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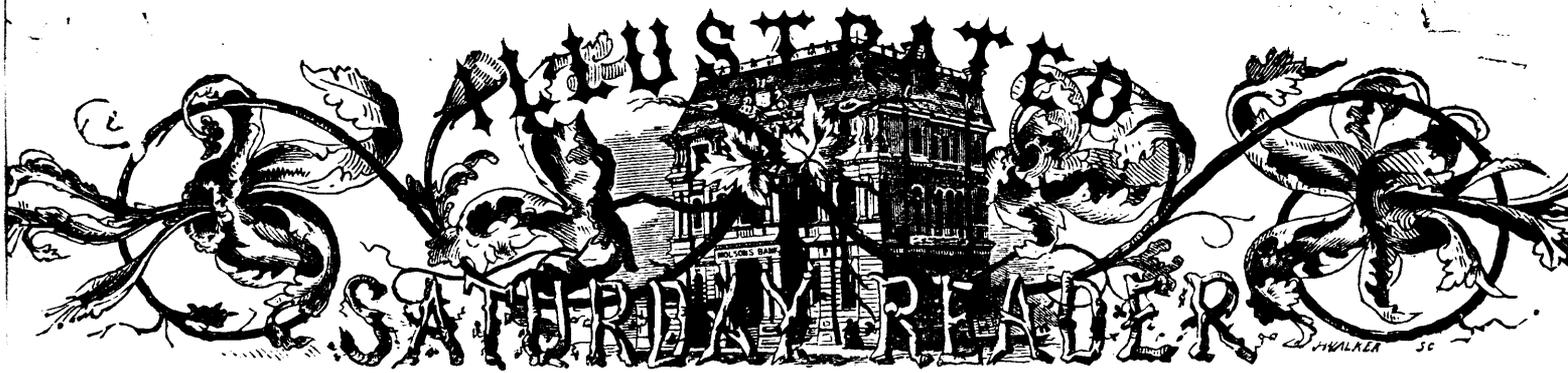
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THE LION IN THE PATH

(From the Publisher's advanced sheets.)

Continued from page 238.

CHAPTER LVIII.—DICK'S STEPMOTHER.

While the adventurer of Coombe Valley was thus engaged in a work that would have wonderfully interested Humphrey Arkdale, that personage was himself engrossed in matters involving equal energy of aim, and equal anxiety as to the surrounding circumstances. Let us take a glimpse of him on the morning after his return home.

"Hush, Jenkyns! I trust thy mistress sleeps. See and make a fire, and have breakfast ready; but step softly, lad, if canst."

"Step softly!" repeated Jenkyns, staring at his master as he took off his cap, and put back his long, lank hair. "Why, master, you don't mean it—a woman in the place, and you working without a fire, and never broke your fast this time o'day! Wait till I get the winder-bar down, I'll rouse the idle hussey."

"You'll do just as you're told, my boy. Hold your tongue, and make the fire."

As Arkdale, as if accidentally, fingered a certain strap, with which the shoulders of Jenkyns had more than once made warm acquaintance, the 'prentice only hung his head, muttering, as he took off and folded up his clean blue and white checked apron—

"And there's Dick, too. Who's to make his breakfast?"

"Who made it before, booby?"

"Who?" echoed Jenkyns, looking round as he sank on his knees before the fireplace. "Dye s'pose there's a young gal or a widdier in this town that aint been here in her turn while you've been gone, with something or other for Dick? Was there ever a morning I opened the door without finding somebody waiting with a smokin' hot pipkin o' new milk or a gallipot o' gruel, and askin' so kindly to be allowed to feed him as you'd thought he was the son and heir of the Lord Mayor, and so pleasant to me, too, with alwis a 'Good mornin' to ye, Jenkyns,' an' 'Any news o' your master, Jenkyns?' an' 'You'll tell him, Jenkyns, how agrieved I was I couldn't do no more for the sweet lamb,' eh? But the tale's changed now, master, since you brought madam home yesterday—nothing but black looks as I

come along this mornin'; and I reckon poor Dick may sing for his supper or whistle for his breakfast now."

Dick lay down on the floor in a bright beam of sunshine, that seemed to be radiating from him rather than shining down on him, so bright and lovely was the child in his morning freshness and sweet health. His eyes were gazing up at his father, who, from time to time, in spite of his sadness, glanced down, and exchanged with Dick looks of laughing idolatry. That sadness Dick regarded only as a bit of deep fun to make him laugh, and tried all he could to show his father his appreciation of it by puffing out his cheeks, blowing bubbles with his mouth, throwing himself on his back, and pointing delightedly with his rosy, dimpled foot at the unusual lines in poor Humphrey's face. Fun had always been the order of the day with these two; and neither of them being able to make themselves understood by words, they expressed their adoration for each other by laughter—not necessarily audible laughter, though there was plenty of that, but a silent laughter of the eye and lip, well understood by both.

Dick's merry noises, the crackling of the logs,



Dick gave one cry, that caught up all his breath,

and the clatter of the old and cracked utensils Jenkyns was setting on the breakfast-table, were the sounds which awakened Joan.

She woke happily, with a smile on her face and Arkdale's name on her lip. She thought they were at the inn where they had stayed the previous night, with the last stage of their journey before them; but her bright, refreshed eyes falling on a child's shoe and a child's toy, she recollected all. The name breathed in tenderness was repeated in agony, with her lips buried in the pillow.

"Humphrey—oh, sweetheart! what has come between us?"

Her next feeling, as she lay listening, was jealousy—jealousy of poor Jenkyns.

"The meddling fool!" she sobbed, as she rose, and began to dress indignantly. "How dare he touch my things? I would I had waked sooner."

She dressed herself with as much care as if it had been Sunday or fair-day at home. She looked wondrous well—her neckerchief was like snow, her hair like nothing in the world, but the loveliest flaxen hair. The little glass in Arkdale's cellar reflected a face infinitely more fair than the little Cam had shown him that September evening; for the last few weeks of happiness, idleness, and roadside fare had wonderfully enriched Joan's small share of beauty, giving it that softness, colour, and repose it had always needed.

Jenkyns was just pausing with a cup in his hand, considering in his own mind whether his mistress deserved her cup setting for her or not, when the door opened, and she made her appearance.

Jenkyns was so startled, he dropped the cup, and it broke to pieces. He had never really seen his mistress before, and was sufficiently struck by her appearance as to stand still, as he had been standing, on his awkward toes, with his tongue in his cheek. Joan did not allow him much time for looking at her.

"How is this?" demanded she, advancing imperiously. "Has your master nothing for you to do but he must needs set you a-meddling in my matters? Prithce, must the few things I have for use be smashed by a clumsy lout like you?"

"Prithce," answered Jenkyns, recovering his tongue and his heels as the same time, "must my master go without his breakfast when it pleases your ladyship to lie a-bed?"

"I think your master would be better employed in giving you a sound drubbing for your insolence than sitting there working in the cold before he's had bit nor sup," said Joan, trying to speak in an unconcerned voice, but growing tremulous towards the end of her sentence.

Arkdale had not yet looked up, or taken any notice of her presence. That slight quiver of her voice touched him, and he turned his head with the intention of saying something kind; but when he saw her standing in the firelight, looking so fair and fresh both in gear and face, the water rose to his eyes, and he said nothing.

Jenkyns, keeping at a safe distance from his master, seized a wig and stand, and began to comb, darting contemptuous glances at his mistress, who feigned not to see them as she swept off all his preparations for breakfast, and began to lay the table afresh.

Now and then she would ask Jenkyns if they had such-and-such an article, and the jealous 'prentice began to suspect she took a savage pleasure in always receiving an answer in the negative, as if the poverty of the place was beginning to prove a pleasant sort of foil to her quickness and ingenuity.

Yet, whenever Arkdale, to whom each question and answer gave a pang, glanced towards Joan, her movements and face assumed an air of sharp resignation.

"Where's the linen kept?" demanded she of Jenkyns.

"Linnin! What you want with linnin at breakfast-time?" said Jenkyns, prevaricating in order to spare his master's feelings.

"I want a tablecloth."

"Why, you just pitched it in the corner."

"I want a clean one."

"Well you'll have it when you wash that, I s'pose."

Here Joan got out one of her own home-spun cloths, shining like satin, and spread it on the table.

"Agrevatin' hussy!" muttered Jenkyns to himself.

"How is this, sir? I can't find more than one spoon!"

"Don't s'pose you could if you was to hunt till next St. Swithen's."

"This coffee-pot runs."

"You shouldn't a-scraped the black off, then. You might a-seen it was left on for a purpose."

"Are there but two of these yellow cups?"

"An' if there was three, d'ye s'pose I should drink out o' the same sort as master?"

Dick, clasping his father's leg with both arms, kept peeping shyly round at his fair stepmother and Jenkyns, and from time to time would lift his eyes to Humphrey's face with a half grave, half comical look, which seemed to ask, "Is this also fun?" but his father's face left him still dubious.

"Will you take your breakfast?" said Joan, at last. "Tis ready."

Arkdale rose, and after standing to warm his hands at the fire, sat down, and took Dick on his knee.

When Joan saw this, she thought of his words on the night before, and was seized with jealousy.

"I will feed the child," said she, sharply, "when we have finished."

Arkdale gently put him down, and Dick looked back at him archly, but tearfully, as if he thought the "fun" were going almost too far.

Jenkyns, who had taken the seat disdainfully pointed out to him by his mistress, got up, took Dick in his arms, and went and sat in the shop.

"Come to your breakfast," said Joan, "and put that child down."

Jenkyns showed no signs of obeying.

"I'll help you, my lad, in a minute," said his master, rising; "and if you don't mind your mistress next time she speaks to you, you and I'll have a little talk outside. Come, now, stir! Put the boy down, and come to the table."

"Master," answered Jenkyns, getting his back against the wall where the strap hung, "I'm very sorry I am," and he began to blubber, "but ever since Dick was born, I've never touched bit nor sup 'fore he was served, and I never will."

Arkdale knew that this rule of Jenkyns' had not been one of mere politeness, as there had been times when, if the 'prentice had satisfied his hunger first, Dick would have come but poorly off. He hardly knew how to punish the young man for his devotion to Dick, yet he felt Joan was expecting such open rebellion to be met with very sharp punishment. While he hesitated, she said, gently—

"Well, well, bring him with you, Jenkyns, if you think he is hungry, as perhaps he may be, since I was late this morning."

So Jenkyns sat down with Dick on his knee, looking happy, but abashed and deferential.

All breakfast-time Joan was frigidly silent. Arkdale had a few questions to put to Jenkyns, or not a word had been spoken.

When the 'prentice went to his work, and Dick was under the table at play with the bantam, Arkdale's heart suddenly misgave him at the thoughts of beginning the day's work under such a state of things; and just as he was leaving the fire-side, he turned back, and stood still.

"Joan, I thank you for your good patience with Jenkyns, and with the many other annoyances you have had to deal with this morning. Believe me, I have noticed and suffered for all."

Joan's eyes looked into the fire with a cold resigned gaze, that if it did not hide their tears, gave them a different meaning.

"But, of a truth, Joan, thee hast made the place so pleasant in spite of all, that thee'lt have me tarrying instead of hurrying away if thee dostna' mind."

"I have but done my duty, Humphrey, as I trust to God I always may do under all circumstances."

"By the mass, my Joan," said Arkdale, with a bitter sigh, "if 'tis to be but duty for us to serve one another now, what name can we give it come ten or twenty years?"

"I have enough to do to look forward to the next few hours at present."

He turned away with a heavy step, and went into the shop.

Poor Jenkyns had a hard morning of it. Dick was at play at his father's feet. Joan, when she had mended an old clean frock she had found among some rubbish, and prepared his bath at the fire, went to fetch him.

Both Humphrey and Jenkyns looked round with a pang as she took him up, and carried him off without a smile or a caress, and both listened for Dick's opinion of this unusual treatment.

All was quiet, however.

When Joan had got on the other side of the curtain which was drawn across the shop in the day-time, Dick stooped, and looked inquiringly in her face. Joan, avoiding the bright, arch eyes, sat down, and jerked off his clothes, flinging each to the far end of the room; and Dick, instead of being offended as each little garment was thus disposed of, kicked and crowed with delight.

Joan's movements became more and more sharp and unkind. Dick looked serious—puzzled, and sometimes glanced wistfully round at the old curtain, but always looked back trustingly at Joan.

He put out his hand to stroke her face. Joan held him off.

"The little fool!" she said. "How can I love thee while thy father loves thee better than me!"

She was determined to quarrel with Dick, but Dick would not be quarrelled with.

As she grew more and more angry, Dick grew more convinced all was meant for fun.

At last, when, after his bath, glowing with Joan's hard usage, he sat in his little shirt on her knee, Joan paused one moment in her task, and gazed at him.

She thought him the very loveliest thing her eyes had ever seen.

"He must always love thee more than me, and I must always hate thee," she said, in her passionate heart.

Dick's eye caught the glimmer of her hair; his hand snatched at it, and pulled it down about them both like a mantle of sunshine.

Glad of the excuse, Joan slapped the dimpled arm smartly, almost violently.

The two men heard the sound; and one, unnoticed by Joan, came from the shop, to which her back was turned, and stood watching and listening.

Dick gave one cry that caught up all his breath, and then paused with his mouth wide open and his head thrown back. Joan, now full of remorse, drew him to her, and kissed the hurt arm, trembling at the thoughts of the outcry that would come with his breath.

Dick's breath did come in good time, and with it not the expected screams, but a peal of fresh, bubbling laughter, while his eyes smiled up at her through their tears, with a look that said.

"You cannot cheat me; I know 'twas fun."

Tears streamed from Joan's eyes. She bent over him with a gaze of passionate love and awe.

"Thou blessed little child!" sobbed she, aloud. "Sure thou didst share thy mother's heavenly birth ere thou wast born to us, for thou art an angel, and I unworthy of serving thee."

"Nay, Joan; 'tis we who are unworthy of being served by thee," said a sad voice.

Joan rose and turned towards Humphrey with the child in her arms, half covered with the golden curtain he had pulled about them.

The boy was heavy for her unaccustomed arms, and she but her foot on the rail of the chair, and partly rested him on her knee as she stood.

"Humphrey, I struck your child. Canst forgive me?"

"How can I do other than forgive you, my poor lass, when I know you did it in the sharpness of your sorrow?"

"But 'twas a wicked sorrow, Humphrey."

"'Twas of my bringing."

"No."

"No, Joan? Ay, I remember last night you said 'twas you had cheated yourself; but I know that, had I been less blind in my self-conceit, I

should have rightly understood your reason for listening kindly to me, a stranger; but be that as it may, I trust to God you will find comfort here in time."

Joan hung her head and wept.

"Oh, Joan, I try not to look back, but how can I see you and not look back to the time that ended but yesterday, though it seems so long ago? Dost remember, lass, what didst think the best colours of all the pleasant harvest—the wheat and poppy and corncockle a-growing together? Thy face, my Joan, has caught all three—thy eyes the blue o' the corncockle, thy lips the poppy's red, and thy hair the ripe wheat's yellow. How, then, can I look at thee and not remember how happy we were a journeying together, and not say to myself, 'Sure my sweet fellow traveller loved me and I her?'"

Here Dick's hand and another's held up the golden curtain, and Arkdale, stealing in, found himself in a prison of shimmering gold and soft arms.

"Sweetheart, when would you think me truest? speaking yesternight, when I was sick and sore with disappointment, and weary with travel, or now—now that I am no longer weary or disappointed? Now that I hold thee and Dick in my arms, and feel myself more blessed than any woman on the earth?"

"If this is being false, Joan, never be true again!"

"'Tis being true to tell you I was false last night in letting you believe I came away with you for anything but liking for you, Humphrey. I think I loved you sooner than you me."

Humphrey said that was not true, but as pleasant a falsehood as he had ever heard.

Joan laboured all day with a stout and loving heart, and chatted and sang cheerily to Dick, who now preferred her company to that of his father or Jenkyns. She watched Arkdale, at first with anxiety, then with pride, as he threw himself into the business of the day—and, as he told Joan, a great day's business it was.

The news of his return had spread, and there came hurrying to his humble shop quite a crowd of persons on various errands apart from shaving and hairdressing. About a dozen huge silver watches were received by Joan into the interior, then came a few old clocks, and on enquiring of Jenkyns what these might mean, she was told that his master was the only man in the town to whom several of the tradesmen of Bolton, and, indeed, more than one of the neighbouring gentry, would trust the setting right of their watches or clocks.

One person who came mysteriously, requesting to see Arkdale alone, was so unceremoniously dispatched, that Joan ventured to remonstrate with her husband, telling him that Jenkyns had heard from some boys that the visitor had arrived in the town in a very neat cart, now put up at the "Royal George."

