling clerk, on whose forehead the beads of agony gathered fast.

"I, Samuel Pringle, now a clerk of ten years' standing in the house of Batterick and Baldwin."

"Batterick and Baldwin," repeated Pringle.

"Declare and confess that the forgery for which George Warneford

was tried, eight years ago, and sentenced to twenty years of penal servitude, was not committed by him at all."

"Oh Lord," groaned the writer, "'not committed by him at all.'"

"That he was entirely innocent of the offence; that it was committed without his knowledge; that he was wrongly found guilty; that the real criminal is still at large."

"Still at large," said Pringle. "Oh, miss, help him to stay at large. Help a poor, miserable, repentant man."

But Helen's face showed no pity. The abject nature of the man filled her with disgust.

"Still at large. That other forgeries and embezzlements laid to George Warneford's charge were one and all the work of the same man, who has hitherto escaped punishment."

"Escaped punishment!" the clerk echoed. "Oh, young lady, help him to escape altogether. It can't do George Warneford any good to see him punished. He's dead now. I know he's dead, else he would have come home."

"I further declare that the real forger——"

"I can't write it!" ejaculated the man. "Mr. Wybrow, let me run away, let me escape, let me go this once. It's pitiful to have a giant's strength, sir, as Shakespeare says, and it's unchristian to use it. Oh Mr. Wybrow! what are we if we are not Christians?"

"That the real forger was myself, and no other."

Helen placed the pen in the nerveless fingers from which it had dropped.

"Write the words," she said.

"I can't, I can't. It's all true, as you know, Mr. Wybrow; but I can't write the words. I feel as if they were sentencing me to a prison."

"Very likely they will," said John. "But confession is better than detection, as you will find. Come, you have no choice."

With a heavy groan he obeyed.

"Myself! Oh Lord! oh Lord! What have I written?"

"Sign it now."

Reluctantly he signed the paper.

"Now, Miss Elwood," said John, "We two will witness this signature."

It was Helen's turn to tremble when she signed her name as one of the witnesses. For what did it mean to her, this scrap of paper? The self-respect of her lover, the restitution of his good name; the recovery of all that made life dear; the bearing back to George of her golden sheaves; a victory worth to her all the other victories in the world!

She sighed. The wretched man went on whining and pleading

the same key about repentance, about the wicked waste of trouble in raking up old matters, about the certain death of George Warneford; but his words fell unheeded on her ears. She was thinking only about the joy and thankfulness that should be theirs, when she bore back to George the paper so precious to them all.

John folded up the paper and laughed. "We have won, Miss Elwood," he said. "You shall tell me afterwards, if you will, what you have won. You know what is my prize."

Then he turned to Pringle, and his voice changed:

"If I had words—if there were words in the language to express the unutterable loathing and disgust that I feel for you, I would use them. But, there are no words strong enough. You have signed, however. We have you now utterly in our power. If you are to expect anything at all from us—the slightest mercy—you will tell us the whole story without evasion or concealment. Out with it!"

"You will be merciful then?" cried Pringle, as he saw the paper folded in John's pocket-book, and deposited in a place of safety. "If I tell you particulars that you would not get from anyone else, you will have a little pity? Think of it, Mr. Wybrow, a whole life spent in prison. If I thought it would only be ten years, I should not mind so much. But a life! never to go out again; never to be free; never to do what I like; never to be without the dreadful convict dress! Oh, I've dreamed of it night after night, till I know it all by heart, and the misery of it. Oh, Mr. Wybrow, be merciful!"

"Sit down again, and tell us, in as few words as you can, the whole history."

Does the story need to be told at length? The situation is known. A weak and cowardly lad, in the hands of his unscrupulous brother, was made to do anything. A cheque-book was purloined and kept in a safe place by Tom; from time to time, whenever the opportunity seemed favourable, a cheque was drawn with the name of the firm forged so skilfully, that the signature was passed without the slightest suspicion. Detection was difficult, because the crafty Tom took charge of the cheques; Samuel, needless to say, getting nothing of the proceeds, but obedient partly from habit, and partly from compulsion.

"But the cheque, the last cheque; how did that get into the envelope?"

"I put it there," said Samuel. "Tom told me to. I overheard Mr. Baldwin talking to the manager of the bank; I knew that the forgeries were going to be found out; I watched from where I sat; I could see Mr. Baldwin through a corner of the curtain; I saw him draw a cheque and place it in an envelope. That was the day before Warneford was caught. He left the envelope on the table. I put the last cheque I

had forged in another envelope exactly like his own. I made an excuse for going into his office—I changed the envelopes. Tom said it was the best chance to throw suspicion on somebody else. How should we know that George Warneford would be the one on whom it would fall? It was not our fault. We had to look out for ourselves—Tom and I. Mr. Baldwin locked up the envelope when he went away; he clean forgot who had been in his room; he forgot, too, that he left his desk for a moment when I was in his office, and he swore positively that no one could have touched that envelope, except himself and George Warneford. Tom was in court when he swore it, and when Tom told me in the evening, we laughed—that is, Tom laughed, till the tears ran down his face."

Helen made an involuntary gesture of disgust.

"He laughed, Miss, not me. I repented. I repented at once, and the money—hundreds of pounds it was—that Tom had through me, never did him any good. I always told him it wouldn't. Oh, it's a dreadful story; and somehow, Mr. Wybrow, now that I've told you the whole of it, I feel easier in my mind."

John Wybrow whispered a few words to Helen, then he turned to the man again.

"Look here, you have told us, I believe, pretty well the whole truth. Of course we don't believe a word about your repentance, and all that. Repentance, indeed! But you have done us, involuntarily, a service. Now, in return, Miss Elwood, this young lady"—Samuel Pringle bowed, as if he were being introduced to her—"has consented to one act of grace."

"And the act of grace, sir?"

"The act of grace is this. You shall have twenty-four hours' start; after that time a warrant will be taken out for your arrest, and you will take your punishment if you are caught. The punishment will be heavy, and I sincerely hope you will be caught. Now go."

He pointed to the door.

Samuel Pringle seized his portmanteau and vanished. Looking out of the window they saw him running down the street till he caught a cab, in which he drove away.

"There will be no warrant in his case, I suspect, Miss Elwood. We must now——"

"Wait a moment," she cried. "My heart is too full. Tell me," she said, after a pause, "tell me, does this confession quite, quite free George from all suspicion?"

"It does. I am no lawyer, but I am certain that it does. It will at least clear him in the eyes of Mr. Baldwin and the world. Miss Elwood, you have helped me to a wife. Let us go to Ruth."

"Not yet," she said; "I want to get at the other man first, and I must wait. I want your advice and help. My brain is troubled with joy. Let us keep this thing to ourselves for one day yet—only one day. And to-morrow is Christmas Eve. Let Ruth keep that feast with a joyful heart."

"And I must not see Ruth till to-morrow evening?"

"Not till to-morrow evening, John Wybrow. If you cannot wait for four-and-twenty hours, what will you think of me when I tell you that I have waited for three years?"

"You, Miss Elwood!"

"Yes; George Warneford and I. That is my secret. You have won a wife and a sister too, because I am to be married to George Warneford."

John took her hand and kissed it. On second thoughts he stooped and kissed her on the forehead.

"You will be our sister?" he said simply. "I am very glad. Where is George?"

"He is here in London. That is another of my secrets. He is at the professor's with me——"

"In the same house as Ruth?"

"In the same house as Ruth, and she does not know. Once she thought she knew his voice, but it passed off. He is with me as my brother, so that we can travel together. Ruth does not suspect. But to-morrow she shall know."

John took her home. In the front room the gas was lit, for the professor was instructing a select class. Behind the blinds was Ruth, but John did not know this, and went away with a longing, hungry heart.

George Warneford was pacing the room impatiently. He stopped with a gesture of inquiry when Helen returned.

"Yes, George, I have seen Mr. Baldwin, and have talked with him, and—and——Oh! my dear, dear love, we who have waited so long, can we not wait a little longer?"

She fell weeping into his arms. He soothed and caressed her, and presently she lifted her head and raised her eyes.

"Let us remember," she said, "the long and weary time of trial, and, with the remembrance, let us think of all that it has done for us; how it cleared away the clouds of anger and revenge which lay on your soul; how it brought you back to your better self, the man I learned to know; how it made me a little less selfish and a little more careful of others; how it brought me the dearest and best thing that can happen to a woman—the love of a good man!"

"Nay, dear," he said, "but the love of a man who would fain be all that his wife thinks him."

"Why, that is it," she said. "You think me fair and pure, and I try to be fair and pure of heart. I think you noble, and you make your own nobleness out of a love for me. What is love worth, except to lead man and woman upward to the higher life?"

Then they were silent, and presently the old sailor stole in and joined them, without a word.

"George," she said, after a little—they were sitting, according to their old custom, side by side before the fire; Ben Croil was in his place, with his head against the wall—"George, what day is this?"

"It is the day before Christmas Eve."

"I remember that day three years ago, George. There were three people on a little islet together. It was a summer evening there, and they sat on the beach watching the golden sunset, as it painted the sands upon the beach and the rock behind them, where the white streamer floated night and day. They had been four months on that islet, where they were to be prisoners for three years. All their hearts were troubled with a sense of wrong. The older man was yearning for revenge upon the mutineers and murderers who had brought them there."

"He was," said Ben. "He's yearning still; but he's going to have his revenge before long."

"The younger man," said Helen in her soft low voice, "was longing for revenge on the man who had brought him to ruin. Was he not, George?"

"He was," said George.

"What does he think now?"

"He would leave him—to Helen," replied her lover, taking her hand.

"And Helen would leave him—to Heaven," she said. "The day before Christmas Eve, Ben—this is a time when we ought to put away all sorts of revenge."

"Ay, ay, Miss Helen, that's very true; bless you, I don't harbour no malice against no one—except Boston Tom. He's got to swing, then I shall be at peace with all mankind."

"We must forgive, if we can, even Boston Tom," she said.

"What! forgive a mutineer and a murderer, when I've got him under my thumb?"