"Be at ease, my Joan," answered the barber. "I know the fellow; he has come to bargain with me for the secret of my new hair-dye, which I do not part with to the king's own wig-maker yet awhile."

Then came a country barber on a brown nag, which was held at the top of the steps by Jenkyns for full half an hour, to the great mortification of Arkdale's rival, Pritchard. This person merely came to beg for information concerning a certain new invention said to be in use in France—a little lathing-brush to use instead of the hand in shaving, and supposed to be in Arkdale's possession.

"Now, why," asked Joan, as the owner of the brown nag bustled out, taking a paper containing all the information he had wanted with him, and leaving something out of his stout leather purse on Arkdale's table—"now, why do you satisfy this one more than he who puts up at the inn like a gentleman?"

"Put it to my good nature, Joan," answered he, locking up the money.

"Nay," said Joan, "remember I have known what it is to bargain with thee."

"Then, cunning one, put it to my happening to know that a man will be in the town to-morrow with these brushes, if he arrive not to-day."

"Next time I want to sell my hair, I'll go to some one else, Dick," said Joan: "I am scarce a match for thy dad!"

"Yet, for all that, she drove me from twelve to fifteen, Dick."

"And gave it to him for nothing at last, my pretty Dick."

But all the rest of the day Joan watched him with smiling satisfaction, saying in her heart—"After all, in a great measure, he is right, whilst I am wrong. Of course, like all men, he goes into extremes; but I truly believe he is one to make a fortune. I am not for a Jack-of-all-trades myself, but these are good, solid, profitable talents which he has, and that no one can gainsay."

Joan had said that she would not look forward again, and she remained true to her word; but though she kept her mind's eyes closed, she could not help feeling the glow of a bright future any more than one can help feeling the sunshine by shutting one's eyes.

Sometimes while she was engaged in unpacking and finding places for the various items of her dowry, she would discover that, quite without her leave, her thoughts had gone through the cellar ceiling, and began to furnish the first floor. Nay, sometimes, to her indignation, she found them in possession of the whole house, which bore before it an announcement that "Humphrey Arkdale was Hairdresser and Clock-maker to his Worship the Mayor, instead of the invitation—"Come to the Subterranean Barber."

When it was evening the three sat round the fire—Joan at her spinning-wheel, Jenkyns nursing Dick, and Humphrey enjoying his rest lazily, as it seemed to the others.

But Joan's busy eye soon detected something more than mere enjoyment of rest in the attitude of Humphrey's figure. Moving her head a little, so as to see into his face, she saw that his large, shrewd eyes, which seemed to be looking at the chestnuts Dick and Jenkyns were roasting in the ashes, were contracted with the expression of a man who, while a crowd of thoughts are floating through his mind, is trying determinedly to hold and analyze one.

Joan watched him, thinking to herself, joyfully—

"Was ever a man's heart so deep in his business?"

Suddenly he looked up, and said—

"Sweetheart, didst ever use the spinning-jenny?"

Joan looked back at him with amazement, indignation, and reproach; looked, in fact, as she might have looked had he called her honesty into question.

"Well," said Arkdale, with a smile, "why look at me as I were mad? Hast used the thing, Joan, or not?"

"Never!" answered Joan, vehemently; "never, Humphrey, as I hope for God's grace at my dying day."

For some minutes after, when Arkdale had turned away and fallen into another fit of thoughtfulness, Joan drew out her thread with a perplexed and offended look on her brow; but by-and-by she said to herself—

"Now, what folly in me to show such hastiness! Here he spoke to me for the sake of civility, out of his deep thought, and I must needs quarrel with his words, as if he could pick and choose them, and feign what he did not feel. He is not a woman."

He sat silent so long that Joan began to grow jealous of the very thing she so much commended—business itself. Bending her head so as to catch his eye, she said laughingly—

"Come, a penny for thy thoughts."

"A penny! I want a fortune for them, Joan."

"I'm the more wishful of hearing them."

"Tell them to thee?" Humphrey looked at her with a smile, and taking her busy hands, pushed her wheel away and drew her within one arm. "Tell thee my thoughts? Why, as for that, I suppose, lass, I scarce can help myself; and yet I hardly durst."

"For why?"

"My Joan, thee'st of a tribe who, did they but know what thou wanst to know, were as like to tear thy husband limb from limb as look at

him. Thee didst get thy bread by the same trade as the poor mad lasses hereabouts, who set their lads to hunt and murder Hargreaves—poor Hargreaves, of the spinning-jenny, my mention whereof did turn thee white. Nay, Joan, be not hurt; I know well thy heart is too tender to have pleasure in such doings; and I know that, for my sake, thee'll look at these things from the other side now."

Joan did not answer, but, after remaining still and almost breathless for a minute, put his arm from her, rose, and stood by the fire, whose light showed her cheek had lost some of its colour.

"What was that?" said she, turning suddenly upon him, with voice and eyes full of alarm and entreaty. "Not my husband speaking kindly—pityingly, a most—of the wretch who tried to take the bread out o' the mouths of us poor girls. Poor Hargreaves! did I bear? He has a harder name in our part!"

"He has an honoured name in this poor home of mine and thine, Joan; and, should he ever set foot in it, will be made welcome."

"If he ever eats bread of mine, may that bread poison me," said Joan, all her superstition and passionate love for her class aroused.

"Yet, Joan, thy husband is the worse man of the two."

"As how? Hath he been at any such sorry business?"

Arkdale remained silent a moment, with his knee on the chair, his arms folded, and eyes fixed on the floor. Joan's eyes were on his face, with a look of sharp suspicion.

"Joan," said he, presently, in a measured patient voice, that touched Joan's heart even while it roused her suspicions more and more, "there are men—men I have known and spoken with—gifted with minds far-sighted and ready speech, who could show you how the very thing you so much fear and loathe—you and those I have taken you from amongst—is to be as much for your good as for the good of others."

"Do I want a wise man like you, Humphrey, to tell me there are liars and hypocrites in the world?"

"Such men there are," he said, as if he had not heard her, "and honest and true men. But for myself, Joan, I can only tell you that what I do and yet hope to do, I do and hope to do from a conviction it is good, and should be done; and, moreover, will be done by those who come after me, if not done by me. This I say, and that I speak truth God knows; and this is all I can say in justification of myself to you."

"Then say out—say out, Humphrey. Do not spare me! You are what they call an inventor."

"I hope to deserve that name."

"Oh, I have no doubt you are already! But as to the justification you spoke of—may I ask what justified your marrying me, a spinner, whose hatred for such doings as yours you must well know?"

"That very fact should give you better thoughts of me, Joan. How could I have any intent to injure those amongst whom I found a wife so dear and kind of heart as thee?"

Joan stood with her face turned away; her eyes were on the door. She felt just then as terrified and helpless as a lamb who finds itself treacherously lured into the home of the wolf, by whom her flock has been worried. In those days thieves, executioners, and resurrectionists were scarcely thought more vile, by those of Joan's class and calling, than inventors. Joan knew a girl who had walked forty miles to see a woman whose son had thrown a cleaver at Hargreaves, and the journey had been spoken of ever since as a sort of holy pilgrimage.

"And they will hear, some day, that Joan Merryweather is the wife of a man worse than Hargreaves. Oh, how I have been cheated!"

Tears and fire filled her eyes as she lifted her head and looked at her husband. A voice whispered her, "leave him—be true to thy people; leave him—defy him!" But all Joan's horror at her position, and all her abhorrence of the inventor, could not blind her to the fact of her love for the man who stood watching her struggle with firm, tender patience. Her face fell into her hands. Both things seemed so utterly impossible—to live with an inventor; to leave Ark-

dale. In the midst of her anguish a thought came, which had a magical effect on her. Her cheeks glowed, her eyes became bright and tender, her form erect.

Arkdale saw the change.

"My Joan," said he, "thy love hast outlived this shock. I knew it would."

Joan met him coming, and fell upon his neck, crying—

"Ay, love, thou knew'st it would, although my heart should break."

"That will not be, my Joan—thou art too brave a woman for heart-breaking; and I knew it, and scorned to deceive thee, as I might have done a poor weak, hair-brained lass."

"'Twas hard for me, you know, Humphrey, said Joan; lifting her face and looking into his with the sweetest, pardon-begging glance, "but you do forgive me?"

"I guessed thy heart, and forgave it beforehand."

"Jenkyns," cried Joan, suddenly, "what were thy eyes made for—to look what thou art doing, or to stare at thy master! But come, lad," she added, smiling, and speaking in a soft, joyous tone, which made Jenkyns start again, "Dick is a burthen, though one of love; but your arms are already a'most weary, I should say. Let me lay him in his bed, that you may eat your supper in peace."

"Thee ought to think thyself mighty well off, Jenkyns," said Arkdale, as Joan took the child to the inner chamber, "to have so kind a mistress."

"But I thought myself better off still 'fore I had ere a one," answered bluff Jenkyns.

"Ungrateful rascal!"

Jenkyns shrugged his shoulders.

Joan came back with her scarlet wedding-knot pinned on her neckerchief.

"Look," said she to her husband, smiling brightly, and pointing to it; then added to Jenkyns, patronisingly, "this is my wedding-knot, Jenkyns. I have put it on in honour of my first supper at home. We will have the pastry I put by for to-morrow, and I tell thee, without thy master's leave, thou shalt have something better than ale to drink my health in."

"Thank'ee, missus," said Jenkyns; "I'm agreeable."

They had quite a little feast; and Joan was so gay and gentle, and showed such modest, tender coquetry, that Arkdale could scarce believe it was the cold, precise Joan Merryweather, with whom he had bargained at the fair.

Now and then, perhaps, a less enraptured observer than Arkdale, or a less careless one than Jenkyns, might have wondered at the intense eagerness of Joan to look and say her best that night. It was as if she had a dangerous rival at the table, and love and jealousy were teaching her all the arts and witcheries of a finished coquette.

When Jenkyns was gone, and the place all closed once more, Arkdale said—

"Joan, thee hast not seen Dick's uncle yet; wilt come with me now to look in upon him?"

"Dick's uncle, Humphrey?"

"Ay. Not his good-for-naught uncle Paul, mind you, but the rich old fellow from whom Dick expects a fortune fit for a prince."

"Now, of a truth you never told me this before," said Joan. "You laugh at me, Humphrey. You mean— Ah, I know what you mean!"

"Well, will you come?"

"Yes, if I shall not be afraid. Pray, do you work by the light o' blue fire?"

And Joan shivered as she laughed, and locked her hands on his arm.

A heavy wooden bench was placed before an opening near the chimney-place, and covered with old carpet to the floor. Humphrey moved the bench away, and, entering the cobwebbed recess, laid his hand on a rough, ungainly-looking thing, and turned to Joan with a smile.

Holding her hand to the candle, so as to throw the light into the recess, and so as to leave her face in shade, Joan looked with much the same loathing as that with which a prisoner of war might look upon the arms he is bidden to take up against his own countrymen. She thought

Arkdale would hear her heart beat while she was trying to summon courage and quietness to look up in answer to his look, which she felt upon her face.

At last she raised her eyes, smiled faintly, and nodded.

"What think you of him?" asked Arkdale.

"Since Dick is his heir, I dare not offend him," answered she; "otherwise I should say I cannot praise his beauty."

"Well, by the mass, I must own he is not so comely as some spinners," said Arkdale, looking at his bright-haired wife.

"What a frightful thing for a woman to have in her house-place," said Joan.

"A woman has nothing to do with it; it is to be worked by a horse."

"A horse, good lack!" and Joan fell into a fit of laughing. "Your pardon, dear heart; but indeed, Humphrey, a horse! Fancy thy daughter, should'st thee ever have one, when asked who spun her linen, instead of saying, with a little pride, as I can say, 'My mother,' must needs answer, 'Twas farmer so-and-so's mare, or walled-eyed Dobbin, lying dead, now, at the knackers!" Oh, you would make a woman no woman at all. A horse to spin! Mercy on us, what next?"

"Are you laughing or crying?"

"Forgive me, I am trying to do neither."

"And so art doing both with all thy might. My lass, thee'rt weary. I had much to tell thee about my labours here, but it shall be at another time."

"Ay, at another time," said Joan, wiping her eyes with her apron. "Why are you getting it out?" and she shrank back a little, as Humphrey pushed the model from its corner.

"Because I must be up and at it betimes in the morning," answered he. "Dick's uncle has been too long neglected already. He will be for leaving Dick a beggar after all, if he is not properly cared for."

"I reckon Dick, and all belonging him, will be beggars, if he is too much cared for. Why, what an ado there is here, and all to make trumpety weft; for I have heard that none of these things can turn out warp."

"As yet they have not," said Arkdale; "but this is for weft and warp too, my Joan."

Joan was silent. Arkdale looked at her and smiled, thinking she was incredulous.

"Thee'rt thinking, if such is to be done, Joan, thy husband is not the man to do it."

Joan raised her eyes, grave and tearful, to his face, and shook her head.

"I was not thinking that—but a sadder thought."

"What was it, lass!"

"That there is less harm in a fool's folly than a wise man's. When he turns his hand to mischief, what ruin can he make!"

"My Joan, thy voice is but a whisper of that which I shall have howling in my ears in a little time. Forgive me if I can hear thee and smile, feeling assured, as I do, that I shall presently make thee of one mind with myself."

Joan's lips murmured something inaudibly, which was not "Amen."

"Come, now, sweetheart," said Arkdale, taking her hands, "we have learnt to know each other much better to-day. I propose we make such knowledge suffice, and try one another no further. If we cannot always exactly understand one another, let us take for granted that that we do not understand is good, and believe in no evil—thou of me, or I of thee. My chief thought is for thy happiness, my next for Dick's; and all my hopes for both are set here," and he laid his hand on the machine. "Come, then, thou canst not love thy husband and despise his labour. Give me thy hand over it, lass. There, now let us trust our love may overreach every difficulty that comes betwixt us in this life as our arms reach over this—thy present difficulty."

"Amen," said Joan; "Amen!"

It was two hours after this. The fire was fast dying on the barber's hearth, and gave out light by gasps. The crickets, like jovial heirs, came noisily taking possession. The barber's full,

strong breathings could be heard through the closed door.

Towards the end of the second hour there was a moment when the jubilee on the hearth was stopped, and the breathings grew louder: The chamber door had been opened. It was closed again, and a form, bare-footed, golden-haired, went past the hearth, and stood before the ungainly thing whose huge shadow came and faded, and again came and faded, on the discoloured wall.

Joan's fever-brightened eyes had never closed that night; her heart—whose throbs kept the pale hair that streamed down over arm and bosom in glistening motion—had known no minute's rest. Her ears these two long hours had heard nothing but the harsh clamour of old women's tongues uttering threats of vengeance against such men as he who slept beside her.

She stood still by the machine, looking at it.

The crickets grew bold at her silence, and chirped loudly as before.

For Joan there was no silence, no solitude. Something she saw and heard, which made her stiffen and draw back, and at last, when she had remained thus staring at the darkness, her face suddenly grew white, she flung out her arms with a cry that died away to a whisper as it reached her lips.

"Nay, nay, good dames, good wenches, I will be true to thee! I will be true!"

Her eyes wandered from end to end of the dreary cellar, and grew less wild as the fire sent a glow over it, and for one instant drove off the shadowy crowds.

Then with a quieter, more intense passion in them, the eyes again were turned to the machine. She laid her hand on it—her white lips moved silently, and the huge shadow of the machine model came and faded, and faded and came on the discoloured wall.

"Thou art very still; 'tis but the body here—thy soul lies with him, whispering mischief. My love, so wise, so good! What dost thou with him? He is possessed with thee, thou devil, and I will tear thee out! I will tear thee from his heart, I tell thee—or leave thee master there, and go away and die! From this night it is strife unto death betwixt us!"

Which shall conquer?

CHAPTER LIX.—MR. FAITHFUL ENJOYS HIS EMPLOYER'S HOSPITALITY.

He had been right in his guess as to the character of the parts of the machine thus guarded, but he did not know or guess what a guard had been placed there—an electrical machine of great power—the Leyden phial, then lately invented, and which the astute Brothers Coombe had thought worth trying, as a sort of additional defence against interlopers, of whom they stood in eternal dread.

The shock, at once so inexplicable and so unexpected, stopped for the night all further movements. Mr. Faithful, indeed, found it a hard task to recover the use of his limbs, to steady his brain, to find his lantern, and walk forth out of this horrible place, which had now lost for him all its weird beauty and enchantment.

He, too, like most of his contemporaries, had his full share of superstitious imaginings. What was he to make of this incident? It seemed even more alarming to him on reflection than even while he endured the blow. Might not the place be full of such traps, though he had had the luck to escape all for the moment but that one?