The old man was inflexible on this point. That Boston Tom should be allowed to escape never entered his head. It was, if anything, a part of the great scheme of Christian forgiveness, that hanging should come first and pardon afterwards. And the knowledge that he had caught him at last, tended greatly to soothe his soul, and prepare him for a

fuller enjoyment of that season when peace and goodwill are specially preached to the nations of the earth.

Helen ceased to urge her point. But another pleader took up the cause of Boston Tom. It was a second letter from Rupert, written in pencil and in haste:

"Whatever you have to do with this man," he wrote to Helen, "must be done quickly. I think he is dying. Last night, after drinking enough rum to float a three-decker, or at least one of old Ben's favourite craft, and after coughing till he shook the walls of the house, he broke a blood-vessel. We put him to bed, and he went on drinking rum. I was with him all night. I think, Miss Elwood, that I am getting rather tired of playing my part. The place is a den of thieves. The five pounds are already nearly gone, and the woman of the house is throwing out hints that more will be wanted before long. Also I am expected to dance all the evening to please the sailors. After all, there is some fun in showing these timber-toed lubbers what dancing really means. But I am afraid that Dan Mizen suspects me; he is always on the watch.

"R. L.

"P.S.—They have had a doctor to see him. He reports that the patient can't last more than twenty-four hours. The woman has carried off his clothes, and I caught her searching the pockets. Also Dan Mizen has been making observations about captures and such things. My own idea is that he is trying to make something for himself out of the man's death. Act at once if there is anything to be done."

Helen read this letter aloud and waited for a response, looking to George first.

He thought for a minute.

"If the man's testimony is to be of any use to us," he said, "it must be got at once."

"We can do without it, George, but we shall be stronger with it."

"Then I will go myself and get it out of him."

Helen turned to Ben. "What do you think, Ben?"

He was putting on his overcoat.

"Think?" he asked, with impatience glittering in his pale blue eyes. "What is a man to think? Here's the murderer going to cheat the gallows, and no one to interfere but me. Think? Why, that we must go to the nearest police-station and arrest him, dead or alive."

"We will go, Ben, you and I. No George"—she put him back gently as he rose to go with her—"it isn't altogether my fancy, but I want to finish this work with Ben and our friends. I want you to remain where you are, unknown and unsuspected till the time comes."

"The time, the time! Oh, Helen, I cannot believe the time will ever come!"

"It has come, George; it is here already. Have patience for a single day—only a single day—and you will find that it has really come for you, and for Ruth and for me. My heart is very full, dear friend; but the work is nearly done, and this night, please God, will finish it. Do not wait for me. I am safe with Ben and Rupert."

It was nine o'clock. As Helen opened the door a van drove up, and a man, jumping down, began to hand out parcels.

"Here you are, Miss," he said. "Name, Lemire."

"I will call Madame Lemire. Please bring in the things."

The professor came, Madame being out on a little Christmas marketing.

"Turkey for Mr. Lemire—sausages for Mr. Lemire—barrel of oysters, Mr. Lemire. That all right? Case of wine, Mr. Lemire—box of French plums, Mr. Lemire—ditto ditto, boxes of preserved fruit—bon-bons—one, two, three, five; that's right. Very sorry, sir, to be so late."

"But these can't be for me!" cried the bewildered professor.

"Quite right, sir—quite right; ordered two hours ago; nothing to pay. Stop a minute! Pheasant for Mr. Lemire—wild duck, Mr. Lemire—cod's head and shoulder, Mr. Lemire."

"But, my friend, I have ordered none of these things."

"Didn't say you had, sir. Friend, I suppose, ordered 'em all. Christmas time, you know. Hamper besides; don't know what's in the hamper. Where's that box Jim? We was told to take very particular care of that box. Here you are, sir—box for Mr. Lemire. Think that's all, sir. You'll have to sign here—so—and here's a letter."

By this time Ruth Warneford, Antoinette, and the children were gathered in the little hall gazing at the treasures which lay piled one above the other, cumbering the way. The professor, balancing himself upon his toes, gesticulated, laughed, and remonstrated. But before they knew what had happened, the men with the van had driven off, and they were left with their boxes.

"But what does it mean? Is it St. Nicholas? Is it the good Christmas fairies? Is it a gift of Heaven?" and the professor was helpless. "My dear young lady," he addressed Helen, "I assure you on the word of an artist, that the resources of the establishment at this moment go no farther than the prospect of a leg of mutton, without a plum-pudding, for Christmas Day. You will hardly believe me, but that is the fact; and my wife has now gone out with Gaspard in the hope of purchasing that leg at a reasonable cost; and here are turkey, sausages, oysters, pheasant, wild duck, wine—apparently champagne, vin d

champagne!—French plums, fruits, cod-fish, bon-bons. Children, children, you are about to taste unheard-of luxuries. It is a return into Egypt."

"And the box, father. What is in the box?"

Ben produced that knife of his, which, when not in active service in cutting tobacco, was useful as a screw-driver, as a crow-bar, or a marline-spike, or a hammer, or as any implement likely to be required on board of a sailing-ship. With the help of this he opened the box. The contents were covered with paper.

"Stop! stop!" said Nettie. "This is too delicious. Let us carry everything into the class-room."

All the things made a gallant show on the bare floor—such a picture as might have been painted and hung upon the walls of some great banqueting hall. It would have been called Christmas Plenty in the Olden Time. The game lay in an inner circle, surrounded by the boxes of fruit, and the cases of wine. The barrel of oysters formed a sort of tower in the centre, and the children were gathered around the mysterious box, over which Helen stood as guard.

All was silence while she opened the first parcel.

It was wrapped in tissue paper, as costly things should be, and on it was a card, "For Nettie." Opened, it proved to contain a winter jacket of the very finest and best. The next was marked, "For Charlotte." That contained a brand-new dress, warm and soft; and so with all the rest. For the girls, dresses; and for each of the boys—the parcels being labelled, "for Gaspard, care of his father," and so on—a bank note, white and crisp.

Never was there such a Christmas present.

"But nothing at all for Ruth?" cried Nettie. "Oh, Ruth, it is a shame!"

"Had you not better read your letter, professor?" asked Helen.

"Ah, to be sure. The letter! the letter! Now it is strange that I should have forgotten the letter. Gaspard, my son, take the violin So. Come, here is a letter, children."

Instead of reading it aloud, and at once, he began by solemnly taking Ruth's hand and raising it to his lips with the courtesy of the "ancien régime."

"Listen, children. This is all the letter:

"For those who love Ruth, and have been kind to her."

"That is all, children, that is all." The professor blew his nose. "Always a blessing to us, from the day when God's providence brought her to our home—always the sunshine of our house."

"No, no," cried Ruth. "You have been my parents, my family—all to me."

"It is from her earnings," the professor went on, "from her poor earnings, that our Christmas fare was to have come, because, I confess to you, Mademoiselle Elwood, that art is not remunerative in this quarter. But, pardon, mademoiselle, you were going out when these grand things arrived. You have delayed yourself on our account."

"Yes, I have to go out for an hour. Come, then, good night, Nettie; good night, children all. I am sure you deserve all the good fortune that can befall you."

Ruth ran after her.

"Helen, tell me what do you think it means? Is it John? Do you think it is John?"

"My dear, perhaps it is John. Do you remember the promise in the church?"

"Do I remember? Ah, Helen, can I forget?"

Helen hurried away, but as she opened the door she heard the professor strike up a cheerful note.

"Now, children all! The joyful dance of the Happy round the Monument of Plenty. Mademoiselle Antoinette will commence. Where, oh where is Rupert?"

And when Madame Lemire returned bringing with her the humble leg of mutton, she found the children executing one of the professor's highest conceptions—a Pastoral Piece—round such a display of splendid things as even Leadenhall market could not surpass.

CHAPTER X.

BEN HAS HIS REVENGE.

Out in the cold December evening Helen and Ben walked through the streets crowded with the late buyers in the Christmas markets. The old man was silent, thinking over his baffled hopes of justice. It was a bitter pill for him to swallow. After all these years, in which every day brought before him in stronger colours the blackness of the treachery which lost the Lucy Derrick, and destroyed so many lives; and after finding his enemy, the last and worst of the whole mutinous crew, to learn first that Christian forgiveness might have to include even that desperate villain, and then that a more potent hand of justice than even British law was taking him away from his grasp;—all this was too much for the good old man. Helen divined his thoughts, and tried to lead them back to other matters. "You will be rejoiced, Ben, to see Mr. Warneford's good name restored, will you not?"

"Ay, ay, Miss Helen. Not that it makes any difference to him, nor

to you, nor to me neither, in so far as my respects is concerned. Boston Tom is at the bottom of that villainy too."

"He was, Ben, and if he is on his deathbed we must forgive him that as well as the greater crime."

Ben made no answer.

They came into Whitechapel High-street, all ablaze with gaslight, and presently arrived at the house.

The door was open, but there was no one in the front room, where Rupert had been wont of late to entertain roystering Jack and his friends with an exhibition of his art. No one in the passage, no one on the stairs—all was dark and silent.

They waited. What to do next? and where to go?

Presently they heard a voice upstairs, and footsteps.

Ben listened.

"That's Master Rupert," he said. "Follow close to me, Miss Helen."

The room was lit by a single gas-jet, flaring high, like one of those which decorated the butchers' stalls outside. It was an old-fashioned wainscoted room, but the paint was thick with dirt, and the ceiling, which had once, perhaps, been whitewashed, was blackened with smoke and grimed with age. It was furnished with a low, rickety wooden bed, and with a couple of chairs—nothing else, not even a washstand or a table. And on the bed, propped up by pillows, sat Boston Tom. He was dying; his cheeks were white and sunken; the old wound at the side of his lip showed red and ghastly against the deadly pallor of his cheek; his hair lay over his low, receding forehead; round his shoulders was thrown an old pea-jacket; and in his trembling fingers he held a tumbler half full of rum.

He looked round and saw his visitors, with a curious smile.

"Ben Croil, is it?" he gasped; "old Ben Croil the bo's'n. Thought you was dead, mate. Thought you was cast away in the captain's gig—you and the young lady and George Warneford. Glad you're not; that makes three less—every little counts. Three less; bully for you, Boston Tom."

He raised the tumbler to his lips, and would have let it fall in his weakness, but for Rupert, his sole companion, who held it for him while he drank, with a look half of apology and half of recognition at Helen and Ben.

"It is all we can do for him now," he exclaimed.

"Does he know it?" whispered Helen. "Does he know his condition?"

The man, who had closed his eyes for a moment, opened them and bestowed a wink upon her which saved the trouble of speech.

How to address this man? How to touch with the slightest spark of human feeling, a heart so callous and so seared?

Ben Croil saved her the trouble of consideration. He stepped to the foot of the bed and gazed steadfastly in the face of his enemy.

"At last I've found you," he said.

"Ay, mate, you've found me, and none too soon. Guess I'll save my neck yet." He spoke with an effort, but there was the determination of keeping it up to the end in his face.

"Where's that rope you spoke about, bo's'n?" he went on. "Cheated you, after all. Boston Tom's booked. Look ye here, mate, all of them fellows is dead and gone, every man Jack of them. Some of 'em drowned; some of 'em cut up for food when we took to the boats; some of 'em food for sharks. Youngster, give me hold of that bottle." He took a pull at the rum and went on, after a fit of coughing, which might have killed an ostrich. "Ugh, it's this cough that prevents me from talking; prop me up a bit more, boy. So, Ben, you're done this time."

"Say you're sorry, mate," said Ben, in whose mind, touched by the sight of the forlorn wretch, Helen's teaching suddenly sprang up full blown into charity. "Say you're sorry."

"What's the use of that?" asks the impenitent murderer. "That won't bring back the Lucy Derrick. Of course I'm sorry. Who wouldn't be sorry with nothing but the gallows or the black box? Sorry!" Then he turned to Rupert. "See, boy, you're a trump; you've looked after me when all the lot bolted; you're the one as has stuck to me these days, and never let me want for nothing. So I'll give you all I've got left, and that's a word of advice. If you go to sea, don't go mutineering, and keep your hands from slaughtering captains and mates. Then you'll live to be a credit to your family."

"Are you sorry for nothing else, Thomas Pringle?" Helen asked.

"Lots," he replied. "Lots. Buckets full. But then Thomas Pringle is gone for many a year, and Boston Tom's took his place."

"In the case of George Warneford now, the man who escaped with me in the boat——"

"Ay, ay. I remember well; that was a bad job, that was."

"I know all about it," said Helen; "your brother Samuel told me."

"Did he now?" Boston Tom asked the question with an air of keen interest. "Did he really? I did use to tell him that, if he ever split on that job, I'd take him out some dark night—say Hampstead-heath way—and brain him; so I would have done too, three years ago. Suppose it's no use thinking of that now; can't be done."

"All about it," continued Helen. "Samuel forged the cheque at your instigation."

"So he did, so he did; that's a fact. I wanted the money bad, very bad I wanted the money at that time. Warneford got it hot, and I laughed."

"Samuel has written a confession of the whole," Helen went on; "but I want your confession."

"Then, my lady, you won't get it; so you may go away again, and leave me here till the time's up. More rum, my lad."

He lay back after this effort, and closed his eyes, exhausted. He opened his eyes again after a few minutes, and uttered, with great enjoyment:

"Catch a weasel asleep! If Sam has confessed, that's all you want if he hasn't, you don't catch me napping."

"He has confessed indeed," said Helen. "Do you think I would bring you an untruth, now of all times in the world?"

He shook his head.

"There's one thing more to be said, Boston Tom," Ben stuck in. "'Tis a small matter, this old forging business, and if Miss Elwood wants your name at the foot of a bit of paper, you may as well put it there. Murder's different, and, by George, if you don't do what she asks, I'll step out and fetch a policeman. If you can't be hanged, you shall sit in a cell without the rum."

"Give me another drop, boy."

"Let be, let be!" said Ben, interposing and snatching the bottle from Rupert. "Not another drop shall you have until you've made that there confession."

The dying man stretched out his hands with a gesture of despair.

"Not the rum!" he cried, "not the rum. Take anything away, but leave me that. You, boy; you're stronger than him; fight him for it; tear it out of his hands; make him give it up to you. Up, boy, and fight him!"

But to his surprise the boy joined his enemies.

"You shall have your rum," he said, "when you have signed the paper."

Then he lost his courage, and began to moan and whine exactly like his brother Samuel.

"I'll sign anything," he said, "if you will give me the bottle."

Helen wrote rapidly. She had all the facts, and wanted nothing but a simple declaration. In a few minutes she was ready.

"Listen now. Tell me if this is all you have to say:

"'I, the undersigned, believing myself to be dying, solemnly declare that the forgery for which George Warneford, clerk to the house of Batterick and Baldwin, was convicted and sentenced to twenty years' penal servitude, was committed by my brother, Samuel Pringle, clerk

in the same firm. I also declare that the whole of the forgeries, of which that was the last, were by the same Samuel Pringle. They were committed at my own instigation, and for my own profit; I had the spending of the money, and Samuel Pringle, my brother, never touched a penny of it. George Warneford knew nothing about it from the beginning to the end.'"

"That's about all," said Thomas Pringle. "I've nothing more to say; it's quite time; give me the bottle."

"Not yet," said Ben. "Take time—so! Now sign as well as you can."

Helen guided the fingers while the signature of Boston Tom slowly drew itself across the bottom of the page; then the pen fell from his hand, and Boston Tom's head fell back upon the pillow. For a while they thought him dead, but he was not; he opened his eyes and motioned for the rum, which Rupert held to his mouth.

"Leave me to the boy," he sighed wearily.

While they thus looked on at this miserable ending of a shameful life, there was a noise below, and steps were heard upon the stairs. The door opened, and Dan'l Mizen appeared; behind him two policemen.

"There he is, gentlemen," said the ex-ship's boy, eagerly. "There he is! That's Boston Tom, the ringleader of the murderers. And, oh! here's Mr. Croil, gentlemen." He turned to the policemen. "Bear witness for me, I'm the first to give information. I'm Queen's evidence. I'm the one that came forward first."

"Thomas Pringle, alias Boston Tom," said one of the policemen, "I've got a warrant for you. It's mutiny and murder on the high seas; and remember, what you say now may be used against you in evidence."

Boston Tom raised his dying head, and looked about him, trying to recollect.

"It's all a dream," he said. "What's gone before in the dream? You're Bo's'n Croil; you are old Ben. I know you. There's Dan Mizen. We're all honest men here, play fair and square, drink square and fair, pay up and play again. Pass the rum, my boy."

And with these words Boston Tom laid his head back upon the pillow and closed his eyes. They waited for five minutes. He did not open his eyes. One of the constables took his hand and felt his pulse. The hand was cold, and the pulse had stopped.

He had gone before another Judge.

CHAPTER XI.

CHRISTMAS EVE.

THE next day was a day of mystery. Miss Elwood had a long talk in the morning with Madame Lemire and Antoinette, the result of which

was a great crying of all three, followed by mighty preparations, the like of which had never before been witnessed in Yendo Street.

It was holiday with the professor; but he, too, conscious of impending change, roamed restlessly from one of the two rooms to the other.

Ruth stole out after breakfast, accompanied by Charlotte, and took refuge in the church, where she had her organ to attend to till dinner time. When she returned, she too felt that it was a very curious and mysterious day. Old Ben, who, like the rest, was restless and disturbed, opened the door and poked his head in just to say, in a hoarse whisper:

"It is all right at last, Miss. Heart up, pretty," and then he disappeared.

Nettie, too, came rushing up from the kitchen once in every quarter of an hour, just on purpose to kiss and hug her, and then, after a pirouette or two of wonderful dexterity, rushed downstairs again and disappeared.

And then the professor came and sat with her—the kind professor, her devoted friend. He too was silent and restless; he could not sit still, he fidgeted on his chair, he stood on his toes, he danced on his elastic feet from one end of the room to the other, and then, before finally dancing out—which he did after half an hour of this performance—he took Ruth's head in his hands, and kissed her on the forehead.

And when he was gone, Ruth felt that he had dropped a tear upon her brow. For everybody now, except the children and herself, knew the whole story. They knew now what it all meant, the mystery of all this coming and going; they knew now the reason why this mysterious couple, this so-called brother and sister, had sought out these obscure lodgings in the unknown region of America Square. Helen, before going out on her errand of victory that morning, had told Madame Lemire the whole story. Therefore Nettie and her mother had a good cry, and cried at intervals during the whole day, insomuch that the grand culinary operations were as much wept over as if they had been intended for the cold meats of a funeral banquet. They told Charlotte, and Charlotte, after telling Gaspard and Rupert, crept upstairs and sat on a footstool, with Ruth's hand in hers, thinking what a wonderful story it was; and then, because we all want to have a little of our own interest in everything, realized how dull the days would be without Ruth to cheer them up.

"Tell me what it means, Charlotte," said Ruth. "What is the matter with everybody? Is it on account of the mysterious Christmas present?"

Charlotte shook her head.

"Better than that," she said. "That means only feasting. Far bet-

ter than that; something very, very good, Ruth—something that will make us all happy; because it will make you happy. Think of the very best that could happen to you, the very best, you know—not a silly wish, not something, you know, for to-day or to-morrow, but for always—and then be quite sure you will have it; and more—yes, more."

The afternoon dragged on, and the early evening brought blindman's holiday. Then the children came flocking in, to sit round the fire and talk, as was their usual custom, with Ruth Warneford to tell them stories. But she told them none that evening, because she was anxious and disturbed.

Presently, one by one, the rest came in. The professor, without his violin, balancing himself on tiptoe; Nettie and Madame dressed as for some unusual ceremony, and with looks of great mystery. The boys came in too, Rupert and Gaspard—the former with folded arms and a certain melodramatic gloom, the latter bursting with the importance of having a real and wonderful secret to tell.