Could he pursue such labours as his must be with that sort of fear overhanging him?

The dogs, the blunderbusses, this new and fearful mystery, all tended alike to impress Mr. Faithful's mind with the thought that he had embarked on a scheme to attack a citadel that was too strongly defended for him, who did not even know the character of the opposing forces he had to contend with.

Should he conceal what had happened, supposing his ghastly face and shaking limbs would let him?

No, clearly not. He would seek Marks, and tell him all.

He must tell him, for, if not, how did he know but that this truly diabolical invention, of which Mr. Faithful had never even heard, was able to reveal by its altered state what had happened? He found the watchman still dozing, told him he had taken the keys without waking him, had fancied he heard something in the machine-room, and gone in, and been struck all of a heap—by what, he knew not.

The watchman was greatly tickled with the story, and explained that he had purposely not told him, meaning to play him a trick, as the best way of making the invention known to him, but never dreaming that Faithful would be such a fool as to rush himself into the trap uninvited.

The victim was very willing to pass the matter over as a practical jest, and he listened with great interest to what little information Marks was able to give him about this new scientific plaything that some wonderful foreigner had invented, an electrical machine he said he called it.

"Plaything you call it, do you? I never in all my life felt anything so like what I should imagine I should experience if all creation were going smash at once, and I made to feel for everything and everybody in my own unfortunate body."

"Ah, well! remember you mustn't blab," said the watchman. "The manager himself always goes into that room alone the last thing after all the people have gone, and locks himself in while getting the machine ready just where you find it in order to prevent anybody from setting it going."

"Are there any more of these pretty contrivances?"

"Not that I know of. And yet those Brothers Coombe are so very cunning, and do value their machine so much, that there may be something about Mr. Richard once said to me, though I put it down at time for bounce."

"What was it?" carelessly demanded the watchman on trial.

"Why, he said once, in a rather comical manner, 'Ah, Marks, my boy! if anybody ever gets in at night and alone by any chance, they won't find it an easy sailing. Failing all else, I have got one reliance ever at the last—beyond ought you know, Marks, my boy!—that will infallibly expose the rascal who attempts the job!'"

"Oh, he meant this very machine!" said Mr. George Faithful.

"That he certainly did not," asserted the watchman in reply, "because I knew of this piece of devilry at the time."

"Indeed!" said Mr. Faithful, profoundly impressed.

"That's what he said, but he never mentioned it again, nor I to him; but I myself always fights rather shy of that room. I just looks in once or twice in the night, but you don't catch me much beyond the threshold."

"Marks," said his companion, "you are a wise man. I see I mustn't try any more to move without your guidance. By the mass, how my nerves do quiver, to be sure! just as if they were the strings of a harpsichord suffering from some horrible blow from a giant hand, who didn't know how to play, and rather liked the richest Escordas!"

When Mr. Faithful got home to his breakfast and bed, he could not sleep, but lay jaded, spiritless, half-fraid of further progress.

Yes, he was obliged to confess that to himself. He had endured bravely hitherto, but he was inclined to think, on the whole, he had risked and borne as much as he had originally reckoned upon, even in his most generous moods of self-sacrifice.

Was he, then, to go away beaten?

Beaten! Beaten!

Perish the thought! He leaped up from bed, determined not to sleep till he had made all requisite preparations for the ensuing night.

Tinder-box, paper, pencil, knife, rule, short bits of convenient wax, lengths of string to expedite the measuring process—these were soon got ready. And then came the critical question—How was he to shield himself from observation without?

And then again recurred the question of what

sort of place it was outside the windows. Could it be the kennel? Was there a door opening there from the kennel into the mysterious room?

He could not rest till he had determined this; so, taking his flageolet, he went wandering about, ever drawing nearer and nearer to that side of the mill, and to Mr. Richard Coombe's house, and then just what he had feared happened: the children heard him playing, came out, and said their father had sent them to ask him to come in.

Of course he had no choice but to obey. He found Mr. and Mrs. Coombe in a superb room, adorned with Corinthian pillars, and surrounded with every kind of luxury.

The secret machine had of itself, no doubt, added no little to the wealth that was here revealed. And Mr. Faithful seemed mentally to see and to study profoundly that machine, just as if it were a living thing, bringing in day by day, and pouring out there before these people, all that the heart of man could desire in the shape of material comfort.

They were very gracious and condescending, and after hearing a tune or two, Mr. Coombe went out to attend to what more interested him—his mill. Mrs. Coombe, after a little time, followed his example, to see to her domestic regions, and the new watchman was left alone with the children.

He instantly rose to his feet, and continuing to play, walked about the room, the children clinging to his side and knees, and making him play a kind of march.

He meantime was making excellent use of his eyes. He saw that triple row of windows, with their long iron bars, straight before him. He saw a covered corridor or passage leading from the building where he was straight to those windows, but ending first in the kennel which extended along the base of the machine-room, though divided from it by a continuation of the corridor.

In an instant it flashed into the piper's mind that the one last rock of defence to which the lace manufacturer had referred must be his own immediate personal connection with the room—his own power of passing at any moment absolutely unseen, unsuspected by any one within the mill, to the kennel, or to the sacred room itself!

Important discovery! and how hopeless a one for the experimentalist!

Might not, indeed, the same ingenuity that contrived the use for the Leyden jar have established some sort of system of signalling between the machine-room and the owner's house—a system in which the luckless adventurer was to give the signal, and bear the consequences?

Supposing even that a single night—nay, half-a-dozen nights might, by extreme precautions and reasonable luck, be got safely over—even then could he hope to go on night after night for several weeks together, as he feared he must to obtain accurate drawings?

He felt thoroughly depressed, and the children began to complain of him for playing so badly, and threatened to tell papa.

To avert this alarming exigency, he piped away with what seemed to the children wonderful spirit, and seeming love of the fun, for he was so noisy; but when Mrs. Coombe returned, she was quite struck with his pale face, and made him drink a glass of wine.

At this moment an incident occurred which promised to do more for Mr. Faithful even than the wine.

One of the children, a boy, had been for some time rummaging about in portfolios, drawers, and out-of-the-way places, for some particular sort of writing-paper that he wanted, in order to show Mr. Faithful how he could make out of it a conjuring cap.

Not succeeding in his search, he began to pester his mamma, who persisted she knew nothing about it.

"I am sure, mamma, papa has got some in his big cabinet. May I open it?"

"No, you can't; it is locked! It's always locked."

"Oh, but see, dear mamma! the key's in!"

"It's a wonder, then. But you must not touch

it. You know he has forbidden any one to open that desk. I dare not myself explore its hidden secrets."

This was said to Mr. Faithful, with a pleasant and confidential smile.

That gentleman listened and watched, as if some inkling of a new discovery was already creeping over him.

"I shall go and ask papa," said the boy, returning to the charge.

"Very well; you must not open it without his leave."

The boy went away, and returned, looking rather flushed, and said—

"Mamma, I told papa, but he's so busy he didn't say anything, and he couldn't come, but I can see he doesn't mind!"

Mrs. Coombe had by this time got interested in a letter that had just been put into her hands, and she hardly noticed what the boy said, or the aspect of his face, which would have warned her that her darling was again venturing his "one fault," as she amiably called—a fib.

He opened the cabinet, rummaged about, brought forth the sort of paper he wanted, but with a bit of genuine diplomacy, thought he would seem to be very careful, so took the several pieces to Mrs. Coombe to look at.

She glanced carelessly over them, and said—

"Yes, you may have these! No! Stop! Why, dear me, you have got hold of a sheet of papa's plans for the machine. I declare I feel quite frightened! Let me look again at the others!"

It was but one sheet that was not blank. That sheet was put back by Mrs. Coombe's own hands, and the boy was allowed to carry off the other leaves in triumph.

Mr. George Faithful saw and heard all this with transports of joy and hope that it was hard to conceal.

He determined to hurry away, and think over in solitude this new and most promising incident, which offered at once not only all the drawings he needed, but an accurate solution of their meaning.

He felt delirious at the mere prospect.

Calm himself, he played the children one farewell tune, and he had for his reward the satisfaction—not a very moral one, he confessed!—of hearing Mrs. Coombe make the boy own he had told a fib, and of also hearing her tell him to hold his tongue about what he had done, for, as she said, "Papa would be very angry."

A discovery, therefore, was made—one seemingly of vast importance; and yet the fact of the discovery was not likely to become known to the gentleman whose action might have made the discovery valueless—Mr. Richard Coombe.

CHAPTER XX—THE MIDNIGHT TOILER GETS ANOTHER SHARP LESSON.

It was strange how the tide of feeling ebbed and flowed with our present adventurer. He had left Mr. Coombe's house in glorious spirits, yet by the time he reached his own door he had quite changed, and found the world once more looking black.

Why? He had suddenly remembered that the taking the actual drawings from the cabinet would be theft?

The word seemed to burn into his soul! It compelled him to get rid of the pain and shame by ejecting the idea at the same time.

No, he said, he would not be exposed to that charge under any conceivable circumstances.

To be caught during his efforts to copy the machine would be unpleasant and dangerous, but he felt he could defend his conduct on the principles of commercial morality and precedent, and that, at all events, he had got an unanswerable tit for tat for the Coombes, who had obtained the machine precisely in this way.

But this did not apply to taking their actual, visible property, such as drawings. What, then, must he do!

He must go back into the machine-room, get a key of the door that communicated with the manufacturer's residence, find some way of passing the dogs, in case there was no separate passage apart from the kennel (though most likely there was); then get into the house, get to the

cabinet in the dead of the night, and remove the drawings one at a time, to be copied and replaced before taking another

"A pretty programme" said Mr Faithful, against.

That was his plan, but then, unluckily, it still involved this difficulty—that if caught with one of the drawings in his possession, he might be charged with the intention to steal, and he could not effectually rebut the charge.

Mr Faithful seemed strangely sensitive to this possible imputation, which was the more remarkable considering the not very scrupulous acts he had put himself in the way of performing.

The dislike of the idea drove him back, though reluctantly, to his old scheme—to make the drawings from the machine itself. And then, too, as he reminded himself, he would be quite sure of what he was about, whereas he might get the wrong drawings if he took any, or great alterations might since have been made. Anyhow, he would stick to the original plan.

But he must attack the enemy in a more determined mood. He was growing impatient at the thought of such prolonged delays, so he resolved he would finish the whole job just as he had wanted to finish it—that is, before taking the responsibility of keeping watch upon himself. He saw he would thus have a kind of screen which would probably prevent Mr. Richard Coombe from looking jealously on his presence on the premises. Besides, he liked the idea of not violating the sacred idea of trust when the trust should be real.

He rose at last to such a pitch of mental audacity as to resolve to try the possibility of completing the whole operation in a single night, or at the most in two or three nights, for he could not hope to send Marks always asleep with usquebaugh.

Three nights after this he was prepared. Carrying a heavy bundle under his great coat, he entered upon his nightly duties, found Marks only too glad to have nothing to do but smoke and drink, but for all that he was so long in going off to sleep that Mr. Faithful had to return again and again in his rounds to look at him before daring to proceed.

At last he was able to go to the magic door, unlock it, and enter upon his task.

He locked the door inside, so that he might not be supposed to be there if Marks, by any unlucky accident, woke, and came to seek him.

His first business was, while keeping himself in the dark, to go to a particular part of the wall near the door of entrance, and do something there in intense silence which kept him a long while. Moving along the wall a couple of yards, or so, he seemed to repeat his effort.

He then went to the opposite wall on the farther end of the room, and there also found mysterious occupation for some time, and again at two spots.

Then, still feeling his way—for the night was dark, and no light came in at the windows, or next to none—he got to the back of the room, behind the machine, and facing the windows, still making no noise, unless a very slight sound like a sharp instrument penetrating the walls which was occasionally heard was due to his hand, and there again the same double effort was noticeable.

Lastly, he went to the side of the room where the windows were, and did whatever he had been doing to the other walls, also the same to this.

Then taking a stout ball of cord from his pocket, he went to one of his spots of work, fastened his cord tightly to a screw, with a loop for his head, which he had previously placed there, went to the opposite end of the room, and stretched the cord tightly to a similar screw.

Three other cords being established in the same way, Mr Faithful went feeling with his hand all over them, as a spider feels its web, to test its rigidity and strength, and then he fetched his bundle.

Opening this, and taking one piece of cloth at a time from it, he hung up four pieces, which then completely covered the central portion of the cords where they met, and so formed an enclosed square, with the edges of the cloth meeting.

The machine was now completely enclosed by opaque drapery hanging to the ground, and which needed only a similar covering for a roof to shut out or shut in all light.

Stretching fresh cords diagonally across from corner to corner of the square, and supporting them by the aids of the screws in the walls and of strong projections of the machine, he was able to put the remaining cloths he had brought with him over the top.

He now crawled into his dismal, yet not at all depressing, tomb, to feel all about it, and be sure that the edges everywhere overlapped, and pinning them wherever he found the slightest tendency to gape.

Then, getting out again, he fetched his lantern, lighted it inside, and surveyed his domain with immense enjoyment.

"Not much room," he chuckled to himself, "but 'twill do. I must have a look outside."

He crawled out on hands and knees, so as not to disturb the drapery which pressed rather heavily on the cords, swaying them down, and he found there was not a gleam of light anywhere visible. His success was perfect!

"Ah, if only they'd now let me alone to finish the job at my leisure! Wouldn't it be nice! But I suppose I must put down and rebuild every night, if it does take me a good while. Well, well, never mind! Now, then, to work!"

He had got plenty of light, for he used two or three pieces of wax candle.

He could now study the machine at his pleasure, secure that he was not seen.

Strange! how prosaic it looked after all his imaginings about it!

But there was one gratifying thing: it did not look half so difficult as he had fancied it would be, so with eager hands he began.

First, with a rude sketch of the machine as a whole, including its fixed supports, its limbs, etc.

Then he measured all these portions with a rule, and jotted that down on his sketch.

His next step was more difficult—to disentangle in his mind the maze of cords used in the machine, the object of which, briefly described, was to prepare the raw silk for the weaver by machinery instead of, as usual, by hand labour. By this machine, the only one at the time in England—the *welt* or cross threads of silk were produced perfectly suited for the weaver, though the warp (the threads extended lengthways) were still required as before from Italy under the name of organized silk, or thrown silk. This was the silk Daniel Sterne had brought to sell.

But, as we have intimated, even the mere production by machinery of one of the two kinds of material required by the weaver was revolutionising the silk trade, and throwing an immense fortune into the hands of the fortunate Coombe Brothers.

No wonder there was many a George Faithful—as that personage chose to designate himself—who yearned to share in the golden stream, though no Englishman before him had risked so much and so continuously in order to entitle himself to what he asked.

Mr. Faithful found the machine at first terribly complicated, and in spite of all his most arduous efforts to understand it, he could not get along for some time. At last he thought he would venture to try to set the machine going, thinking he could then classify the different strata, or groups, as it were, of details, when he saw what they did.

Cautiously he removed the Leyden jar from its place, having learned the secret of successfully handling it from the watchman.

Then he saw that what had previously bothered him when he was looking at the jar, wondering whether it was a part of the jar or no, was the handle of the machine.

He felt a little nervous at touching it, but he did touch it, found it hard to move till he exerted greater strength, then it slowly began to revolve, and the whole machine with it, which seemed to waken into sudden life; and there was a variety of sounds, strangely muffled, however, by the thick black pall that enveloped everything.

He was congratulating himself on his success,

and stretching out his head the better to see the machine thus getting to work, or rather to show its mode of work, when the handle, having made nearly the complete revolution, became rather harder to move, and Mr. Faithful had to throw his whole strength into operation, when, just as his hand, with great effort, was reaching the lowest part of the circle it had gone through, and moving with increased rapidity, a sharp spike of steel suddenly penetrated the hand, and held it immovably fast.

To be continued.

The Saturday Reader.

WEEK ENDING JANUARY 19, 1867.

THE CLUB SYSTEM.

THE Publisher, in order to extend the circulation of the READER, offers the following liberal inducements to persons who will interest themselves in forming clubs. Any one sending him the names of three new subscribers, with cash in advance for one year's subscription, will receive by return mail a copy of Garnean's History of Canada, 2 vols., originally published at \$2.50. Any one forwarding the names of ten new subscribers, with one year's subscription each in advance, will receive, in addition to the above, a copy of Christie's History of Canada, 6 vols., just published at \$6.00. With a slight expenditure of effort, hundreds of our country friends may thus become the possessors of one or both of these excellent histories of the land of their birth or adoption.

A GREAT WANT.