The elders tried to talk, but it was no use. Conversation flagged, and a damper was thrown on any more efforts by the sudden breaking out into sobs and tears of Madame Lemire. When Nettie and Charlotte followed, and all three fell to kissing Ruth and crying over her at the same time, the professor, followed by his two eldest sons, retired to the class-room, whence presently issued the well-known strains of the violin, accompanied by sounds indicating that, with his two sons, the professor was seeking consolation in Art. As for the children, all this crying, with the house full of the most enjoyable and hitherto undreamed-of good things, seemed a kind of flying in the face of Providence; so that when, at six o'clock, a carriage drove to the door, it was a great relief. The professor returned and lit the gas, and the others formed a group involuntarily.

Helen was the first who entered, and she was followed by Mr. Baldwin and John Wybrow.

John Wybrow? Was it possible? Then this great thing was—was——

"My own dear, dear, dear Ruth," said John, quite naturally, holding her in his strong arms. "Don't cry, my darling. It is all right at last, and here is Mr. Baldwin to tell you so."

"We have done a great wrong, my dear," he said solemnly; "a very great wrong, and God forgive us for our hard hearts, and for our readiness to think evil. I am here to ask your pardon—very humbly to ask your pardon. Take her, John, and make her happy." He spoke as one deeply moved.

"And where, Miss Elwood, where——"

He looked round the room.

"Not here—come upstairs, Ruth dear, with me; Mr. Baldwin and all of you—yes, all of you. Come, kind friends all. Ruth, there is one more surprise for you, and then we shall have finished."

She spoke with quivering lips, and led the way upstairs.

Her brother, standing impatiently before the fire, sprang to meet her.

"Yes, George," said Helen; "It is done. Ruth, dear, this is not my brother, but my betrothed. It is your own brother; your own brother George. Do you not remember him now? Yes, Ruth, your brother restored to you indeed, and his innocence established before all the world."

Then said Mr. Baldwin, who leaned upon John Wybrow while he spoke, and spoke very slowly:

"George Warneford," he said, "I have been thinking in the carriage what I should say to you, and could think of nothing; no, nothing that would express my sorrow and my joy."

George Warneford shook hands with him without a word. He could find no words; his sister was clinging to his neck weeping the tears of joy and thankfulness, and his own heart was overcharged.

"I have sinned greatly," said Mr. Baldwin; "I was too ready to believe evil. I should have known all along that your father's son could not—could never have done that thing."

"Say no more, sir," said George; "let the past sleep; tell me only that you are quite and truly satisfied."

"I cannot let the past be forgotten, George. A great injury has been committed, and a great reparation must follow; the reproaches that I have hurled at you in my thoughts for the last eight years have come back upon my own head; nothing can ever make me forget. You kind friends," said the old man, turning to the professor and his family, who were gathered, not without an instinctive feeling as to artistic grouping, in the doorway, "who have entertained Ruth Warneford as one of yourselves, and have known her story all along, how shall we thank you? To-morrow is Christmas Day, but on the day following I shall proclaim George Warneford's innocence to all the people of the firm, and, in their presence, humbly ask this injured man for pardon."

"No, sir, no. My kind old master, there is nothing to forgive."

"John, my boy"—Mr. Baldwin turned to his nephew—"tell me what I ought to do."

"First ask George to let me marry Ruth," said John, holding out his hand.

"Granted at once," said George; "that is, if Ruth says Yes."

They shook hands, and the audience—the Lemires—clapped their hands and shouted.

"What next shall I do, John?" asked Mr. Baldwin, wiping his eyeglasses with his handkerchief.

"The next thing you must do is to give away Helen Elwood on her wedding-day, which must be mine and Ruth's as well; and you must buy her the very handsomest present that you can think of; no curmudgeonly gift will do."

The audience clapped their hands again, approving this. John Wybrow, who was a practical man, then said there had been enough of tears.

"Ay, ay, John. What next?"

This time it was old Ben who stepped to the front, and touched his gray old forelock.

"Beg pardon, sir, there's one that ought to be remembered. Who found out Boston Tom and sat by him night and day, so that he couldn't escape if he wished, and stuck to him? Stand for'ard, Master Rupert. That's the lad, sir. He wants to go to sea; give him a passage out and back in one of your own ships."

Mr. Baldwin shook hands with Rupert, now of a rosy hue.

"You shall have whatever you like to ask for, young gentleman, if I can give it."

Once more a round of applause from the family. By a dexterous movement of the right leg, Rupert gracefully stepped over their heads, and deposited himself in the background.

"And nothing for you, Mr. Croil?"

"Nothing for me, sir," said the old sailor. "I belong to Miss Helen."

"Anything else, John?" asked Mr. Baldwin, still unsatisfied.

"You ought to give desks in your office to as many of Mr. Lemire's sons as like to accept them; and, my dear uncle, the partnership which you promised to me, and which I threw over with so much bravado in the church——"

"It is yours, my boy, to begin from the new year."

"No, give it to George Warneford, as some reparation for his eight years of unmerited suffering."

"That will not be fair," said George.

"But the audience clapped their hands again.

"Both of you, both of you," said Mr. Baldwin. "The firm can take in both. And what more, John?"

"Why, sir," said John, "I find that Madame Lemire would be delighted if we would all stay and take supper here; and I really think that, if the professor would allow such a thing, we might have a little dance downstairs before supper."

Again the audience clapped their hands, and there was a move to the class-room.

The professor took his violin of ceremony.

"Simple quadrille of four," he announced. "Mr. Warneford and Miss Elwood at the head, Mr. Wybrow and Miss Warneford for vis-à-vis."

He struck the floor with his foot, and began to play. It was a lame sort of quadrille at first, because two of the performers had tearful eyes, and would rather have sat in a corner. But John Wybrow knew what he was about and what was best for everybody.

Then they had a waltz, and Rupert danced with Ruth, while John took Helen.

Then began the dancing of high Art, after this respect to social usage.

"Danse de Foie!" cried the professor. "Pas seul, Mademoiselle Lemire; pas de deux, Mademoiselle Lemire and Monsieur Rupert Lemire."

At eight, Madame Lemire announced that supper was ready, and they all filed in. Needless to tell all the splendours of this wedding feast, only, as they entered the room, an unexpected sight greeted their eyes. Rupert, holding a sword in his hands, was standing on the table and, as they crowded in, executed a grand dance among the dishes, as difficult and as original as any Indian dance among eggs. And such was the love of the Lemire family for Art, that this spectacle gave them more delight and pride even than the pheasants and cold turkey, with champagne, which followed.

Mr. Baldwin, after supper, asked if he might propose a toast.

"Not the health and happiness of George and Ruth Warneford," he said; "that is deep in all our hearts. I propose that we drink the health of Professor Lemire, who is a good and a kind man, that we wish him all the success that he wishes for himself, and more; and that we thank him and his wife, and his children, one and all, for their faithful love and care of Ruth. Let us promise never to forget the great debt we owe him—a debt so heavy, that no service could pay it off; a debt, my dear friends, which we would not pay off if we could. For in this house Ruth was received with love, and brought up, in God-fearing ways of truth and religion, for you, George Warneford, and for us."

* * * * *

My story is told. You will see now, reader, who has told it. The writer is my wife—my Helen. Twenty years have passed since that day, and we are old married people. Some of those who played their part in the drama have departed from us; old Ben is gone, and Mr. Baldwin; the professor, who caught a cold from going into the rain in

his pumps, is gone too ; his wife was not long in following him. The young Lemires, however, have done well. Rupert went out for his voyage, but, once in Melbourne, stopped there, and is there still. He long since married, but he sends Ruth a present every year. His sister Nettie went on the stage as a danseuse, and after two or three years danced herself into the affections of a young fellow, who only wanted a wife to make him the steadiest and best of men. She took care of all the younger branches, except Charlotte, who lives with Ruth Wybrow, and is a second mother to the children.

And as for me, I am at the head of the firm of Batterick and Baldwin, the other partner being John Wybrow. Our chief clerk is Gaspard Lemire. I got the Queen's pardon, which was necessary, Mr. Baldwin said, for my complete restoration to the world ; and I had the temporary annoyance of seeing my story told in the papers, and mangled in the telling too. I can never be too grateful for the recovery of my good name ; but the thing for which I am most constantly and unceasingly grateful is for the gift of a perfect wife—the most divine gift that was ever vouchsafed to man.

To the Reader.—Owing to the length of this story we are compelled to greatly curtail the several Departments following, and to omit our monthly Book List altogether.

Topics of the Time.

THE CHURCH AND THE THEATRE.

OUGHT clergymen to smile on the theatre? This is a question which Professor Blackie, with characteristic daring, bearding Puritanism in its native home, answers in the affirmative. It is now causing discussion in our own newspapers. The question is one of great interest, and we should be glad if we could say that the problem it involves had been solved by the Greek professor. More than a year ago that great actor, Mr. Irving, invited clergymen to attend the theatre in order that their influence should repress what was bad, and in no special way, as he contended, connected with the drama. It is fifteen years since Mr. Gladstone made a speech, in which he spoke enthusiastically of the educational influence of the theatre. But the drama in the mind of Professor Blackie is the drama of Shakspeare, or a drama inspired by a genius as pure, if not as great. The theatre in the mind of Mr. Gladstone was that theatre in which Charles Kean had beggared himself by his Shakspearean revivals, and that earlier theatre to which the world owes so much—which is connected with the sublimity of Æschylus, the pathos of Euripides, and the greatness of Sophocles.

On the Saturday prior to opening his Greek class, the Professor had witnessed Mr. Irving in two plays, "Hamlet" and "the Bells," both of a high moral character. Does the conclusion follow, that the modern stage is "performing nobly its proper function" as practically as a national pulpit? It does this undoubtedly "on some occasions;" but this is all that can be said. The Professor never saw anything to be condemned, at any of the great theatres, and never found himself in bad company in a pit; and he declares that with regard to public amusements generally, the clergymen of Scotland had taken a false position, and would have to "wheel right about" if they meant to do any good.