BYRON, in one of his petulant moods, speaks of "an English winter, ending in a July, to recommence in August;" and a French officer described the Canadian year as consisting of six months of winter and six months of bad weather; while about the same period the courtiers of Louis the Fifteenth alluded to thecession of this country to England as the transfer of some acres of snow. Well, as the man in the play says, we ought to bear our detractions meekly; and we must confess that we do have a little too much snow, and that our winters are rather long—a mere *coupsion*, of course. But the maligners of our climate ought to remember that it is such lands out of which great empires are formed. Where nature is too prodigal of her favours, man sits down contented with what she gives, and unlearns the primeval destiny of earning his bread by the sweat of his brow. The fatal gift of beauty has been the curse of many of the fairest portions of the earth, and if Naples has her balmy breezes, her sparkling waters, and her unclouded sky, she has also her lazaroni.

That we have our climatic difficulties to contend against, we will not therefore deny, and the question is, how are we to turn that difficulty to the best advantage? We are told that we must cherish our manufactures to employ our people during the long season of otherwise enforced idleness, from December to May of each year: and very good advice that is, beyond a doubt. But, at most, manufactures could be embarked in only by a part of our population, for we cannot all be manufacturers. Outdoor amusements are becoming fashionable and popular, greatly to the advantage of our physical requirements. But what we have hitherto chiefly neglected is to afford facilities for mental culture. The first step in that direction would, we believe, be the creation of public libraries, which have proved so beneficial in Europe and the United States; and which we want more, perhaps, than any country in the world. To others they may be in some respects a luxury; to us, our winter of six months makes them a necessity, as we are sure they would be a blessing.

We can judge of the value of these institutions by the consideration of what has been their history in other countries. The first great public library in England was got up by Humphrey, Duke of Gloucester; but it disappeared under the influence of the Protestant Reformation, for the Protestants in a great measure destroyed the books under the conviction that they were Papistical. It was a vast loss to the nation. The next great benefactor to the country, in the same direction, was Sir Thomas Bodley, the founder of the Bodleian Library at Oxford. He had been a statesman of the Elizabethan age; and, after long reflection, determined to consecrate his remaining life to the establishment of a public library, which would be an honour to himself, his mother university, and his native country.

Public libraries were, so to speak, a leading feature of the ancient civilization. The Alexandrian library is "a household word" of bookmen, and the Roman patricians took a special pride in forming such institutions, to which they attached their names. In modern times, Italy is entitled to the honour of being the pioneer in this laudable work, in which her merchant princes bore a leading part, for even the Medici were traders. It was with them a labour of love, as it was with men of our own race who followed in their footsteps. They were no mere humourists indulging a crotchet, but high-minded philanthropists, having the best interests of their kind deeply at heart. Sir Thomas Bodley gave his days and his nights to the collection of his books and manuscripts; and the sums expended by him were immense, if calculated in accordance with the present value of money. Other men of those days were also diligent collectors, though, unlike Bodley, many of them looked chiefly to their own private gratification. We learn that the well-known Sir Simonds DeWes ordered by his will that his precious library should be kept entire, and not sold, divided or dissipated; and we are told that the celebrated Cecil's library was the best for history, Walsingham's for policy; Arundel's for heraldry; Cotton's for antiquities; and Fisher's for divinity. Sir Robert Cotton's is the famous Cottonian Library.

It were useless to give a list of the many public libraries to be found throughout Europe and America, any encyclopedia will supply the necessary information. But their number proves the high value set upon them, a fact to which we in Canada have so far been blind. We are behind the Lower Provinces in that respect, for the cities of Halifax and St. John possess considerable collections of books, several of them open to the public; and some of the public libraries in Spanish America would not disgrace a European capital. We had, it is true, our fine Parliamentary Library, once of a time, and we set fire to it—an *auto da fé* which must be a standing disgrace to the people of Montreal until the loss is replaced by the substitution of a similar collection, which we can call our own. On this head, indeed, the commercial capital of Canada may be regarded as the Excelsior of the empire, for to no other British city of its size, from Calcutta to Toronto, is this approach equally applicable. Yet our merchants are wealthy, and few communities anywhere possess more aggregate property. It is the desire, and not the means, that is wanting. Mr. Redpath has shown an admirable example by his handsome donation of books to the McGill University, and it is to be hoped that this will not long be a solitary specimen of such generosity. Surely somebody will take the matter up; and if we have neither a Smithsonian nor a Peabody amongst us, still what the few will not do, can be effected by the many.

THE UNITED STATES—CONSTITUTIONAL DIFFICULTIES.

It is not always easy to detect the meaning of political movements in the United States, but two incidents that have recently arisen in Congress appear to us to be specially worthy of notice. We do not refer to the threatened impeach-

ment of President Johnson, which we imagine will turn out to be little more than one of these ebullitions of party spirit in which our American citizens so largely indulge; for whatever Mr. Johnson's public delinquencies may be, or are supposed to be, his conviction would, we suspect, be difficult, without the infringement of existing law. The matters to which we allude are the attempt to restrict the patronage now at the disposal of the Executive, and the scheme to convert into territories the States lately in rebellion against the Federal Government. The first of these measures bears a close resemblance to that of the Long Parliament of England in the time of Charles the First, and, as well as the other measures, is not without significance as bearing on the nature and working of the Federal constitution. They are two points on which the political institutions of the United States differ widely from those of England, and have been regarded by British statesmen and constitutional writers as among the weak features of the former. The movement, it seems to us, affords evidence that the judgment so passed is correct, for it is a protest against the irresponsible privileges of the President and an admission of the perils springing from the Federal system and of its inferiority to a Legislative Union. Thoughtful men in the United States begin to perceive that an Executive, which can do what it likes—though within certain limits—for a period of years, is not in accordance with the principles and theory of parliamentary governments; while it has also become apparent that "States within a State" are ready-made instruments of disruption, secession and rebellion, if quarrels should occur between the members of such a confederation. President Johnson, as a matter of fact, has had, and has exercised, the power to turn out of office crowds of persons who are supposed to possess the confidence of the great body of the American people, while, practically, he cannot be prevented from doing so until his presidential term has expired; and the reconstruction of Virginia, South Carolina, and their sisters of the late Confederacy, would replace them in a position to inaugurate a new insurrection, whenever they thought proper to venture on such a step. The inferences we draw from these facts are, first, that an irresponsible Executive is bad, and, secondly, that a Federal form of government is unsafe; both faults existing in the American constitution. The remedy for the one, we believe, is to be found in the adoption of Ministerial Responsibility to Parliament, as it prevails in England, the cure for the other evil will probably be discovered, after one or more lessons like that of the recent Southern war, for it takes nations long to get wise through experience.

The English, from their dislike of change, have been called the Chinese of Europe; and their American descendants have inherited that characteristic, as far at least as their Constitution is concerned, if not in other respects. It has been in their eyes a faultless instrument in which no blemish can be found from beginning to end; it is an immaculate conception of infallible wisdom. The Mahometans adduce the utter perfection and beauty of the Koran as proof of its divine origin, and the same argument has been applied to Joe Smith's Book of Mormon by his disciples and followers. So the American Koran is the Constitution of the United States. But we know that Mahomet was a plagiarist, and wrote or indited much absurd nonsense, while the Mormon prophet's effusions are as vulgar as they are profane. We do not desire to draw any invidious comparisons, yet our American friends may rest assured that the great work of their revolutionary fathers, in common with all other human performances, is not above criticism, and will admit of amendment.

GABRIELLE'S CROSS.

It's well to be off with an old love
Before you are on with a new.

Years and years ago, when the old castles of Kidwelly, Llanstephan, Llangheryn, and Tenby were in their full strength, frowning defiance

upon the unconquered Celts, a castle, of which not a stone remains, stood upon the brow of the hill, to the left of which rises the rock called Gabrielle's Cross.

It had been built by one of the followers of the knights who came into Glamorganshire to keep the lands for the king.

The baron was a poor man when he landed with the Norman army; but like his countrymen, he had the knack of getting money, and acting up to the rule

That he should take who has the power,
And they should keep who can,

his purse was not long an empty one; and the strong walls that made his castle were built by the half-starved Celts, who were paid for their labour with food and money stolen from their ancient chiefs. The baron had only one child, a daughter, and of all the fair maidens who graced tilt and tourney none were fairer than Gabrielle, but, alas! none more fickle. Lover after lover had broken lance in her honour, but neither lance nor lover had pierced the lady's heart, until, amongst the company whom the jovial baron gathered round him, there appeared a stranger knight, a soldier of fortune, fresh from fair Normandy, and as yet penniless, but what Henri de Vinceuil lacked in gold, he made up in good looks and confidence.

Love plays strange pranks. The more cause why a lady should not let her heart slip away, the more certain it is that she will let the prisoner forth; and Gabrielle, queen of flirts as she had proved herself, was no exception.

Henri was poor and unknown. The baron would never consent to her union with him; but these things only added excitement to the passion which looked so plainly out of Gabrielle's beautiful eyes, that the young soldier was not long in discovering his good fortune.

He found out that Gabrielle spent an hour or two almost every day upon a rock overhanging the bay, and there accordingly they met, and there Henri told the old old tale.

Gabrielle was very much in love with him, and quite romantic enough to scorn poverty. Henri (so she told herself) would make money, and if he did not, she would love poverty for his sake.

Time went on. No one suspected why the fair Gabrielle had grown so gentle and considerate, until one day her father, being in a rambling mood, ascended the trysting rock, and, coming suddenly upon the lovers, saw and heard enough to drive him into a towering passion.

He denounced Henri as a beggar and a scoundrel, had him driven ignominiously from the castle, and ordered Gabrielle to her chamber, where he intended to keep her prisoner until she consented to take a husband of his own choosing.

Gabrielle was most disconsolate, but Henri was gone, and her chamber was not a cheerful apartment. The end of it all was, that about six days after Henri was sent about his business, Count Louis de Castel wooed and won a willing bride, and an early day was fixed for the wedding.

Now, although Henri de Vinceuil had been banished from the baron's castle, he had not gone very far away, having taken refuge with Sir William de Londres, at Kidwelly Castle, where in due time he heard how easily his false mistress had been consoled.

Pride, love and revenge were all in arms. The hope that had sustained him, the trust in what he believed was her constancy, and the deep passion she had roused in his heart, were all crushed at once.

He had heard her called fickle before, but he knew it to his cost now, and, mad with jealousy, thirsting for vengeance, he went day after day to the trysting-rock, in the wild hope that he would see her again, and make such an appeal as no woman's heart could withstand.

He did see her again, but not alone,—Louis, the happy accepted lover, was with her. They came up the winding path arm in arm, and stood there, looking across the lovely bay, little dreaming of the fierce eyes that were watching them, or the hot breath that was breathing curses close beside them.

Louis was in love, and made no cold lover

either; but Gabrielle had never been at the old trysting-place since the fatal day, and "light of love" as she was, she could not but think of the arm that held her, the eyes that had looked the love the lips could not find words eloquent enough to tell. And even though Louis talked and laughed, a shadow lay upon the girl's face, which, at last attracting his attention, roused a sting of jealousy.

"He was a handsome youth, that discarded lover of yours, Gabrielle," he said, affecting a

laugh; "but it is an old truth, that 'there's danger in playing with two-edged tools.' Gossips say he boasts that if the lover was warm the lady was willing, and I heard but yesterday that he'd sworn to join the crusading army and seek out a Pagan bride."

"Liar!" shouted a voice close by the speaker's side. "Draw and defend yourself. Henri de Vinceuil is neither a boaster nor—"

Before he could finish the sentence, the count's sword flashed in the sunbeam, and a volley of angry oaths fell from his lips.

He had not expected such an interruption, that the lies (for indeed, they were lies, though only meant as what in these days, would be elegantly called "chaff") should reach such interested ears, or be hurled back in his teeth, or that he should be compelled to assert the truth of the idle words at the risk of his life.

"Stop! for Heaven's sake!" shrieked Gabrielle, hanging upon his shoulder, "Stop, I command you! Kill me, Henri, if you will; I am to blame—"

"Gabrielle, stand back!" and Louis threw her roughly off. "This man has insulted me. It is my quarrel now."

"Oh! no no! for my sake!—as you love me, Louis—do not fight. I will explain."

But her words were lost in the clash of steel, the fierce exclamations and trampling feet of the combatants;

and, covering her face, she crouched in a corner of the rocky wall, where she had often listened to Henri's vows, and answered them with her own.

The fight did not last long. Henri had the advantage, both as a swordsman and in size and temper, for even as he fought his thoughts were busy; he knew he was casting his life into the balance with a false and heartless coquette; as his passion cooled so also did his love, and when the point of vantage was gained—when Louis was beaten back, dropped the point of his sword and that of Henri, sliding up, pierced his breast—Henri's anger was over, and some thing like regret, not to say sorrow, for the man who hung his heart upon such a slender branch as Gabrielle's faith, was in his heart.

For some moments he stood looking into the count's white, death-like face; then, stooping, he tried to staunch the spurting blood. Suddenly

turning to faithless Gabrielle, he said, sternly, "I only desired revenge; had I felt as I do now the utter worthlessness of such love as yours, this unfortunate man might have lived. I have one word to say—he was right. I am going to join the holy army, not because I despair of having you for a bride, but rather that I wish to forget that a woman could be so false and fickle, and that I was ever fool enough to trust in Gabrielle's truth, or believe in Gabrielle's love."

things could happiness rest. He had heard Henri de Vinceuil's parting words, and their truth settled down in his heart. He loved Gabrielle no longer. Still honour prevented him breaking off the engagement. He thought himself the most miserable of men, bound as he was to a woman whom he could neither love nor esteem; nor was Gabrielle slow to perceive the change, and although for a long time she tried to appear blind, there came a day when her anger broke forth; and, taunting him with his

changed heart, caused him to speak the truth, and Gabrielle, who had really learnt to love Louis as truly as such a heart as hers could love at all, found herself much in the same situation as that in which she had placed Henri.

Time passed on. Gabrielle was as lovely and as capricious as ever, but somehow suitors hung back; nay, even though it was whispered that Gabrielle would not be so fickle, and that the baron had gone so far as to ask more than one of the flirting gallants as to "his intentions," no proposal was made.

Henri de Vinceuil, having won fame and fortune by the work of his good sword, came back, and Gabrielle would fain have persuaded him, as she did herself, that she had never really loved another, but been the victim of the baron's tyranny, but in vain. Henri found a younger and truer bride; and Gabrielle, wearied of the world, fell back upon another excitement, and expended all the wealth left her by her father in building a convent, where she ruled supreme, and from which place she every year made a pilgrimage to the trysting-rock, upon which she had caused a cross to be erected.

Gabrielle's Cross has long been broken, but part of the shaft still stands, and keeps up the memory of the legend.

ALICE EVEZARD.



This golden glossy tress,
Fair as the glinting of the summer sun,

And, turning down the path, Henri de Vinceuil left his false love for ever.

Gabrielle, stung into a sense of what was going on by the very bitterness and truth of his reproaches, sprang up, and would have answered him, but her eyes fell upon the ghastly form of her betrothed, lying in a pool of his own blood, but evidently not dead, for even as she looked his eyes opened, and a faint cry escaped him.

To rush to the castle for help was Gabrielle's next and most practical action, and the wounded man was lifted upon a litter and carried home.

His recovery was a slow and painful one; weeks and months passed by before the wound healed and strength was restored, and during those weeks and months a change had come over the sick man's nature. Gabrielle's gaiety and coquetry had charmed him in health, but reflection had shown him that upon neither of these

THE VACANT COT.