We think what Professor Blackie says is worthy of consideration as far as it goes, but he does not cover the whole ground or meet the case. There is undoubtedly a modern drama which is impure in motive and texture, in which the plots and dialogues are as objectionable as one of Wycherly's comedies; there is a comic opera which in matter, and still more in the way it is put on the stage, has the reverse of ennobling influence; there are ballads of which the less said the better, though we are far indeed from saying a ballad may not be a pure and delightful performance; there are the late hours in big cities like Edinburgh and New York; there is the influence of money, to which stage managers have shown themselves susceptible in a way better not dwelt on; there is the peril of a vagrant profession, success in which leads to intoxicating wealth, and still more intoxicating flattery: all this and

more, is in the mind when "the theatre" is spoken of. Professor Blackie, we fear, has not cut the knot; but it may be the knot is to be cut, and whether it can or no, well deserves the discussion alike of clergy and laity. Puritanism went too far; it is possible to go too far in the other direction. Men will have their "cakes and ale," but there is no reason why they should not so have them that the best of divines would find it quite consistent to give his blessing.

IMPERIALISM IN THE UNITED STATES.

A telegram informs the world that a newspaper called the *Empire*, and intended to be published three times a week, has been lately started in New Orleans. At the head of the first page is a medal on which Grant is represented wearing a laurel wreath. Above is the inscription "Ulysses Imperator," beneath the words "The Empire is peace;" words uttered by Napoleon III. in one of his oracular speeches. The thing is evidently an elaborate joke, intended probably to injure the Republican party. But it would have no point unless there had been a good deal of talk about Grant's possible designs to convert the Republic into an empire. It is hard to find any justification in his conduct, for attributing such designs to him. But nothing is more common than to hear Democrats express their fears of "Grant's bayonets." It was the *Herald* first started the idea that Grant wanted to play the part of Cæsar. Even so sage a newspaper as the New York *Nation* called attention recently to the fact that troops were being concentrated at Washington, and that General Grant had begun the preparation of his annual message. Unfortunately some of the party managers on both sides show an unscrupulousness from which anything might be expected. But there is no sign that either the leading men, who in the end control, or the people at large, have in the least forgotten their loyalty to institutions which, after all defects are conceded, must be pronounced admirable of their kind. It may be considered ominous that a fear of Cæsarism should be uttered in any part of the country. But you can hardly conceive despotic power as existing for a week throughout a community so intelligent and so fertile in resource. The natural genesis, however, of despotism, is the subjugation of a whole people by means used to crush a part; the sooner, therefore, the reign of the carpet bagger in the South is brought to a close, the better.

MEDICAL TESTIMONY.

THE case of McCrae, who was recently tried in Hamilton for the murder of his wife, brings up the question of medical testimony in its bearing on judicial inquiry, and, we may add, on the character of a great profession as well as on public morality. The scandalous spectacle which persistently disgraces courts of justice—one army of skilled witnesses contradicting another army of skilled witnesses, has before now called forth the eloquent condemnation of the greatest ornament of the English Bench. The medical part of a murder case

is generally of a character to which only a Molière could do justice. Had we amongst us the great ridiculer of the quacks of the seventeenth century we should have a comedy of the "Medical Witnesses," which would soon bring about the needed reform. On the trial of the celebrated Palmer, the poisoner, the present Chief Justice of England, who was Attorney-General at the time, in summing up the evidence, spoke with withering denunciation of the suborned testimony of the medical experts. Yet, so far as we know, no step has ever been taken in parliament to meet the reason of the case.

We are ruled by an intricate system of law; and, as the object of every trial is to ascertain whether an accused person is or is not guilty of offending against its commands, the accused is entitled to the advocacy of persons "learned in the law." All witnesses who know anything of the facts should be at his command. The testimony of persons acquainted with customs bearing on his case is important; and, so long as no abuse follows, each side should be at liberty to call as many medical men as thinks fit. But no feature of judicial inquiry has been so much abused as that of medical testimony. It does not fulfil the purpose of testimony; for, instead of throwing light on the case, it confuses the jury, who have after all to take certain broad surgical facts, and construct their own theory. Nevertheless, for an hour or more the humiliating farce will have gone on; the court contemptuous, the throng laughing, as one file of practitioners declare that a wound could only have been caused in one way, while the opposing file call their Maker to witness, and pawn all their skill in asseverating, it could only have been caused in a manner diametrically opposite. Why is all this? The answer is such as should lead to a loud call to turn the hose on this dirty part of our judicial administration. One side is feed to swear for the accuser, the other for the accused. You cannot prosecute for perjury, and the remedy must be found in the removal of what has been found to be useless.

Take away from each side the power of calling medical witnesses, save only those who apart from their skill have a status as witnesses. Let there be in every district two medical men whose duty it shall be to attend to cases of wounding and murder and the large class of kindred offences, who may be called into court by either party, to enlighten the inquest, but whose fee will come, not immediately out of the pocket of prosecutor or prosecuted, but, out of that of the township, city, or village. This plan would, we fear, diminish the profits of the medical profession, not, however, as professional men but as "professional witnesses." It would add slightly to the burdens in communities, which could be balanced by fees. There would be no loss; the ultimate quotient would, we believe, show a pecuniary gain. But even were there a loss, ample compensation would be found in the clearance from our courts of a great scandal which strikes at the morals of the whole people, degrades the noblest of all professions, and brings into derision the administration of the law.

Olla Podrida.

"To every thing there is a season, and a time for every purpose under the heaven:" a time for plain fare and a time for plum-pudding; a time to be matter-of-fact and a time to be sentimental. Christmas is pre-eminently the season for plum-pudding and sentimentality, and the considerate reader will, therefore, forgive me if I discover a tendency to moralize a little. How is it, by the way, that an all-embracing charity is most frequently to be found in the atmosphere of good cheer? Suppose, now, that I preach a little homily suited to this festive season! There are sermons and sermons. There are sermons which are "rousing," and there are sermons which are quite otherwise. The author of "*Punch's* advice to those about to marry" made an equally brilliant *mot*, which is still retold by his friends. It was:—Advice to those who cannot sleep—Change your clergyman! I would not, for worlds, preach a Christmas homily likely to disturb the peace of mind of any one, for I would have every reader of this magazine of the opinion that Robin Goodfellow is not a bad fellow. The comic almanacs will tell you that this is the season for making good resolutions. What *I* trust is, that it may prove fruitful of good impulses, for I have no faith whatever in the making of good resolutions. It has always seemed to me that preachers and moralists, in dealing with practical ethics, overlook the value of a good impulse, and overestimate that of a good resolution. We all know with what the road to a certain place is said to be paved, and the proverb is a satire on the facility with which good resolves are made—and broken. But when we are visited with a good impulse, we are conscious that it is born of something higher than remorse or selfishness, which furnish the incentive to most good resolutions. I believe there is more potential goodness in following out the promptings of one good impulse than in striving to keep a whole Deuteronomy of good resolutions, for a good impulse is fruitful of its kind, while what are called "good resolutions" are only the reaction of individual faults of character.

> "When the devil was sick, the devil a monk would be;
> When the devil got well, the devil a monk was he!"

We can imagine even that personage making good resolutions, but we cannot imagine him visited by good impulses. The application of my little sermon is obvious: I would have us all throw the reins upon the neck of every good impulse, and go confidently whithersoever it leads us, for good impulses are as unerring as are the dictates of the conscience; while the making of good resolutions is a delusion and a snare.

A Canadian newspaper writer recently pointed the moral of his thesis thus:—"but *Tibril dzag dug*, as the Tibetans say." The adage is cribbed from Wilson's *Abodes of Snow*, where, however, the translation is given. There is a tendency amongst a certain class of English writers to use, on every possible occasion, words and phrases which are not English. Of all literary foibles that to my mind is the silliest. It is as if one would impress

his readers with the idea that he (the writer) was *au fait* in all the literary languages, and that it was his very superabundance of learning which constrained him to use a sort of *glossa gentium*. But *simplex munditiis* is as applicable to literary style as to female adornment, and I fail to see the κῦδος of affecting an ignorance of the resources of one's native tongue, or in pretending to a constant subtlety of meaning, in order to express which we must —we must—in fact—*wir müssen uns behelfen*. Any man who had a *scintilla* of νόος about him would know that there was what the Germans call *gefährlichkeit* to vigorous thinking in adopting such *usus scribendi*. *Favete linguis!* ye *gens de lettres*, who can only talk an *olla podrida* of languages.

Not long ago, an English writer said that American authors regarded recognition and acceptance in England as constituting their truest patent of literary nobility. The assertion was challenged and violently repudiated by various newspapers and periodicals in the United States—probably because there was not a little truth in it. What shall we Canadians say, when we find that a book written by one of us, on a subject peculiarly and exclusively Canadian, is classified by no less an authority than the *Saturday Review* as pertaining to "American literature." Yet this is what that periodical does in briefly reviewing Mr. Sandford Fleming's admirable *History of the Intercolonial*, and, on a subsequent occasion, of Mr. Hamilton's *Prairie Province*. We trust the time is not far distant when even the *Saturday Review* may find it necessary to devote some space to "Canadian literature."

It is often said that true art appeals to the boor as well as to the man of æsthetic culture. An experience of my own, during a visit to the Centennial Exhibition, and of which I made special mental note at the time, may serve to illustrate the truth of the remark. It was in the Italian Department, I think, that I came across a tableau of two wax figures, representing a Mary and a dead Christ. The group rivetted my attention. The love, and the anguish, and the reverence imparted to the face of the Mary was more than artistic—it was a triumph of genius. The form of the figures, and the very drapery upon them, were simply perfect, and I (though I have seen Madame Toussaud's), for the first time in my life, realised the fact that a group of wax figures might be made a work of high art. There was the Christ, with the marks of the crown of thorns, with the riven side, and with an expression of inarticulate goodness and departed sanctity that awoke holy memories; there was Mary, too, wistfully gazing upon the dead body with a love more divine than herself might be conscious of. Having noted all this, I raised my eyes in quest of sympathetic appreciation. A respectable-looking workman was standing by my side. He had also been looking at the group, and, in answer to my mute inquiry, he hazarded the remark, in the unmistakeable down-easter' twang:

"Guess he's bin shot."