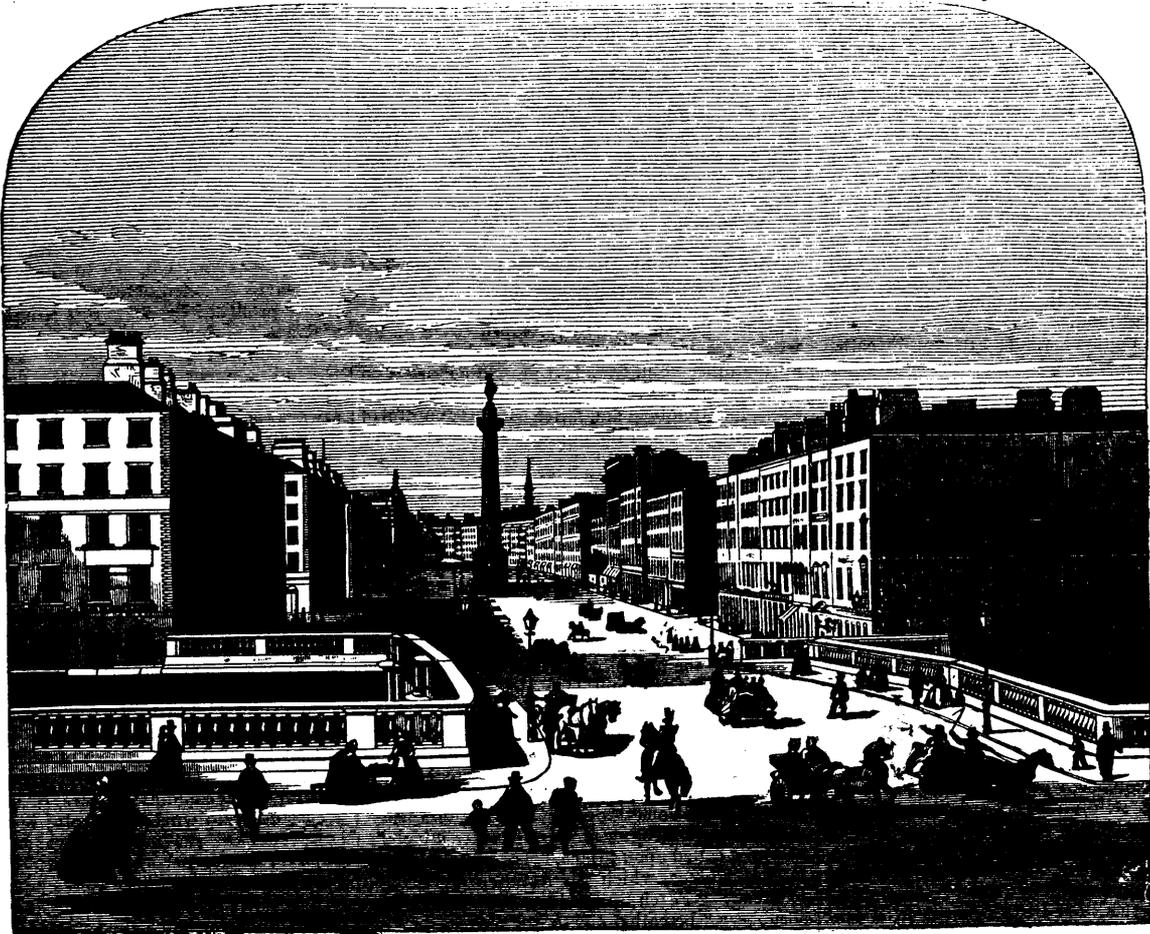
Untenanted it stands!

Ah! wife, sweet wife, we know not what is best—
Our Father gave—the same our Father's hands
Have led our darling to a holier rest.

Unmurmuring we bow,
And kiss the rod, although our hearts are sore;
We see but through a glass all dimly now,
Yet dimly seeing, still would fain adore.

This golden glossy tress,
Fair as the glinting of the summer sun,
Alone remains. Ah, darling! God can bless,
Though sighs break through the faint "Thy will be done."

Though human tears bedew
Our eyes uplift to heaven's blue arched dome,
Faith, God bestowed, can pierce the azure through,
And clasp our darling in his angel home.
January, 1867. GARDE.



Sackville Street, Dublin.

SACKVILLE STREET, DUBLIN.

WE believe the engraving which accompanies this notice will be welcome to a large section of our readers, for the Irish heart is proverbial for the warmth with which it cherishes memories of "home," and where is the Irishman who has visited the ancient capital, and is not proud of Sackville street? Its spacious breadth and stately architecture place it in the front rank of celebrated streets, and have earned for it the designation of "the grandest thoroughfare in Europe." Viewed from the bridge, the effect is very fine. The stately column seen in the engraving was erected by public subscription at a cost of upwards of £6000 sterling, in honour of England's greatest naval captain, and it has been well remarked that the grandeur and severe simplicity of the design are in striking keeping with the stern sense of duty which animated the hero of Trafalgar. The Doric pillar is 108 feet in height; it is surmounted by a platform on which is placed a colossal statue of Lord Nelson, leaning on the capstan of a ship. A winding stair in the interior of the column leads to the platform from which a magnificent view may be obtained of the city, the river, and surrounding country. "Eastward sparkle the waters of the beautiful bay, its northern shores stretching far into the sea, and terminating in the Hill of Howth, and the southern, on which Kingstown stands, ending abruptly in the lofty headland of Bray. Landward stretch the mountains of Wicklow and Killiney, the richly-wooded Dublin hills, and the highly-cultivated plains of Meath and Kildare, while, blue and purple, in the distance repose the mountains of Carlingford and Mourne."

Sackville street contains the General Post Office, built exactly opposite Nelson's pillar in 1818 at a cost of \$250,000; also the celebrated Rotundo, in which are held the principal balls, concerts, and public meetings in Dublin. The chief apartment in the Rotundo is a magnificent room eighty feet in diameter, and forty feet in

height without any central support. The building also contains several smaller apartments, suitable for concert and lecture rooms. Attached to the Rotundo is the hospital, founded in 1751, by Dr. Bartholomew Mosse, and opened for the admission of patients in 1757. This charitable institution is supported by private subscription, and the revenue derived from the Rotundo.

Our space will not permit us to notice the remaining attractions of Sackville street, but we refer our readers to the engraving which will give them an excellent idea of the general appearance of a street which is the glory of Dublin and the boast of Irishmen generally.

THE TWO ALICES.

I.

Alice the Countess sits in the oriel,
O she is stately, calm, and queenly!
Honour and power of an immemorial
Race that lady bears serenely.
Ab, but down by the fount that glistens
Half in sunshine and half in shade,
Sits and sings, and the blackbird listens,
Another sweet Alice, the Countess's maid.

II.

Countess Alice has eyes of lustre,
Countess Alice has lips of pride:
Close to her footstool suitors cluster—
Lady fit for a prince's bride.
Alice the maid is soft and tender—
Bright are her eyes with a passionate life:
O to clasp thy waist so slender,
Maiden fit for a poet's wife.

III.

Countess! brave is the man who touches
Thy ripe full mouth with the sense of power:
Thou shalt be Queen perchance, or Duchess,
Under the bloom of the orange-flower.
Girl in the print, whose sweet lips utter
Songs by the fountain under the tree,
Thine is the breast that for me shall flutter,
Thine is the cheek that shall flush for me.

MORTIMER COLLINS.

BROUGHT TO LIGHT.

BY THOMAS SPEIGHT.

From the Publisher's advanced sheets. Right of translation reserved.

Continued from page 301.

Clotilde had undergone so much mental and bodily torture during the last few hours, that the keen edge of anguish was in some measure blunted; and now that the end of all her sufferings seemed so imminent, she sank into a sort of dull stupor of despair, which lent a strange air of unreality both to herself and her surroundings, making her feel as though she were merely acting a part in some weird, fantastic dream, from which she should presently awake; dulling for a time, as though by the influence of some powerful narcotic, both overwrought body and overwrought brain.

Nor was this spell, if such it may be called, broken till she heard a sudden rush of voices, and knew that the other inmates had taken the alarm. A little later, there was a louder clamour of voices than before, and she could hear her own name called aloud; and then she knew that they had missed her, and that some effort would be made for her rescue. Therewith the desire to live came back upon her in all its intensity; and what a wild, agonised prayer was that which, from the lowest depths of her heart, went up to heaven's gate, that she might not die just yet—that she, no martyr to any religion save that of Self, might not be called upon to undergo this fiery trial—that she might live, were it only for a little while, live to redress some of the wrong she had done, live that she might have leisure to repent!

Presently she heard Gaston's voice giving orders to the men outside, and the sound thrilled her mother's heart. Whatever might happen to herself, her darling was safe; and from that moment one half of her calamity seemed lifted off her. The room by this time was full of stifling smoke, and the menacing crackling flames sound-

ed louder with every passing minute. They seemed to be quite a crowd of people collected in the shrubbery outside; she could hear the deep murmur of many voices, now loud now low, without being able to distinguish anything that was said; and ever and anon the sharp, imperative tones of Gaston sounding clearly above the rest, with what seemed to her like a ring of suppressed agony in their very clearness. After what appeared a terribly long delay, a ladder was found that would reach to the windows of her room; and scarcely had its tip touched the wall, when a man was climbing it with the agility of a sailor, under whose fierce blows, next instant, the panes of the window fell into fragments to the ground.

"Mother! mother! where are you?" called Gaston, for it was he who had climbed the ladder.

The window of Lady Spencelaugh's apartments were of the old-fashion diamond-paned sort, with iron cross-bars worked into their frames, and opening only by means of small casements; so that it was impossible for any one to get either in or out that way; and her Ladyship had often secretly felicitated herself on the additional security which her rooms derived from the peculiar formation of the windows.

As it was impossible for Gaston to obtain ingress through the window, all that he could do was to call again, still more loudly than before: "Mother! mother! where are you? For Heaven's sake, speak to me." But the room was filled with a dense smoke, which only seemed to throw back the ruddy glare which shone in through the windows, without being penetrated by it; and Gaston's eyes, as he clung desperately to the bars outside, were quite unable to pierce the obscurity within; besides which, he had every reason to believe that his mother was in bed in the inner room, and his efforts were directed to the rousing of her from her supposed sleep. Again and again he called her; and she in turn put forth all her little strength in a desperate struggle to free herself from some of her bonds, or at least to get rid of some of the gag; but all her efforts proved utterly futile, and only seemed to have the effect of rendering her the faster prisoner than before.

"My God! she must have been stifled in bed by the smoke!" she heard Gaston say at last; and then she heard him go down, and with that, her last chance of escape seemed to die utterly away. She knew that they would not try to reach her through the window, had not all ordinary means of access to her rooms been blocked by fire. Through the broken window she heard some man who had a louder voice than his neighbours, say that the rooms below were all on fire now, and that the thick beams of the ceiling would soon be burned through, and then—The man's voice was lost again in the murmur of the crowd, and Lady Spencelaugh's soul shuddered within her. There was no hope left her, then—none! Then came another thought: So much for her yet to do, and so little time to do it in!

A sudden cheer from the crowd. What could it mean? And next moment the sound of hurried footsteps advancing along the corridor that led to the rooms; and then the crash of a heavy body against the door; another, and the door broke away from its hinges; and through the smoke there advanced upon her a tall black figure which, in that first moment of surprise, she could not look upon as other than an apparition from the dead. The current of air from the broken window had thinned the smoke in some measure, and the room was filled with the ruddy glare of the burning house, and in the midst of that glare stood he whom she, but a few short hours ago had fondly hoped lay buried fathoms deep beneath the waves—he whose young life she had blighted, whose death she had compassed—he whom she had hated above all others—the eldest of her dead husband, and now Sir Arthur Spencelaugh. Oh, the bitterness of owing her life to the courage of this man! Was this the method of his forgiveness?

"You, and in this position, Lady Spencelaugh!" said Sir Arthur, as his quick eye took in the details of the case. "What scoundrel has been at

work here? But you must tell me afterwards, for we have not a minute to spare if we would get back in safety."

He had his pocket-knife out even while he was speaking, and was rapidly cutting the cords that fastened her. But even when released from her bonds, she was utterly unable to move either hand or foot, and Sir Arthur seeing this, hastened into an adjoining room, and thence brought a large counterpane, in which he proceeded to wrap the helpless woman; and when this was done, he took her up lightly in his arms, and carried her out by the way he had come. At the end of the corridor he paused; before him lay the raging gulf of fire, several feet in width, which he had so boldly overleaped when on his way to reach for Lady Spencelaugh, before which all the other volunteers had paused aghast, and even Gaston, brave enough on all ordinary occasions, had trembled and fallen back, as doubtful of his ability to reach the opposite side. This fiery gulf occupied the spot where the old staircase had been, which was one of the first objects that fell a prey to the flames. From the opposite side of the staircase ran what was known as the Stone Gallery, and the space between this gallery and corridor where Sir Arthur was now standing was filled by a staircase no longer, but by a seething bed of fire. The leap across from the gallery to the corridor was a desperate one under any circumstances, since to miss your footing on the opposite side meant nothing less than destruction; and burdened as Sir Arthur now was, to get back the same way was a sheer impossibility. The men awaiting his return in the gallery had given him a hearty cheer when they saw him emerge through the smoke, holding in his arms the object of his search; but the cheer had ended in something very like a groan when they saw and recognized the difficulty which he was now called upon to face. There was a minutes' intense silence, which Sir Arthur was the first to break. "Fetch up the long ladder out of the shrubbery," he called out to the men in the gallery. They understood in an instant why he wanted it, and two minutes later, there it was. With hearty good-will, they proceeded to push it out from the gallery, and over the burning wreck of the staircase, till the other end rested on the corridor at the feet of Sir Arthur; who then, taking up his burden again, stepped lightly from rung to rung across the fiery gulf, till he reached the opposite side, and then gave up his charge into the hands of the pale-faced Gaston, who as yet knew not the name of the fearless stranger.

CHAPTER XLII.—A MADWOMAN'S REVENGE.

Night after night, with quiet, stealthy patience, the woman Marie laboured at the task she had set herself to do. But it was not every night that she could so work, for there were quick ears at White Grange; more than once she had been surprised in the dead of the night by the sudden entrance of Peg Orchard, her youthful jailer, who slept in the next room, and who had been disturbed by the rasping of Marie's knife against the iron window bars; and on one occasion old Nathan himself had put in a sudden appearance, carrying a lighted candle in his hand; but Marie was far too alert and wary to be caught at work, and was always found in bed by her nocturnal visitors, and to all appearance asleep. So it was only when the wintry wind, blowing shrilly round the exposed Grange, shook the crazy old building in its burly arms, causing doors and windows to rattle and creak, and haunting the dark wakefulness of such of the inmates as could not sleep with strange weird noises, never heard at other times that she could labour at her task with any degree of safety. And now that task was all but done. With the old knife which she had picked up by stealth in the orchard, she had sawn through two of the iron bars with which one of the windows was secured, or so nearly through them that two or three hours more would see her labour accomplished. Had not the bars been rusted and corroded with age, they would probably have baffled all her efforts with the feeble means at her command; but such as they were,

she had overcome every difficulty, and now her reward seemed almost within her grasp.

She had been working for freedom. To get away, anywhere, out of that horrible prison, in which she had been shut up for so many weary, weary weeks, was the one absorbing idea that filled her secret thoughts by day and night. What she should do, after getting away—what was to become of her, without money or friends, at that bleak season of the year, was a thought that rarely troubled her: that one passionate longing to escape absorbed all the little mental energy that was left her in these latter days. Whenever she tried to look forward, to calculate future probabilities, there rose before her mental vision a dim blurred picture, in which everything shewed indistinctly, as though seen through a mist that was far too dense for her wearied aching brain to penetrate. It was always the same, too, when she sat down on the floor, and stuffing her fingers into her ears, tried to think out some scheme of vengeance upon the arch-enemy of her life. She knew that Duplessis was beneath the same roof with her; she had heard his voice on two or three occasions, although she had never seen him since the first night of her incarceration; and the sound had filled her with such a secret but intense fury, that had she been able to reach him, she would have flown at his throat like some savage creature of the woods. Yet, with all her hatred of the man, whenever she tried to work out to a definite issue the feelings with which she regarded him, and looking forward to the time when she should be once more a free woman, strove to trace mentally the outline of some scheme by means of which she should wipe off at once and for ever the accumulated score of many years, her feeble brain would again play her false; and however hard she might strive to retain her gripe of them, her thoughts would begin to slide and veer, and crash one against another, like icebergs in a troubled sea; and then the inevitable fog would swoop suddenly down, and everything would become blurred and dim; and she would wake from her reverie with a start, and a childish treble laugh, and set to work with renewed assiduity at the dressing of her dolls. But when midnight came round, and all the house was still, then she seemed an altogether different creature as she crouched on the window-seat, with her knife in her hand, labouring slowly and steadily, with a sort of concentrated ferocity of patience, in which there was no trace of a weakened intellect. "You and I, *cher Henri*, have a heavy account to settle," she would then often murmur to herself. "It is a debt of long standing, and must be paid to the uttermost farthing."