I solemnly explained to him what I thought was meant to be represented, and while I was still speaking, he said:

"Do tell! Want to know! I guess you're right"—and passed on to look at something else.

ROBIN GOODFELLOW.

Current Literature.

It is impossible to say what revolutions may take place in poetic taste. But it seems to us exceedingly improbable that the heroic couplet will ever again hold the position it once held as a narrative measure. To ears accustomed to the variety of Mr. Tennyson's blank verse, eight cantos of heroic couplets could not fail to sound monotonous, notwithstanding vivid portraiture, rapid action and bright colouring. *Deirdrè [pronounced Deer-dree] does not throughout hold the reader's attention. Nevertheless it is a noble attempt to do for Irish legend what Mr. Tennyson has done for another mine of Celtic poetry. The heroine's beauty is the cause of as many woes as the wrath of Achilles. The poet did well to refine her character in accordance with modern ideas. We think it is a pity he did not vary the poem by giving a more lyrical form to such laments as her farewell to Alba (Scotland), which she regrets leaving as much as Béranger's Marie Stuart fears to visit it, as Queen. Giving the argument of a poem, unless when it is intended to criticise it at length, seems to us a very thankless task. Suffice it to say, that while King Connor is visiting his Story-tellers, Feilimid, a daughter (Deirdrè), is born to the host; that Caffa, a seer, prophecies her beauty and the evils it would work; that the nobles counsel the child's destruction; but the King orders it to be shut up in a gardened building until old enough to be his wife. The description of the growing girl here is very beautiful, and forms an excellent contrast for the scenes of battle which are to follow. Of course she falls in love with another than the King—Naisi—by whom and his friends she is carried away. After much warlike incident, the clan go over to Alba, and accept military service under the Albanian King, who unfortunately falls in love with Deirdrè, whereupon her husband and his tribe escape to one of the Hebrides. They are induced to visit Erin, and go back to Esmania, where they are entertained by the false King.

> Alas! for love, the slayer of brave men,

They are slain while sleeping off the weariness of toil, and the fumes of "ruddy wine," and the three leaders, Naisi and his brothers, are bound and condemned to die. The poem concludes with Deirdrè dropping dead on her husband's breast. The description of his sorrow is pathetic and powerful.

The author's style has been compared to that of Mr. Morris, but there is much less dreaminess about his muse. There are superficial resemblances, but Dr. Joyce's verse has far more life and movement than anything which has come from the pen of the author of "the Earthly Paradise.' Itis of Homer his battle pieces will remind the reader. He has a rich vocabulary. But not only does he weaken his verse by unnecessary amplification—a fault to be expected at times where there's a rich vocabulary—he destroys too often

* *Deirdrè, No Name Series*, Boston; Roberts Brothers. Toronto: Hart & Rawlinson, 1876.

the magic of poetry by the use of familiar expressions. Nor does he leave enough work for the reader's imagination. The following description of "Dawn" is very beautiful, but it would have been more effective if the lines italicized had been condensed, we were about to add, omitted, but that we were conscious some fine colours would thus be taken from the picture :—

A monstrous wave
Upheaved its broad gray back, and murmuring drave
Along the sound from answering shore to shore,
While clear and sweet, commingling with its roar,
Came sounds of blowing conch and breathing shell
And of all things that on the ocean swell
Follow the mariner's bark with omens glad,—
The wheeling sea-fowl and the Dolphin mad
With the keen zest of life; then silence came,
And the young Dawn arose in ruby flame!

The suddenness of this dawn is not true to local colour; such suddenness belongs to this continent, but not to the North of Ireland.

Similes are in some cases worked out at too great length, but, generally speaking, with great felicity. Take the following Maini had diffused through King Connor's Court scandal concerning Naisi and Deirdrè.

Therewith vague hints and nods and looks of bale,
Around bright Eman's green he spread the tale
Full secret, as when, 'mid the forest, gleams
A quiet crystal pool, unfed by streams;
Silent it lies with all its images
Of painted blossoms and sky-piercing trees,
And reed and rocks, till from its oozy bed
The otter sudden rears his murderous head,
Looks round a moment on the grassy plain,
Then turns, and dives, and disappears again;
Around the spot disturbing wavelets flow,
And to the banks in widening circles go,
Like the fell otter, Maini crept amid
The palace folk, and in his wiles was hid;
Like the wave circles widening as they sprung,
Spread the black venom of his bitter tongue!

This is a splendid picture :—

They looked, and saw
The eagle of the golden beak and claw,
And bronze-bright feathers shadowy overhead,
And silent on the elastic ether spread
A space, or with alternative flutterings,
Beating the light air with his winnowing wings;
While, underneath, the quick hares 'gan to flee
Into the brake, save one that tremblingly
Crouched blind with fear. Then, as when 'cross the heaven
On a wild March day the dark wrack is driven,
And a small cloud-rent sails athwart the sun,
Sudden a bright gleam smites the marshland wan,
Arrowy and swift, so like that flash of light,
The mighty King-bird from the heavenly height,
Shot down upon the shuddering prey below,
With a great whirr that raised the powdry snow
In a pale cloud around, and from that cloud
His piercing mort-scream echoed shrill and loud
Upon the listeners' ears, then with his prey
Up through the blue bright heaven he sailed away,

Leaving upon the snow a broad red streak
Of blood behind him.

In this fine piece of painting there is but one defect, and that is in the line

And a small cloud-rent sails athwart the sun.

Not until the reader has thought a second time does he catch what is meant by a cloud-rent sailing across the sun. When the "wrack is driven" that a cloud-rent should "sail" is inconsistent.

Deirdrè proves that another claimant has appeared for the "crown of song" from this generation.

Everything relating to Britain's Great Eastern Empire,* with its population of 200,000,000, ought to possess great interest for every one who speaks the English tongue. That so vast a country should have become tributary to the "tight little isle," is one of the most remarkable facts in history; and that the connection should exist as happily as it does speaks volumes for the wisdom with which British affairs are managed in these days. It was a "happy thought" to send the Queen's eldest son on a visit to India; and how well he discharged the manifold duties of his somewhat trying position, is now matter of history. Mr. Drew Gay, the special correspondent of the London *Daily Telegraph*, has told the story of the Prince's progress in a manner which brings the salient features of it before the reader with remarkable vividness. With the Prince, he landed at Bombay, and with him he passed from place to place, until the Paris of India, Jeypore, was reached. We have pictured to our minds, the magnificent landscape of Ceylon, and the wonderful festivities at Kandy, where, by the way, is exhibited the Buddah's tooth, worth a million sterling! We have brought before us the charms of Calcutta, and the royal landing on the banks of the Hooghly, the grand military spectacle at Delhi—famed in the Mutiny—when the Shahazsada passed the Jumna Musjid in the sight of a score of thousands of people; the Himalayas of Cashmere; the ascent to Jumna on the hill; the barbaric music, and the strange Asiatic costumes which were to be seen in every part of India. It is a book which, though slightly defective in construction, as all books must be which are made out of newspaper letters, has remarkable attractions. The interest of the letterpress is heightened by several illustrations, pourtraying some of the most remarkable scenes witnessed during the royal tour. It is not only a charming book to read, but will be, to every one who obtains it, a most desirable memento of the Prince's Visit to India.

Though well on in the mellow stage of life, Mrs. Harriet Beecher Stowe evinces no falling off in mental activity. Among the writers of the United States she holds the distinguished position of having written the book which has had the largest circulation. She has never done any literary work equal to her "Uncle Tom's Cabin," but though that was her masterpiece, she is

* *The Prince of Wales in India*; Or, from Pall Mall to the Punjaub. By F. DREW GAY. Toronto: Belford Bros., 1877.

never uninteresting, never unpleasing. Her "Footsteps of the Master"* is a venture in a new line—new, not in the sense that appeals to the highest and best instincts of humanity (for all her books do that), but that it is a distinctively religious work. It consists of readings and meditations for different church seasons, following the life of Jesus from Advent to Ascension, though without particular regard to ecclesiastical order. There are numerous poems, carols and hymns, interspersed throughout it. The mechanical portions of the book are admirable. The typography is neat; the illuminated titles very pretty, and the illustrations crisp and bright. It is a beautiful holiday book, as well as a helpful manual of religious teaching.

This is the season for Boys' and Girls' books of every kind "The Prattler,"† something of the nature of "Chatterbox," is excellent, both as to stories and illustrations. It has evidently been prepared with great care, and must commend itself to a large constituency.

How cleverly the art of story-telling is manipulated in "the Golden Butterfly"‡ is realized only when we look back on the unnatural characters in whom the authors have managed to interest us. The principal character, Gilead P. Beck, is intended as a study of the citizen of the United States, who has been in a dozen professions, from newspaper editing to mining, who "strikes ile," and who loses a large fortune in a manner which it is no harsh criticism to characterize as fabulous. But for much that is faulty in the book, the authors could, perhaps, plead Thackeray's excuse for never painting a murderer. A murderer, Thackeray said, he had never had the honour to reckon among his friends, or even among his acquaintances. Yet two such writers could not but give some idea of the type of American citizen they sought to depict, and Beck's hopefulness, his independence, his belief in his luck, as typified by the golden butterfly he carries with him, like the amulet of a Catholic devotee, are true American traits; but to think of a shrewd American who had "struck ile," wishing to give away all the money he could not spend, and ready to entrust it to a financier of the class of Baron Grant! Still more preposterous is it, that an American of forty-five, who had "done everything," had travelled from east to west and from west to east, coming north to "his dominion" to find a fortune and found an oil village, could use such a sentence as: "May be I may run a horse in a trotting-match at Saratoga." The racing men of Saratoga, or anywhere else below the line, would be not a little surprised at seeing one "run" a horse in a "trotting-match." There are many other defects in the local colour, which strike even an eye which has not been over the ground, and in the theatrical business the influence of Artemus Ward is too perceptible. The race with the bear, we must frankly tell the authors, seems to us incredible, and yet it is most interesting, because so well told. But, notwithstanding defects which are inseparable from writing about fields which have been brought

* *Footsteps of the Master.* A series of readings, meditations, hymns, poems, etc., following the course of the Life of Our Lord on earth. By HARRIET BEECHER STOWE. Toronto: Belford Bros., 1877.

† *The Prattler.* A story book for boys and girls. 150 illustrations. Toronto: Belford Bros., 1877.

‡ *The Golden Butterfly.* By the Authors of "Ready Money Mortiboy." Toronto: Hunter, Rose & Co. 1876.

before us only through the medium of the reports of others and our own fancy, the novel is an interesting one. It is well written. The authors succeed in winning our interest in the fate of more than one of the characters; but we would warn them against yielding too readily to the temptation to go on producing, without taking care that the store-house of observation shall be full.

It is an accepted truth that we must all have cares, and it seems equally accepted, although not so often formulated, that to talk about those cares, to philosophize about them, to point to possible issues of good from them, and to dwell on sources of emotion outside the mutations which are their cause, is a means of escape from the torture of failure, a salve for the sting of disappointment. The author of "The Cares of the World,"* is evidently a man of a gentle spirit and cultivated understanding who brings to his essays on this thorny subject the well-stored mind of a scholar and the piety of a Christian. There is a true vein of originality running through these essays, but it is the originality of a nature that has lived much apart, and not that of boldness of intellect; the originality which is akin to quaintness; the originality of a nature perfectly sincere. There are sixteen essays and much variety. The first essay is on "The Universality and Sympathy of Care;" the last on "Widowhood and its Hopes;" and throughout the whole, written in a fairly agreeable style, there is a great deal of just observation.

BOOKS RECEIVED.

Anecdote Biography of Percy Bysshe Shelley. Edited by Richard Henry Stoddart. Sans Souci Series. New York: Scribner, Armstrong & Co. Toronto: Willing & Williamson.

Josh Billings' Farmers' Allminax. For the year of our Lord 1877. Being about one hundred and fifty years (more or less) since George Washington smote the cherry trees with hiz little ax. Toronto: Belford Bros.

Canadian Almanack for 1877. Toronto: Copp, Clark & Co.

Infelice. By Augusta J. Evans Wilson, author of "St. Elmo." Toronto: Belford Bros.

Rose in Bloom. By Louisa M. Alcott, author of "Little Women." With Illustrations. Toronto: Hart & Rawlinson.

The Progress of Science.

The handsome building on Richmond street, which has recently been erected by the Canadian Institute, is now almost ready for occupation; so that the ordinary work of the Society will, in the course of the new year, be transacted in its own rooms.

* *The Cares of the World.* By John Webster Hancock, LL.B., Barrister-at-Law. London: James Spiers. 1876.

Undoubtedly the new building will give an impetus to the Society in the prosecution of the objects which it has in view; for, until now, the library accommodation has been very inadequate, and neither reading nor lecture room was commodious or comfortable. The aims of the Society are not so generally known as they ought to be, or a more lively interest would be taken in its proceedings. First among these is the advancement of science, and in fact the Canadian Institute discharges for Ontario the same function that the Royal Society does for England, although on a much smaller scale. Its machinery is the same; weekly meetings for reading, and afterwards discussing scientific papers, are held; a journal (*) of the proceedings is issued quarterly, and a library and reading-room are provided for the accommodation of members. The journal is exchanged for the published transactions of learned societies all over the world, so that the periodical table, furnished, as it is, with reviews and magazines, forms a source of reference equalled by few cities on the continent.

The Society must bring itself, however, into closer relationship with the people, and this cannot be done better than by organizing courses of popular lectures similar to those which are delivered at the Royal Institution, and which have done so much for promoting scientific knowledge among the Londoners.

At a late meeting of German naturalists it was resolved to ask Government aid to found two new zoological stations in the German Ocean, similar to that which has been so ably conducted as a private enterprise by Dr. Anton Dohrn at Naples. The places selected are Kiel and Heligoland, and it was proposed that England should be asked to take part in the establishment of that at the latter place. It is to be hoped that these will meet with more encouragement than the Anderson School of Natural History, which was in working order for a short time on Penikese Island, but which has now become defunct. Surely there are naturalists enough on the continent to render such an institution imperative; it is rather an anomaly that Harvard has to reserve one of the Naples tables for its young zoologists; if the Penikese station were revived this would hardly be necessary. The policy of the German Imperial Government has been so frequently directed to the encouragement of scientific research, that the project for the new European stations is not likely to be quashed for want of fun ls with which to start them.

In a paper on the mammals of Turkestan (†) Dr. Severtzoff discusses the affinities of the Persian deer (Cervus maral) with our Wapiti (Cervus canadensis.) He arrives at the conclusion that the animals are not specifically different, although the Canadian animal, unlike the Persian, does not change its coat during summer. He proposes the abolition of the local specific title, and the substitution of the specific name Wapiti or Maral for both.

It is sometimes thought that crystallized nitro-glycerine is more sensitive to shocks than the liquid substance. That this is not true has been demonstrated by M. Beckerhinn (‡), whose experiments prove that if a given weight has to fall through a distanceδ before it explodes the liquid substance,

* The Canadian Journal—Copp, Clark & Co.

† Am. Mag. Nat. Hist. Nov.

‡ Chem. Cent, Blatt, pp. 449 and 697, 1876.

the same weight has to fall through a distance $2{\cdot}7\delta$ before it explodes the crystalline substance.

An explanation of the origin of the manganiferous red clay, which I mentioned last month as occupying such a large tract of the sea-bottom, has been offered by Mr. Hardman, of the Irish Geological Survey (*). The globigerina-shells are formed chiefly of carbonate of lime, but also contain carbonates of iron and manganese, and silicate of alumina. In falling to the bottom the carbonate of lime is dissolved, and retained in solution by the water, the other carbonates are oxydized and sink to the bottom with the silicate of alumina. The red clay is composed of the latter, coloured with peroxide of iron, and the manganese takes the nodular form owing to the same molecular law which determines the form in which the carbonate of iron appears in clay ironstone.

A new enemy to the vine seems to have appeared in the vineyards of the Department of the Côte-d'Or in France. (‡) No traces of Phylloxera have been detected either in foliage or roots, and yet little fruit, and that acid, is obtained, and the plants are rapidly dying off. It has been noticed that this is especially the case in porous soil, whereas plants grown on compact soil have yielded a well-coloured fruit, with plenty of sugar. This has suggested a remedy to M. du Mesnil, which, indeed, he proposed before (†) for Phylloxera. He uses a beetling-machine provided with a flat iron plate, and worked by handles. This is used on perfectly dry soil, the surface of which by light, quick blows is rendered so hard that the insects are arrested in their passage from the earth to the leaves, and thus cannot pass through the transformations necessary for their life. This treatment does not succeed with moist soil, which gives under the blows, and would thus be rendered unfertile.

Notes on Education.

Dr. Dawson, the distinguished President of McGill University, Montreal, chose for his inaugural lecture at the recent opening of the University, the subject of "*Student Life in Canada.*" Dr. Dawson has the happy faculty of combining an earnest and pleasant manner in his address to students. Instead of repelling by a cold and professional style of inculcating "wise saws and modern instances," (which students so instinctively abhor), he seeks to win them by his earnest persuasions. The lecture is characterized by wise practical counsel and suggestions.

The Ontario Minister of Education, by invitation, still continues, with great advantage, his official visits to various parts of the Province. He is to

* Darwin—Insectivorous Plants.

† Comptes Rendus v. 83 p. 813.

§ Ann. der. Phys. v. Chem. No. 9, 7876.

take part in the inaugural ceremony of opening a very handsome and spacious central school building recently erected at Guelph.

The question of superseding rural school trustee corporations by Township Boards of School Trustees, is being re-discussed in the interests of economy and efficiency. The feeling in favour of the change is growing rapidly.

One of the most striking signs of literary activity among the schools for promoting secondary education in this country, is the publication by the pupils of various of these institutions, of a monthly publication, edited by themselves. Thus we have the "*Queen's College Journal*"—a very creditable publication of eight pages—issued semi-monthly, by the "Alma Mater Society" of the College; "*The Quarterly*," a more ambitious, but still excellent, "periodical," of twelve pages, published under the auspices of the pupils of the Collegiate Institute at Hamilton; the "*Literary Journal*," an entertaining sheet of four pages, "published by the Welland High School Literary and Scientific Society;" "*The Boys' Herald*," of eight pages, a fair attempt at journalism, published by Messrs. Bower & Perley, St. John, New Brunswick. Of these juvenile, but nevertheless very creditable publications, we remember the following which had once "a local habitation and a name," in connection with their respective Institutions. The first, we believe was "*The Oasis*," "published by the Literary Society of Victoria College, in 1842 or 1843;" "*The Calliopean*," published by the pupils of Prof. VanNorman, Burlington Ladies Academy, at Hamilton, in 1848; "*The Squib*," published by a Literary Society in Hellmuth College, London, in 1860; the "*College Times*," published in 1870-2 by the pupils of Upper Canada College. The pupils of the Wesleyan Female College in Hamilton, prepare a periodical in manuscript, we believe.

The success of the new University scheme, of Nova Scotia, is yet a question of doubt. At all events, one clause in the Act creating the University of Halifax, has given rise to a good deal of hostile criticism. Prof. Johnston, of Dalhousie College, has called attention to it. The clause forbids "the Senate to do, or cause, or suffer to be done, anything that would render it necessary or advisable, with a view to academic success or distinction, that any person should pursue the study of any materialistic or sceptical system of logic or mental or moral philosophy." Prof. Johnston shows how utterly impossible it will be to determine what is meant by the words in the Act. He says, "Logic is a Demonstrative, not a speculative, science, and admits of 'materialistic' or 'sceptical' views just as much as mathematics."

The version of the school system of Manitoba is a subject which is attracting a good deal of public attention in that Province. At present there are two Administrative Boards—a Protestant and a Roman Catholic. It is proposed to supersede the present system, by one closely allied in its general feeling to that of Ontario.