The night fixed upon by Duplessis as the one for the secret expedition of himself and Antoine to Belair, was also the one on which Marie had decided, provided the weather were favourable, to carry out her long-cherished plan of escape. During the afternoon there was a light fall of snow, just sufficient to whiten the moorlands, but not deep enough, except here and there where it had drifted, to impede walking. As night set in, a keen northerly breeze sprang up, which crisped the fallen flakes, and whistled shrilly round the old Grange, grumbling hoarsely in the chimneys, and trying the fastenings of door and window, and making the madwoman's heart beat high with hope. If only it would last till an hour after midnight! She went to bed as usual about ten o'clock: she could trust to her instinct to awake at the first stroke of twelve. When Peg Orchard left her that night, Marie called the girl back after she had got outside the door, to give her another kiss. Then she got into bed, and in five minutes was soundly asleep; but before the clock on the staircase had done striking twelve, she was as wide awake as ever she had been in her life. She sat up in bed, and listened intently. The wind seemed, if anything, more blustering than ever. How lucky that was! She would have dearly liked to scream in chorus with its wild free music, so light-hearted did she feel; but she bit one of her fingers instead till the purple teeth-marks made a deep indented ring round it. Then she slipped noiselessly out of bed, and

crept to the door, and put her ear to the keyhole. *Diab!e!* they were not all in bed yet, those beasts there! She could distinguish a faint murmur of voices below stairs; and presently a door opened, and the voices grew louder, and then she recognised them for the voices of Duplessis and Antoine; and she snarled in the dark, as she listened to them, like some ferocious animal. She could not distinguish a word that was said, and in a minute or two the two men seemed to go out at the front door, and then everything but the wind was still. For a full hour longer, she crouched against the door, except for her breathing, as rigid and motionless as a mummy: listening, with all her senses on the alert; but the dead silence inside the house was unbroken by any sound that owed its origin to human agency. When the clock struck one, she rose up, as silent as a shadow, and stretched out her cramped arms, and pushed the tangled ends of her hair out of her eyes, and began to set about her great achievement. An hour's quiet steady labour with her jagged blade, and at the end of that time the first great obstacle was overcome; the two bars, sawn completely through, came away from their places, and were carefully deposited by her on the floor. The window was a considerable height from the ground, but that was a difficulty readily overcome. Taking the sheets and coverlet off the bed, she dexterously twisted and knotted them into a stout serviceable rope, one end of which she proceeded to fasten round the stump of one of the bars, while the other end hung down outside nearly to the ground. But little now remained to be done. Having inducted herself into a little more clothing than she had been in the habit of wearing for some time past, but still with her favorite red flannel dressing-robe outside, and with a white handkerchief thrown over her head, and tied under her chin, she felt herself thoroughly equipped for her undertaking. In one corner of the room was a rude box, in which she had been in the habit of keeping her dolls, and the little scraps of finery out of which their dresses were manufactured. One by one she took up the puppets and kissed them tenderly. "I am going to leave you, my pretty ones," she murmured. "You will look for me to-morrow, but I shall not be here. I am going a long, long journey; whither, as yet, I hardly know; but out into the snow and cold wind, where your tender little buds of life would quickly perish. I leave you to the care of that good child, Peg. She will attend to you when I shall be far away. And now, adieu! I love not to part from you, but freedom is before me, and I cannot stay. Adieu! my little ones, adieu!"

She shut down the lid of the box with a weary sigh, and then stood thinking, or trying to think, for the effort was almost a futile one, with her hands pressed tightly across her temples; but whatever the idea might be that she was striving to grasp, it was gone before she could seize it, so, with an impatient little "Pouf!" she dismissed the subject from her mind. One more pull, to test the strength of the knots she had made in her rope; she took up her knife, kissed it, and stuck it in her girdle; and then she crept through the open window, and taking the rope in both hands, slid nimbly to the ground, and felt that she was free. There must have been a sort of mental intoxication in the feeling, for no sooner had she reached the ground than she went down on her knees, and seizing her short black hair in both hands, as though to steady herself in some measure, she gave vent to a burst of horrible silent laughter, a sort of laughter that was largely mingled with ferocity, and which seemed almost to tear her in two, so violent was it, leaving her breathless and exhausted when it died out, which it did as suddenly as it had begun. "I've not been so gay for a long time!" she murmured, as she gathered herself up, and set her face towards the open moors. "I could sing, to night; I could dance—oh, how I could dance! only it would not be decorous in a lady circumstanced as I am."

The window through which she has escaped was at the back of the house, and Marie now found herself in the rick-yard, as it was called, from which a gate opened at once on to the

moors. One source of disquietude was removed from her mind; she knew that Duke, the great house-dog, had gone with one of the young men to a distant fair; Peg had told her so; so there was no fear of an encounter with him. Just outside the rickyard gate, Marie's eye was caught by something, and she stopped for a moment to think. What she saw was a small grindstone, placed there for the use of the household. Next minute, the stone was going slowly round, with the blade of Marie's knife pressed against its surface.

She went on her way after a time, walking across the moors in a direct line from the back of the Grange. The night was clear and frosty. The heavy snow-clouds had broken here and there, and through the wide rifts the stars were shining brightly. From snow and stars together, there came quite as much light as Marie needed, and she went onward without hesitation, neither knowing nor caring whither her errant footsteps might lead her; knowing and caring only that every step forward removed her so much further from the abhorred prison she had just left. She was not greatly troubled by any thoughts of pursuit; she knew that, in all probability, her escape would not be discovered till daybreak, by which time she should be long miles away; and she had all a lunatic's faith in her own cunning and ability to outwit her enemies. She was the sole living thing to be seen on that white desert: but the loneliness of the situation had no terrors for her, and she went calmly on her way, singing now and again a verse from some *chanson* descriptive of the loves of Corydon and Phyllis *à la Française*.

She had left the Grange a mile or more behind her, and now the road, or rude footpath, for it was nothing more, to which she had kept, dipping from the higher levels of the moor, began to tend gently downward; as it did so, the sound of falling water took her ear, and in a little while she came to a deep cleft or ravine in the hillside, at the bottom of which a little stream, whose voice the frost had not yet succeeded in silencing, was brawling noisily. This gash in the fair hillside evidently resulted from some throes of nature countless ages ago. It was from eighty to a hundred feet in depth, and from fifteen to twenty feet wide. Both its sides formed sheer precipices of black rock, as bare and devoid of verdure as on the day they were first laid open to the sky; but the margin of the ravine was fringed here and there with thickets of stunted shrubs. The path traversed by Marie led direct to this ravine, across which a rude foot-bridge had been thrown, to accommodate the inmates of the Grange, for this was the nearest way down to the high-road in the valley leading to certain outlying villages where the family at the Grange had sometimes business to transact, and effected, as regards those places, a saving of nearly three miles over the orthodox road; besides which, if there was a heterodox road to anywhere, old Nathan Orchard was just the man to take such road from choice. This bridge over the ravine was of a very primitive character, consisting as it did of nothing more permanent than a few strands of rope stretched across, and fastened on each side to the stumps of trees, with cross-strands of thinner rope, over which were laid a few pieces of planking, pierced at the corners, and tied with strong wire to the cords below. As a further security, a hand-rail of stout rope was stretched from side to side about three feet above the bridge itself. To any person with weak nerves, the crossing of this rude bridge, which began to sway in an alarming manner the moment you set foot on it, was not unattended with danger, seeing that a single false step would serve to precipitate you to the bottom, and leave but little chance of your being found alive afterwards; but such as it was, it had served the family at the Grange for many years, and was likely to last for many years to come.

Marie stepped fearlessly on to the bridge, and pausing when she reached the middle of it, took hold of the hand-ropes, and leaning over, gazed down into the dim caldron at her feet. Eastward, the moon was rising over heathery hills, and the clouds fell away before it as it slowly

clomb the great azure plains, and little by little all the wild features of the scene were lighted up under the eyes of the madwoman. She could see the black riven sides of the gorge, looking as if they had been torn asunder only an hour ago; she could see the glinting of the white water where it tumbled over a ledge of rock some twenty feet in height, and again, as it seethed and bubbled angrily among the jagged granite teeth with which its after-course was thickly strewn; and as she gazed and listened, the voice of the water seemed to syllable itself into words intended for her ear alone. "Come to me, come to me," it seemed to say; "here 'tis ever sweet to be—sweet to be." Nothing more; only those few words, over and over again, in a sort of murmurous sing-song, that awoke vague echoes in her brain. The water spoke to her as plainly as she had ever heard human voice speak. The danger, and she seemed to know it, lay in the perpetual iteration of the words, "Come to me," the effect of which upon her excitable nerves was to work her up into a sort of dreamy ecstasy, which might not improbably culminate in her striving to obey the invitation by leaping headlong from the bridge into the gulf below. She strove, however, to break through the spell that was being woven over her, dragging herself slowly and with difficulty, as though she were being plucked at behind by invisible hands, from the spot where she had been standing, to the edge of the ravine, and stumbling forward on her knees the moment she felt herself on firm ground.

"Sorceress, I have escaped thee!" she cried aloud. "I will not obey thy summons. Thy silvery voice would lure me to destruction. But hark! I hear another voice. One whom I know well is coming this way, and he must not see me. Hush!"

Still kneeling, and with upraised finger in the act of listening, all the pulses of her being seemed to stand still for a moment, while she waited to hear again the voice which had startled her. It came again, and this time nearer than before. There could be no mistaking whose voice it was; and as its familiar tones fell on Marie's ear, she forgot all about the water-sprite's invitation—forgot everything except the one fact, that the man whom she hated with all a lunatic's intensity of hate was close beside her, and that there were now no stone walls, no iron bars between them two. As she realized fully that this was indeed so, a great wave of fire seemed to sweep across her brain; and all at once the moon looked blood-red, and the stars took the same colour, and all her muscles seemed to harden, and her fingers began to grope instinctively for the haft of her knife. There was a thick clump of underwood growing close to the spot where she was kneeling, and partly overhanging the brink of the ravine. She was only just in time to reach the shelter of these shrubs, when the head and shoulders of a man came into view above the opposite slope of the hill; and the same instant the handsome, crafty face of Duplessis was evanescently lighted up by the blaze of a fusee, as the Canadian paused for a moment in the act of lighting another cigar. As he did so, he spoke again, addressing himself to Antoine, who was toiling painfully up some distance behind his master: "Another little pull, my cabbage, and we shall be on level ground, and then half an hour's brisk walking will take us to the Grange. An hour of this exercise every morning before breakfast, would soon bring down that overfed carcass of thine to something like reasonable proportions."

"Oh, Monsieur Henri," panted Antoine, "but it is cruel, my faith, to drag persons of delicate stomach up these precipices! Why wasn't the world made without hills? It would have been a much pleasanter place to live in than it is now." The glowing tip of the cigar was coming nearer and nearer to the madwoman hidden in the thicket. "But with regard to *La Chatte Rouge*," continued Antoine, "has Monsieur given my proposition due consideration? It is simple, it is safe, it is effectual. Let Monsieur go to Paris and enjoy himself, and leave Antoine to clip the claws of *La Chatte*."

"*Séllérat!*" hissed the madwoman from her

hiding-place. "La Chatte would like to drink thy heart's blood!"

The glowing tip was very close now. Duplessis, with one foot on the bridge, and one still on firm ground, paused for an instant to answer Antoine.

"Take care, my infant," he said laughingly, "that she doesn't claw thine eyes out in the process." With that he took hold of the hand-ropes, and came forward, step by step, slowly and cautiously. The frail structure bent and swayed under his weight in a way that might well have alarmed a man of weaker nerve. He had reached the middle of the bridge, when he looked up suddenly, for the dry branches of brushwood were cracking, as if some one were hidden among them; and then he saw that he stood face to face with the woman of whom he had just been speaking. She rose before him like an avenging spirit, her eyes blazing with madness, and her white face distorted with an intensity of hate such as no words could have expressed.

"I am here, Henri Duplessis," she said; here—*comprends tu?* and thy prisoner no longer. The hour of our reckoning has come at last!"

Her fingers were still nervously seeking something in the folds of the shawl that confined her waist; and as she spoke, she moved a step or two forward. So unlooked for, so utterly unexpected was the apparition of this woman, that for once Duplessis lost his presence of mind. As Marie made a step forward, he took one backward; and as he did so, his foot slipped off the narrow plank on which he was standing, thickly crusted as it was with frozen snow. He slipped and fell, with a wild, inarticulate cry of horror; but as his feet slid from under him, he clutched convulsively at the hand-ropes, which yielded fearfully to the sudden strain, but did not break; and so he hung for a few seconds over the ravine, making desperate efforts to recover his footing on the slippery planks. With a cry that seemed like an echo of his master's, Antoine rushed forward to the assistance of Duplessis; but Marie was at the bridge before him. For one brief instant, the blade of her knife gleamed whitely in the moonlight, and then it came swiftly down on the rope by which Duplessis was hanging, severing the strands one by one with its keen edge; and while Marie's wild maniacal laugh, that was as much a shriek as a laugh, rang shrilly over the moorland, the last strands gave way, and Duplessis, still clinging to the rope, was dashed with frightful violence against the opposite side of the ravine, and falling thence, came down with a dull thud, which chilled the blood of Antoine to hear, on to the sharp-pointed rocks below, round which the angry stream was ever brawling.

Again the maniac's shrill laughter awoke the faint moorland echoes. "Gone! gone! and Marie is revenged at last," she shrieked. "How his eyes glared at me in the moonlight as he hung by the rope! I never felt so merry before—never—never." And with that she broke into one of her *chansons*, and wandered away towards the head of the ravine, as forgetful, apparently, of the recent tragedy, as though no such person as Henri Duplessis had ever existed; while heart-broken Antoine, calling his master's name aloud, went searching, like one half-crazed, for some path by which he could obtain access to the bottom of the ravine.

CHAPTER XLII.—ANTOINE'S NARRATIVE.

Towards the close of a bright February afternoon, about a month after the events related in the foregoing chapter, a man, well wrapped up from the weather, might be seen toiling slowly through the park on his way to Belair. To the footman who answered his imperative ring at the side-door, he gave a parcel, done up in brown paper, and sealed with several great splashes of red wax, and charged him to deliver the same without delay into the hands of Lady Spencelaugh, and of no one but her; and then adding that no answer was required, he slunk away from the door, and was presently swallowed up in the dusky park, seeming to melt into and

become a portion of the dim shadows that were mustering so thickly under the branches of the old trees.

The packet, on being opened, was found to contain Lady Spencelaugh's stolen jewels: not a single stone was missing. Beside the stolen property, there was a letter addressed to her Ladyship, written in French by Antoine Gaudin, but too lengthy to be given here in its entirety. Of its chief points, however, as explanatory of certain events narrated in the earlier chapters of this history, the following may be taken as a free translation; although it was difficult, here and there, to make out the sense of the original, owing to Antoine's execrable writing, and his curious method of spelling, based, apparently, on some phonetic system of his own.

MY LADY—In the interests of human nature in general, and of the late lamented Monsieur Henri Duplessis in particular, it is requisite that the underwritten explanation of certain events as drawn up by me, Antoine Gaudin, be read with serious attention by your Ladyship. It is a justification to the world of the great heart that has gone from among us. For, alas, Madame, my dearly-loved master is no more! My eyes are wet as I write these words. But for the moment, I put Sentiment, the generous, the profound, on one side, and will try to set down what I have got to say after the fashion you English love so much—in a 'business-like way.' (Ah, the droll phrase!)

Monsieur Henri Duplessis was born in Canada, of a noble French family that emigrated to that country about a century ago. My mother was his foster-mother, and I was his foster-brother, and so I learned to love him, and devoted myself to his fortunes through life. M. Henri's parents both died when he was quite young; and when he came of age, he found himself master of a handsome fortune, with all the inclination to enjoy it. At that time, he was young, ardent, generous, and impulsive, and as handsome as Apollo's self. We—that is, he and I—set out on our travels; and first we determined to see whatever the American States could shew us that was worthy of our regards. To my dear master, after the studious and secluded life to which he had been condemned during his youth, New York seemed a very Paradise of delights, and he tasted of every pleasure that it had to offer him. Grown tired after a time of city-life, he determined to study nature in some of her wilder moods, and man in some of his more primitive aspects, and we set out for the Far West. It was while we were taking this journey, on our way to the prairies, at a little town in one of the western states, that my dear master first encountered the evil genius of his life in the person of Marie Fevriez. Marie was an actress, born in America, of French parents; young and enchanting enough at that time, I must admit, with a certain devil's beauty about her, which had for M. Henri an irresistible but fatal attraction. It was on the stage that he first saw her. She was performing her great part in a piece adapted from the French, entitled *La Chatte Rouge*, in which she appeared in a flame-coloured robe, and in a certain dark scene with real phosphorescent flames playing about her head; and enacted a sort of beneficent fiend, avenging her own wrongs, and those of the good people of the play at the same time. She was not an actress that would please a first-class audience; she lacked both education and refinement; but she was not without power of a certain kind, and was much run after in the rough country towns where she commonly played.

Well, my master fell in love with *La Chatte* at first sight. It was not difficult for a man in his position to obtain an introduction to her, and he was not the less fascinated when he saw her off the stage. Certainly, she was a splendid animal that time. My master made love ardently, proved to her the extent of his fortune, overwhelmed her with lavish presents, and ended by asking her to become his wife, and accompany him to Europe. In a brief three weeks from the night on which he first saw her, they were husband and wife.

They went to Europe, but I was left behind. Madame did not like me, and I did not like

Madame; and M. Henri was so infatuated just then that he was persuaded into giving me my *congé*. They spent five years on the continent, at the end of which time Monsieur returned to his own country, beggared in purse, and separated from his wife; and little by little the wretched story came out. Gambling, and extravagance of every kind, leading by easy but rapid steps to bankruptcy and general ruin; and combined therewith, the bitter certainty that the woman he had loved with such foolish madness had only cared for him because of his money—and to his proud spirit that was the bitterest stroke of all. My master was a man of strong passions—a hot lover and a fierce hater—and he now hated the woman to whom he was chained for life with a depth of hatred equal to the love he had formerly borne her. Of all his fortune, nothing now remained to him but a little farm in a wild part of the country, and thither he and I now retired from the world, and spent three or four quiet years. Those years at Petit-Maison I believe to have been the happiest of my dear master's life. No longer able to move in that society which he loved so much, and of which he had ever been so bright an ornament, he fell into his new and narrow mode of life with the native cheerfulness of a true gentleman, whom nothing can ever really disturb so long as he retains his faith in himself. He looked after his farm, and read his books; and by way of variety, he and I would often go on long fishing-excursions to the lakes. But by and by, an aunt of M. Henri died, and left him another fortune—a little one, this time, and by no means equal to the fortune he had spent; and with it came the desire to go out once more into the world, and resume his position in society. Of Madame, we had heard nothing positive for a long time. We only knew that she had taken to her old mode of life, and was wandering somewhere among the outlying States with an itinerant troop of players. Among his friends in Toronto and Montreal, it was, of course, known that M. Henri had been married; but as no one there had ever seen his wife, and as it was known that he had been living *en garçon* for the last three or four years, people concluded that Madame was dead, and, for reasons of his own, my dear master was desirous that such a belief should be universally adopted. What, then, was our surprise and disgust when, one morning, about a fortnight after our arrival at Montreal, Madame Marie turned up at our hotel, and demanded to see M. Henri. To deny her was out of the question. By some means, best known to herself, she had heard that my master was once more a rich man, and she had come with the intention of doing her best to ruin him for the second time. She demanded one of two things: either to be acknowledged as the wife of M. Duplessis, and received as such by his friends; or else to be subsidized by a sum equivalent to half his annual income, on condition that she kept the marriage secret, and never entered Canada again.

To no other terms would the harpy listen; and my master was fain, at last, to accede to her second proposition, and so rid himself of her presence for ever. Having settled everything so much to her own advantage, she set out on her return to the States, but had only left Montreal a few hours when she was seized with illness so severe as to be unable to continue her journey. An address found on her person caused my master to be sent for; and on reaching the hotel where she lay, we found her far gone in a severe attack of brain-fever. She ran a close race for her life; ultimately, she recovered; but the fever had left her with a twist of the brain, which made it doubtful whether she would ever be fit to mingle with sane people again. It seems that there was a hereditary taint of insanity in her family, and now the blight had fallen upon her. My master had her placed in a private asylum, kept by a man of the name of Van Goost; and it was fully understood between them that Madame was to be considered as insane during the remainder of her life; Van Goost, in fact, constituted himself her jailer for life, for which service he was of course handsomely paid.

After this little episode, M. Henri, accompa-

nied by your humble servant, set out for Europe for the second time; and it was in the course of this tour that we first had the honour of meeting your Ladyship and the late excellent Sir Philip. Your Ladyship knows how the acquaintance began; how we all came to England together; how my master took up his residence at Lilac Lodge; and what a great favourite he was with Sir Philip. It was some time before this that the brilliant idea had first struck him, which he now began to elaborate carefully. Marie was shut up for life; he himself was, to all intents and purposes, a free man; he would marry an heiress, and make his own fortune and mine at the same time. Ah, the beautiful scheme! it was worthy the genius of M. Henri. The charming Mademoiselle Frederica was the object of his adoration; and he would have married her, Madame, as surely as you read these lines (and what an excellent husband he would have made her! for he had the good, the noble heart), but for a most unhappy accident. That accident was the escape of *La Chatte Rouge* from the custody of the Herr Van Goost. She got into Van Goost's private room the night she went away, and ransacked his papers till she found a letter containing M. Henri's address in England; and in less than a month from that night, she arrived at Kings-thorpe Station. She was disagreeable at first, and seemed inclined to spoil everything; but ultimately she fell into M. Henri's views, and agreed to pass as his sister, but insisted upon being introduced as such to his friends at Belair. With an understanding to that effect, my master left her; but to introduce this uncultured creature—who required winding up with cognac every morning, and whose manners and conversation had a coarse theatrical tinge—as his sister to the refined and courtly Sir Philip, and to the beautiful miss who was to be his wife, was more than he could bear to do. In this emergency, Antoine proved himself a useful ally.

On the third day of Madame's stay at Kings-thorpe, M. Henri went to fetch her away, on pretence of taking her to more comfortable apartments in a neighbouring town. He drove her round by way of the old coast-road, as being more lonely and suitable for the purpose he had in view. Half-way along this road, in a curve of the moors, there lay perdue a covered cart, in attendance on which were your humble servant, and another individual whom it is unnecessary to name. Madame was evidently distrustful of M. Henri's intentions; and when, shortly after leaving Kingthorpe, her nose began to bleed, her superstitious nature at once put down that little incident as a bad omen, and she implored him to take her back; but he only laughed at her ridiculous fancies, as he called them, and drove on faster. When opposite the spot where we lay hidden, M. Henri requested Madame to alight, on the plea that something was wrong with one of the wheels of the gig. She got down, and seated herself on the grass, close by the spot known as Martell's Leap. The signal agreed upon as a summons to us who were in hiding was a shrill whistle. The signal was so long in coming, that I grew curious at last, and popped my head over a hillock to see how affairs were progressing; when what should I see but Monsieur and Madame struggling together like two mad people, and apparently trying which could throw the other over the precipice. One of them was really mad, and that was Madame, as we were not long in discovering, when we succeeded in separating them, which we did only just in time—another minute would have seen one or both of them tumbled from the cliff. Madame's old malady had suddenly come back upon her as she sat there on the grass; and when M. Henri approached her, she sprang up, and seized him by the throat, and swore that she would fling him over the precipice. "In the sudden surprise of such an attack, I forgot everything except the very proper desire I had to keep my neck unbroken," said M. Henri, afterwards. "I forgot entirely that a single cry for help would have brought you two worthy fellows to my assistance; and I believe I should have gone over the cliff in grim silence, had you not appeared just at that last opportune moment which is always provided in plays and romances for the rescue of virtue in distress."

It was a raving madwoman, tied tightly down among the straw at the bottom of the light cart, that we took that evening across the moors to a certain house, where her coming as a sane woman had been provided for. Shut up here from the world, she was at liberty to be mad or not, as pleased her best; what would be her ultimate fate, was a question left open for future decision; she was removed from my master's path, and M. Henri was now at liberty to act as though no such creature were in existence.

Who was the writer of the mysterious letter received by my master one night about two months after Madame Marie had been so judiciously disposed of? That is a question which neither M. Henri nor I was ever able to answer. It was a letter written under a wrong impression—written under the impression that M. Henri had committed a murder; warning him that his crime was discovered, and that the police were on his track; and advising him to flee while he had yet an opportunity of doing so. He did flee—not that he had committed the crime imputed to him, but because his staying would have involved the discovery to the world of that dark secret which he had been at such pains to hide from it; and, as he afterwards confessed, he lacked the courage to go through such an ordeal. His hopes were crushed at one fell blow; the edifice which he had been patiently building for so long a time had crumbled into ruins at his feet; and there was nothing left for him but to get away as quickly as possible. He lay hid in London for several weeks, and then he ventured down to Monkshire in disguise, and took up his abode for a time in the very house where his mad wife was shut up; and there I joined him. By this time, his second fortune was almost gone; for, without being extravagant in any way, his expenses had been heavy, and so long as the prospect of a wealthy marriage lured him on, he hardly cared how his money went. But it was now, when the dreadful eyes of poverty were staring him in the face, that the happy genius of M. Henri shewed at its brightest. He conceived a brilliant scheme, which, if it proved successful, would rehabilitate his broken fortunes at a single coup. You, Madame, as the victim of that plot, are scarcely perhaps the proper personage to appreciate its brilliancy; but I will venture to state that no disinterested person could become acquainted with its details, without passing a eulogy on the daring and ingenuity with which its every step was characterised.

How we sped that night at Belair, your Ladyship knows as well as he who writes these lines, for your two visitors were none other than M. Henri Duplessis and Antoine Gaudin; and the survivor of the two now craves your Ladyship's pardon for the violence which the necessities of the case compelled him to resort to. We had succeeded, M. Henri and I, almost beyond our expectations: the gems which my master had on his person when we left Belair that night, would, in that New World to which we were bound, have formed the nucleus of the colossal fortune which M. Henri had determined on devoting all his future energies to building up; and that he would have succeeded, who that knew him could gainsay? But for him no such bright future was ever to dawn. We were walking across the moors on our way home, when that wretch—that tigris—that fiend incarnate, who with devilish cunning had contrived to make her escape, suddenly confronted my master, who was walking a short distance in front of me; and before I had time to interfere in any way, he was no longer among the living. The precise mode of his death, it is needless to detail here. It is sufficient to say that that woman is his murderer; and had I been able to reach her at the time, she would not have escaped with life. My dear master lies buried under the wild moorland: these hands dug his grave, and these eyes were the last that looked on him before the turf was laid over his head that covered him up from human ken for ever. It was better so; all the 'inquests' in the world could not have brought him back to life for a single moment; and he will sleep none the worse in that he does not rest under the shadow of one of your churches. I return you the gems and other articles bor-

rowed by M. Duplessis from your Ladyship. Now that his dear master is dead, Antoine cares not to retain them.

From this narrative, your Ladyship will perceive how largely M. Duplessis was the victim of unfortunate circumstances; and remembering this, you will not fail to do him justice in your recollections. You, Madame, know what he was in society—how handsome, how witty, how accomplished; but the silver lining of his character—his goodness, his generosity, the thorough nobility of his disposition, can never, alas! be known fully to any one but to him who writes these lines—that is to say, Madame, to your Ladyship's humble and devoted servant,
ANTOINE GAUDIN.

(To be Concluded in our next.)

BIRDS OF PREY.

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

Book the First.

FATAL FRIENDSHIP.

Continued from page 286.

CHAPTER VI.—MR. BURKHAM'S UNCERTAINTIES.

The next morning dawned gray and pale and chill, after the manner of early spring mornings, let them ripen into never such balmy days; and with the dawn Nancy Woolper came into the invalid's chamber, more wan and sickly of aspect than the morning itself.

Mrs. Halliday started from an uneasy slumber. "What's the matter, Nancy?" she asked with considerable alarm. She had known the woman ever since her childhood, and she was startled this morning by some indefinable change in her manner and appearance. The hearty old woman, whose face had been like a hard rosy apple shrivelled and wrinkled by long keeping, had now a white and ghastly look which struck terror to Georgy's breast. She who was usually so brisk of manner and sharp of speech, had this morning a strange subdued tone and an unnatural calmness of demeanour. "What is the matter, Nancy?" Mrs. Halliday repeated, getting up from her sofa.

"Don't be frightened, Miss Georgy," answered the old woman, who was apt to forget that Tom Halliday's wife had ever ceased to be Georgy Craddock; "don't be frightened, my dear. I haven't been very well all night,—and—and—I've been worrying myself about Mr. Halliday. If I were you, I'd call in another doctor. Never mind what Mr. Philips says. He may be mistaken, you know, clever as he is. There's no telling. Take my advice, Miss Georgy, and call in another doctor—directly, directly," repeated the old woman, seizing Mrs. Halliday's wrist with a passionate energy, as if to give emphasis to her words.

Poor timid Georgy shrank from her with terror. "You frighten me, Nancy," she whispered; "do you think that Tom is so much worse? You have not been with him all night; and he has been sleeping very quietly. What makes you so anxious this morning?"

"Never mind that, Miss Georgy. You get another doctor, that's all; get another doctor at once. Mr. Sheldon is a light sleeper. I'll go to his room and tell him you've set your heart upon having fresh advice; if you'll only bear me out afterwards."

"Yes, yes; go, by all means," exclaimed Mrs. Halliday, only too ready to take alarm under the influence of a stronger mind, and eager to act when supported by another person.

Nancy Woolper went to her master's room. He must have been sleeping very lightly, if he was sleeping at all; for he was broad awake the next minute after his housekeeper's light knock had sounded on the door. In less than five minutes he came out of his room half-dressed. Nancy told him that Mrs. Halliday had taken fresh alarm about her husband, and wished for further advice.

"She sent you to tell me that?" asked Philip.

"Yes."

"And when does she want this new doctor called in?"

"Immediately, if possible."

It was seven o'clock by this time, and the morning was brightening a little.

"Very well," said Mr. Sheldon, "her wishes shall be attended to directly. Heaven forbid that I should stand between my old friend and any chance of his speedy recovery! If a stranger can bring him round quicker than I can, let the stranger come."

Mr. Sheldon was not slow to obey Mrs. Halliday's behest. He was departing on his quest breakfastless, when Nancy Woolper met him in the hall with a cup of tea. He accepted the cup almost mechanically from her hand, and took it into the parlour, whither Nancy followed him. And then for the first time he perceived that change in his housekeeper's face which had so startled Georgina Halliday.

The change was somewhat modified now; but still the Nancy Woolper of to-day was not the Nancy Woolper of yesterday.

"You're looking very queer, Nancy," said the dentist, gravely scrutinising the woman's face with his bright penetrating eyes. "Are you ill?"

"Well, Mr. Philip, I have been rather queer all night,—sickish and faintish-like."

"Ah, you've been over-fatiguing yourself in the sick-room, I dare say. Take care you don't knock yourself up."

"No; it's not that, Mr. Philip. There's not many can stand hard work better than I can, it's not *that* as made me ill. I took something last night that disagreed with me."

"More fool you," said Mr. Sheldon curtly; "you ought to know better than to ill-use your digestive powers at your age. What was it? Hard cold meat and preternaturally green pickles I suppose; or something of that kind."

"No, sir; it was only a drop of beef-tea that I made for poor Mr. Halliday. And that oughtn't to have disagreed with a baby, you know, sir."

"Oughtn't it?" cried the dentist disdainfully. "That's a little bit of vulgar ignorance, Mrs. Woolper. I suppose it was stuff that had been taken up to Mr. Halliday."

"Yes, Mr. Philip; you took it up with your own hands."

"Ah, to be sure; so I did. Very well, then, Mrs. Woolper, if you knew as much about atmospheric influences as I do, you'd know that food which has been standing for hours in the pestilential air of a fever-patient's room isn't fit for any body to eat. The stuff made you sick, I suppose."

"Yes, Sir; sick to my very heart," answered the Yorkshire woman, with a strange mournfulness in her voice.

"Let that be a warning to you, then. Don't take anything more that comes down from the sick-room."

"I don't think there'll be any chance of my doing that long, sir."

"What do you mean?"

"I don't fancy Mr. Halliday is long for this world."

"Ah, you women are always ravens."

"Unless the strange doctor can do something to cure him. O, pray bring a clever man who will be able to cure that poor helpless creature upstairs. Think, Mr. Philip, how you and him used to be friends and playfellows,—brothers almost,—when you was both bits of boys. Think how bad it might seem to evil-minded folks if he died under your roof."

The dentist had been standing near the door drinking his tea during this conversation; and now for the first time he looked at his housekeeper with an expression of unmitigated astonishment.

"What, in the name of all that's ridiculous, do you mean, Nancy?" he asked impatiently.

"What has my roof to do with Tom Halliday's illness—or his death, if it came to that? And what on earth can people have to say about it if he should die here instead of any where else?"

"Why, you see, sir, you being his friend, and Miss Georgy's sweetheart that was, and him having no other doctor, folks might take it into their heads he wasn't attended properly."

"Because I'm his friend? That's very good

logic! I'll tell you what it is, Mrs. Woolper; if any woman upon earth, except the woman who nursed me when I was a baby, had presumed to talk to me as you have been talking to me just this minute, I should open the door yonder and tell her to walk out of my house. Let that serve as a hint for you, Nancy; and don't you go out of your way a second time to advise me how I should treat my friend and my patient."

He handed her the empty cup, and walked out of the house. There had been no passion in his tone. His accent had been only that of a man who has occasion to reprove an old and trusted servant for an unwarrantable impertinence. Nancy Woolper stood at the street-door watching him as he walked away, and then went slowly back to her duties in the lower regions of the house.