The Chancellor of the Exchequer, Sir Stafford Northcote, in distributing prizes at a Literary and Scientific Institution in London, delivered an able and interesting speech, in which he reviewed the educational condition of England during the last century. He regarded the progress made during the last twenty-five years as greater and more substantial than during the preceding seventy-five years.

Of the 2,141 candidates who entered for the last Oxford Local Examination, 1,424 passed. Of these, 421 gained the title of Associate of Arts; and 1,003, certificates.

Of 660 who offered themselves for examination to the joint Oxford and Cambridge Examination Board, 365 obtained certificates.

At the recent Social Science Congress at Liverpool, the subject of education received a large share of attention. It was the chief topic in the address of the Marquis of Huntley, President of the Congress. The Rev. Mark Pattison, Chairman of the Educational Section, also delivered an address of much force on the defects of primary education.

Cavendish College, so named in honour of the Duke of Devonshire, Chancellor of the University, has just been opened at Cambridge. The Duke and a large array of notables were present. "The College (says the *Educational Times*), is the outcome of several county schools recently established, and is intended to provide opportunities for obtaining a university degree earlier than usual."

An old lady named Mary Datchelor has bequeathed a sufficient sum of money for an endowed school for 350 girls. It is being erected at Camberwell.

Sir J. R. Quain has bequeathed £10,000 to promote legal education in England. It is proposed with this sum to form a professorship of Comparative Law, in connection with some college, university or public institution.

Recent "changes" in the working of the Education Department for Ontario, are thus announced in the *Globe* newspaper :—

"For some time back the Government has had under consideration a question which has given rise in the past to no small amount of acrimonious debate—the expediency of abolishing the Educational Depository. . . . . The Minister of Education, hesitating to abolish the Depository, has recommended, and the Government approved, certain changes which, even if they should turn out to be not quite radical enough, are still in the proper direction. . . . . The Act of 1874 . . . . . gave permission for purchases to be made from the ordinary booksellers, and provided for the refunding in cash of one-half of the purchase-money to the purchasers. Apparently this arrangement was equitable enough, but (the writer says) it has been practically defeated by the action of the Education Department." . . . . "A reduction" (the writer further says) was made by the Department in the price of books, "first to nineteen, and afterwards to eighteen cents. These successive reductions, while they have not entirely prevented trustees and others from dealing with booksellers, have prevented the latter from carrying on this branch of their business except at a loss. . . . . Meanwhile the Government has made a move in the right direction by making it nineteen cents. Should experience show that this is still too low to admit of any other parties besides the Depository participating in the trade, there is nothing to hinder the Government from restoring the original basis of twenty cents." In speaking of the Central Committee of Examiners, the writer adds :—"Recently two Public School Inspectors were added, and, now the Government has decided to add two more—Mr. J. Hughes, of this City, and Mr. G. W Ross, of Lambton.'

Musical Notes.

Mr. Sims Reeves has just concluded a professional tour through the English provinces, during the course of which he has been greatly annoyed by the unreasonable demands of provincial audiences for "encores." The nuisance

culminated at Manchester, when Mr. Reeves, after singing two encores as well as the two which were set down in the programme, declined to sing a fifth time, whereupon a noisy and ill-behaved section assumed the right to command; and, dissatisfied because Mr. Reeves preferred to be prudent, and declined to be coerced into repeating his song, they forgot the first elements of courtesy and politenesss. Madame Cave-Ashton, Madame Osborne-Williams, Mr. Nicholson, and even Signor Foli, were refused a hearing, and for nearly a quarter of an hour such a disturbance as was, perhaps, never heard before in a Manchester concert-room was continued. At length Mr. Pyatt, the manager of the concert, came to the front of the orchestra, and announced that, "in consequence of the disgraceful behaviour of the audience, the concert was at an end." It is to be hoped that there are not many English audiences who would thus insult a public favourite because he refused to sing five songs when he was only paid for two.

The English critics all agree in speaking in the highest terms of Mdlle. Albani's singing at the late Bristol musical festival, though the opinion of connoisseurs seems to be that she fails to excel in *bravura* singing. Her rendition of *cantabile* passages is, however, said to be magnificent.

Miss Kate Field, the well-known American actress and vocalist, made a most successful appearance at the Westminster Aquarium, a few weeks ago. The occasion of her first appearance was at a ballad concert, and although, by reason of her singing in Spanish, all her songs were in a tongue which probably not one out of fifty of her audience could understand, yet her success was undoubted. In some numbers the lady fairly carried her audience with her.

An operatic novelty has lately appeared in England, in the shape of an English version of Nicolo Isouard's opera "Joconde," which was produced for the first time a few week ago at the Royal Italian Opera House, under the auspices of Mr. Carl Rosa. Of the composer, Nicolo (for he is always known by his christian name) we hear nothing at the present day, and we doubt if any of our readers are even aware that he lived between the Battle of Waterloo and the overthrow of the Bourbons, and was at once contemporary and rival of Boieldieu. The opera was produced by Mr. Carl Rosa solely to give Mr. Santly an opportunity of displaying himself to advantage, and has but little merit in itself. A little Mozart, a very copious dose of water, with a dash or two of Boieldieu by way of flavouring, and you have "Joconde." The orchestra is small, and the orchestration is so bald that the opera might almost be played with a pianoforte accompaniment without losing very seriously in interest. So much for Nicolo Isouard.

We hail with much satisfaction the appearance of the following work :— "*Sonatas for the Pianoforte.* Composed by W. A. Mozart. Edited and fingered by Agnes Zimmermann. Novello, Ewer & Co." Hitherto too little has been known, even amongst cultivated amateurs, of Mozart's sonatas.

Herr Wilhelmi, the celebrated violinist, intends to remain in England till Christmas, at least.

M. Anton Rubinstein will undertake a tour this winter through Belgium, Holland, and England. He thinks of making a rather longish stay in London.

The chief event in New York during the last few weeks has been the *début*

in America of Mdme. Essipoff, the Russian pianist, who has made her mark most effectually in England, before coming to this continent. Her success in New York has been most marked, no *artiste*, since Rubinstein, having at once made such an impression.

The Marquis and the Marquise of Caux (*née* Adelina Patti) gave a charming evening party recently in Paris. Of course there was music. The first piece was a trio, sung by Adelina, and her sisters Amelia and Carlotta. Altogether it was a most delightful evening. Amongst those who were fortunate enough to receive invitations were, the Prince of Orange, Prince Galitzin, the Baron de Saint-Armand, Mr. and Mrs. Clarke, and Professor Peruzzi, Mdme. Patti's official accompanist.

Offenbach is working at a new opera, to be called *Le Docteur Ox*. The subject is taken from a story by Jules Verne.

The uncourteous and intolerant manner in which Italian opera-goers are wont to express their disapproval of an artist is not confined to them alone. Only a few weeks ago Mdlle. Priola, the well-known vocalist of the Paris Opera Comique, was hissed off the stage at Marseilles for singing while in bad voice. The grief preyed on her mind, she took typhoid fever, and two days after she died.

A very artistic monument has been erected at the Pere-la-Chaise cemetery to the memory of Auber. It consists of a marble pedestal surmounted by a bronze bust of Auber. On the side of the pedestal are cut the names of all the operas of the illustrious composer.

Madame Nilsson has returned to Paris from her successful tour in Sweden, and will next visit Holland, under the direction of Herr Ullmann. Her operatic performance in Vienna will be in January next, and she will sing in German at the Imperial Opera-house, in the "Huguenots," "Lohengrin," "Faust," "Mignon," and "Hamlet."

At a recent dinner, given at Passy, there were present the widows of the distinguished composers, Rossini and Spontini, the latter in her 86th year, and full of vigour. She remained in Paris during the siege and the troubles of the Commune.

Ernest Lubeck died a short time ago, at Paris, aged ninety-seven. He was in his time famous as the greatest pianist in Holland.

Bellini's sister and brothers have presented the City of Palermo with a page of the *Pirata* in their brother's handwriting.

The City of Stockholm recently offered a prize of 5,000 crowns for a Swedish opera. *Mirabile dictu*! the prize was carried off, not by a professional musician, but by a Custom-house officer.

Our Comic Contributor.

WITH A SPIRIT.

Mediums and spiritual phenomena and communications being the order of the day, I went to test a medium's powers, and, though I knew Josh Bil-

lings wasn't dead, I asked the showman to fetch Josh's spirit up "from below."

"Hish!" says the medium, "we never talk of below. From the "spirit world" is the proper phrase."

"Oh! very good," says I, "have Josh up out of anywhere you like."

Presently all the chairs, and the table and sofa began to dance, a dog barked, and I felt a feeling of a spiritual pin in the calf of my right leg.

The medium said that all these put together, signified "Josh" was "around." Then he asked me for $5, without which no spirit could ever be got to "communicate." I paid the money, and presently the tables, chairs, and

sofas executed another waltz, a neighbouring cat mewed, and a second pin went into my other calf. The medium said everything was now properly fixed, and produced a slate with which he went into a corner, and I heard a sort of scratching, which he told me was "Josh" writing.

When he showed me the slate I remarked that the handwriting was not at all like Josh's earthly penmanship. On this the table gave sixteen loud raps which intimated (the medium said) that Josh had re-modelled his caligraphy under a spiritual instructor. I accepted the explanation and the medium allowed me to copy from the slate the following

"REMARKS"

Solomon, when I arrived in the spirit world, told me he greatly envied me the parentage of the "maxim" in my Book, that "the fools do more harm than the rascals."

The lavish young fellow who is often heard contemptuously saying: "Pooh! what's a dollar!" will end by saying sadly: "Oh, where's a dollar!"

Anacreon will apostrophise his host: "Thou art a hospitable, cordial soul, and lovest a full goblet, but if thou would'st have me right royally enjoy myself, leave me to fill and drink as I list."

When I was on earth I used to note that the man who was ahead at billiards never found fault with his cue; whereas the other man's cue was too heavy, too light, too short, too long, or had a bad top. Thus in general life, 'tis never men who are in fault, but always the means, or instruments, or else the "luck" is against them.