"It can't be true," she muttered to herself: "it can't be true."

The dentist returned to Fitzgeorge-street in less than an hour, bringing with him a surgeon from the neighbourhood, who saw the patient, discussed the treatment, spoke hopefully to Mrs. Halliday, and departed, after promising to send a saline draught. Poor Georgy's spirits, which had revived a little under the influence of the stranger's hopeful words, sank again when she discovered that the utmost the new doctor could do was to order a saline draught. Her husband had taken so many saline draughts, and had been getting daily worse under their influence.

She watched the stranger wistfully as he lingered on the threshold to say a few words to Mr. Sheldon. He was a very young man, with a frank boyish face and a rosy colour in his cheeks. He looked like some fresh young neophyte in the awful mysteries of medical science, and by no means the sort of man to whom one would have imagined Philip Sheldon appealing for help, when he found his own skill at fault. But then it must be remembered that Mr. Sheldon had only summoned the stranger in compliance with what he considered a womanish whim.

"He looks very young," Georgina said regretfully, after the doctor's departure.

"So much the better, my dear Mrs. Halliday," answered the dentist cheerfully; "medical science is eminently progressive, and the youngest men are the best-educated men."

Poor Georgy did not understand this; but it sounded convincing; and she was in the habit of believing what people told her; so she accepted Mr. Sheldon's opinion. How could she doubt that he was wiser than herself in all matters connected with the medical profession?

"Tom seems a little better this morning," she said presently.

The invalid was asleep, shrouded by the curtain of the heavy old-fashioned four-post bedstead.

"He is better," answered the dentist; "so much better, that I shall venture to give him a few business letters that have been waiting for him some time, as soon as he wakes."

He seated himself by the head of the bed, and waited quietly for the awakening of the patient.

"Your breakfast is ready for you downstairs, Mrs. Halliday," he said presently; "hadn't you better go down and take it, while I keep watch here? It's nearly ten o'clock."

"I don't care about any breakfast," Georgina answered piteously.

"Ah, but you'd better eat something. You'll make yourself an invalid, if you are not careful; and then you won't be able to attend upon Tom."

This argument prevailed immediately. Georgy went down stairs to the drawing-room, and tried bravely to eat and drink, in order that she might be sustained in her attendance upon her husband. She had forgotten all the throes and tortures of jealousy which she had endured on his account. She had forgotten his late hours, and unholy roystering. She had forgotten every thing except that he had been very tender and kind throughout the prosperous years of their married life, and that he was lying in the darkened room upstairs sick to death.

Mr. Sheldon waited with all outward show of patience for the awakening of the invalid. But he looked at his watch twice during that half-

hour of waiting; and once he rose and moved softly about the room, searching for writing materials. He found a little portfolio of Georgina's and a frivolous-minded inkstand, after the semblance of an apple, with a gilt stalk and leaflet. The dentist took the trouble to ascertain that there was a decent supply of ink in the green glass apple, and that the pens were in working order. Then he went quietly back to his seat by the bedside and waited.

The invalid opened his eyes presently, and recognised his friend with a feeble smile.

"Well, Tom, old fellow, how do you feel to-day?—a little better, I hear from Mrs. H.," said the dentist cheerily.

"Yes, I think I *am* a shade better. But, you see, the deuce of it is I never get more than a shade better. It always stops at that. The little woman can't complain of me now, can she, Sheldon? No more late hours, or oysters-suppers, eh?"

"No, no, not just yet. You'll have to take care of yourself for a week or two when you get about again."

Mr. Halliday smiled faintly as his friend said this.

"I shall be very careful of myself if I ever do get about again, you may depend upon it, old fellow. But do you know I sometimes fancy I have spent my last jolly evening, and eaten my last oyster-supper, on this earth? I'm afraid it's time for me to begin to think seriously a good many things. The little woman is all right, thank God. I made my will upwards of a year ago, and insured my life pretty heavily soon after my marriage. Old Cradock never let me rest till that was done. So Georgy will be all safe. But when a man has led a careless, godless kind of a life,—doing very little harm perhaps, but doing no particular good,—he ought to set about making up his account somehow for a better world, when he feels himself slipping out of this. I asked Georgy for her Bible yesterday, and the poor dear loving little thing was frightened out of her wits. 'O, don't talk like that, Tom,' she cried; 'Mr. Sheldon says you are getting better every hour,'—by which you may guess what a rare thing it is for me to read my Bible. No, Phil, old fellow, you've done your best for me, I know; but I'm not made of very tough material, and all the physic you can pour down this poor sore throat of mine won't put any strength into me."

"Nonsense, dear boy; that's just what a man who has not been accustomed to illness is sure to think directly he is laid up for a day or two."

"I've been laid up for three weeks," murmured Mr. Halliday rather fretfully.

"Well, well, perhaps this Mr. Burkham will bring you round in three days, and then you'll say that your friend Sheldon was an ignoramus."

"No, no, I sha'n't, old fellow; I'm not such a fool as that. I'm not going to blame you when it's my own constitution that's in fault. As to that young man brought here just now, to please Georgy, I don't suppose he'll be able to do any more for me than you have done."

"We'll contrive to bring you round between us, never fear, Tom," answered Philip Sheldon in his most hopeful tone. "Why, you are looking almost your old self this morning. You are so much improved that I may venture to talk to you about business. There have been some letters lying about for the last few days. I didn't like to bore you while you were so very low. But they look like business letters; and perhaps it would be as well for you to open them."

The sick man contemplated the little packet which the dentist had taken from his breast-pocket; and then shook his head wearily.

"I'm not up to the mark, Sheldon," he said; "the letters must keep."

"O, come, come, old fellow! That's giving way, you know. The letters may be important; and it will do you good if you make an effort to rouse yourself."

"I tell you it isn't in me to do it, Philip Sheldon. I'm past making efforts. Can't you see that, man? Open the letters yourself, if you like."

"No, no, Halliday, I won't do that. Here's one with the seal of the Alliance Insurance Office. I suppose your premium is all right."

Tom Halliday lifted himself on his elbow for a moment, startled into new life, but he sank back upon the pillows again immediately, with a feeble groan.

"I don't know about that," he said anxiously, "you'd better look to that, Phil, for the little woman's sake. A man is apt to think that his insurance is settled and done with when he has been pommelled about by the doctors and approved by the board. He forgets there's that little matter of the premium. You'd better open the letter, Phil. I never was a good hand at remembering dates, and this illness has thrown me altogether out of gear."

Mr. Sheldon tore open that official document which, in his benevolent regard for his friend's interest, he had manipulated so cleverly on the precious evening, and read the letter with all show of deliberation.

"You're right, Tom," he exclaimed presently. "The twenty-one days' grace expire to-day. You'd better write me a cheque at once, and I'll send it on the office by hand. Where's your cheque-book?"

"In the pocket of that coat hanging up there." Philip Sheldon found the cheque-book, and brought it to his friend, with Georgy's portfolio, and the frivolous little green glass inkstand in the shape of an apple. He adjusted the writing materials for the sick man's use with womanly gentleness. His arm supported the wasted frame, as Tom Halliday slowly and laboriously filled in the cheque; and when the signature was duly appended to that document he drew a long breath, which seemed to express infinite relief of mind.

"You'll be sure it goes on to the Alliance Office, eh, old fellow?" asked Tom, as he tore out the oblong slip of paper, and handed it to his friend. "It was kind of you to jog my memory about this business. I'm such a fellow for procrastinating matters. And I'm afraid I've been a little off my head during the last week."

"Nonsense, Tom; not you."
"O, yes, I have. I've had all sorts of queer fancies. Did you come into this room the night before last, when Georgy was asleep?"

Mr. Sheldon reflected for a moment before answering.

"No," he said, "not the night before last."
"Ab, I thought as much," murmured the invalid. "I was off my head that night then, Phil, for I fancied I saw you; and I fancied I heard the bottles and glasses jingling on the little table behind the curtain."

"You were dreaming, perhaps."
"O, no, I wasn't dreaming. I was very restless and wakeful that night. However, that's neither here nor there. I lie in a stupid state sometimes for hours and hours, and I feel as weak as a rat, bodily and mentally; so while I have wits about me I'd better say what I've been wanting to say ever so long. You've been a good and kind friend to me all through this illness, Phil, and I'm not ungrateful for your kindness. If it does come to the worst with me—as I believe it will—Georgy shall give you a handsome mourning ring, or fifty pounds to buy one, if you like it better. And now let me shake hands with you, Philip Sheldon, and say thank you heartily, old fellow, for once and for ever."

The invalid stretched out a poor feeble attenuated hand, and, after a moment's pause, Philip Sheldon clasped it in his own muscular fingers. He did hesitate for just one instant before taking that hand.

He was no student of the Gospel; but when he had left the sick chamber there arose before him suddenly, as if written in letters of fire on the wall opposite to him, one sentence which had been familiar to him in his school-days at Barlingford:

And as soon as he was come, he goeth straightway to him, and saith, Master, master; and kissed him.

The new doctor came twice a day to see his patient. He seemed rather anxious about the case, and just a little puzzled by the symp-

oms. Georgy had sufficient penetration to perceive that this new adviser was in some manner at fault, and she began to think that Philip Sheldon was right, and that regular practitioners were very stupid creatures. She communicated her doubts to Mr. Sheldon, and suggested the expediency of calling in some grave elderly doctor, to supersede Mr. Burkhams. But against this the dentist protested very strongly.

"You asked me to call in a stranger, Mrs. Halliday, and I have done so," he said with the dignity of an offended man. "You must now abide by his treatment, and content yourself with his advice, unless he chooses to summon further assistance."

Georgy was fain to submit. She gave a little plaintive sigh, and went back to her husband's room, where she sat and wept silently behind the bed-curtains. There was a double watch kept in the sick chamber now; for Nancy Woolper rarely left it, and rarely closed her eyes. It was altogether a sad time in the dentist's house, and Tom Halliday apologised to his friend more than once for the trouble he had brought upon him. If he had been familiar with the details of modern history he would have quoted Charles Stuart, and begged pardon for being so long a-dying.

But anon there came a gleam of hope. The patient seemed decidedly better; and Georgy was prepared to reverence Mr. Burkhams, the Bloomsbury surgeon, as the greatest and ablest of men. Those shadows of doubt and perplexity which had at first obscured Mr. Burkhams' brow cleared away, and he spoke very cheerfully of the invalid.

Unhappily this state of things did not last long. The young surgeon came one morning, and was obviously alarmed by the appearance of his patient. He told Philip Sheldon as much; but that gentleman made very light of his fears. As the two men discussed the case, it was very evident that the irregular practitioner was quite a match for the regular one. Mr. Burkhams listened deferentially, but departed only half-convinced. He walked briskly away from the house, but came to a dead stop directly after turning on to Fitzgeorge-street.

"What ought I to do?" he asked himself.
"What course ought I to take? If I am right, I should be a villain to let things go on. If I am wrong, anything like interference would ruin me for life."

He had finished his morning round, but he did not go straight home. He lingered at the corners of quiet streets, and walked up and down the unfrequented side of a loomy square. Once he turned and retraced his steps in the direction of Fitzgeorge-street. But after all this hesitation he walked home, and ate his dinner very thoughtfully, answering his young wife at random when she talked to him. He was a struggling man, who had invested his small fortune in the purchase of a practice which had turned out of a very poor one, and he had the battle of life before him.

"There's something on your mind to-day, I'm sure, Harry," his wife said before the meal was ended.

"Well, yes, dear," he answered; "I've rather a difficult case in Fitzgeorge-street, and I'm anxious about it."

The industrious little wife disappeared after dinner and the young surgeon walked up and down the room alone, brooding over that difficult case in Fitzgeorge-street. After spending nearly an hour thus, he snatched his hat suddenly from the table on which he had set it down, and hurried from the house.

"I'll have advice and assistance, come what may," he said to himself, as he walked rapidly in the direction of Mr. Sheldon's house. "The case may be straight enough—I certainly can't see that the man has any motive—but I'll have advice."

He looked up at the dentist's spoolless dwelling as he crossed the street. The blinds were all down, and the fact that they were so sent a sudden chill to his heart. But the April sunshine was full upon that side of the street, and there might be no significance in those closely-drawn blinds. The door was opened by a sleepy-look-

ing boy, and in the passage Mr. Burkhams met Philip Sheldon.

"I have been rather anxious about my patient since this morning, Mr. Sheldon," said the surgeon, "and I've come to the conclusion that I ought to confer with a man of higher standing than myself. Do you think Mrs. Halliday will object to such a course?"

"I am sure she would not have objected to it," the dentist answered very gravely, "if you had suggested it sooner. I am sorry to say the suggestion comes too late. My poor friend breathed his last half an hour ago."

(To be continued.)

THE TIGRESS AND HER YOUNG.

A FEW years ago, some English officers, camping in the vicinity of Mulksport, went out tiger-hunting, and bagged a splendid tigress. Whilst returning home with the trophy, they found a secluded spot, in the lee of a jagged rock, which evidently was the lair of a tiger; for there lay bones of both human and brute kind and shreds and rags of clothing. There was also a tiny kitten, not more than a fortnight old, coiled in a corner, winking and blinking and gazing at the intruders. The hunters at once decided that it must be the cub of the beast they had slain, and willingly took charge of the little orphan. Tiger kittens are not captured every day; so, when the hunters returned to their quarters, the excitement in their tent was considerable. The newly acquired kitten was provided with a tiny dog-collar and chain, and attached to the tent-pole, round which it gambled to the delight of an audience numbering nearly twenty. About two hours after the capture, however, and just as it was growing dark, the good people in the tent were checked, in the midst of their hilarity, by a sound that caused the bravest heart to beat rather irregularly.

It was the roar, or rather the combination, of shriek and roar, peculiar to the tiger when driven mad with rage. In an instant the gamboling kitten became every inch a tiger, and strained with all its baby strength at the tether, while it replied with a loud wail to the terrible voice outside. The company were panic-stricken. There was something so sudden and unearthly in the roar, that it seemed as though the great tiger, brought in an hour before, had come to life again. Certainly the tiger in question was already flayed; but the picture conjured up became none the more pleasant for that. There was, however, not nearly so much time for speculation to the scared company as writing those lines has cost; for almost simultaneously with the roar there leaped clear into the centre of the tent a bold tigress; and, without deigning to notice a single man there, she caught her kidnapped baby by the nape of the neck, and, giving it a jerk, snapped the little chain, and then, turning for the tent-door, trotted off at full speed. After all, it appeared that the little thing did not belong to the tiger that was slain, but to the brave mother that had tracked and recovered it. Sanguinary man eater as she may have been, one can be scarcely sorry to hear that not a gun was levelled at the great rejoicing creature as she bore off her young one, and that she got off clear.

WHOEVER looks for a friend without imperfections will never find what he wants. We love ourselves with all our faults, and we ought to love our friends in like manner.

CURIOUS EXPERIMENT.—If a bottle be half filled with ground coffee, such as is used for making that beverage, and the bottle then filled with cold water, and the cork replaced, the evolution of gas or air will be so great as to force out the cork. It is also stated that the force is sufficient to burst the bottle if the cork be tightly secured.

THE Prince of Wales has abandoned the razor, and has announced his intention to wear his beard for the future in patriarchal fashion.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

Letters intended for the Editor, should be addressed "Editor Saturday Reader, Drawer 401," and communications on business to "R. Worthington, publisher."

ALBION.—Domesday Book was framed by order of William the Conqueror, and is a register of the lands of England. Judgments were given from this book upon the value, tenure and services of the land described therein. The original Domesday Book is comprised in two volumes, the one a large folio, and the other a quarto.

A. R. T.—Lord Byron, the poet, was born in London on the twenty-second of January, 1788.

SUBSCRIBER.—You are not legally bound to give your servant a character, nor are you bound to give your reasons for refusing to do so.

LIZZIE B.—Heroine has the accent on the first syllable, and is pronounced her-o-een—the first syllable as in herring.

D. G. McDONALD.—Our correspondent has our best thanks for the kind wishes expressed in his note.

INQUISITIVE.—The expression, "escaped with the skin of my teeth," is contained in the twentieth verse of the nineteenth chapter of Job. The phrase, "in spite of his teeth," is said to have originated in this wise: King John once demanded of a certain Jew ten thousand marks; on the refusal of which he ordered one of the Israelite's teeth to be drawn every day till he should consent. The Jew lost seven, and then paid the required sum. Hence the phrase.

A. W. P.—Sir W. Codrington was commander of the forces in the Crimea when Sebastopol was taken.

J. H. Y.—Your proposition is respectfully declined.

CATHOLIC.—The Queen could not marry a Roman Catholic; the law forbids such a marriage.

SHOP.—Yes. Mr. Macready's last appearance on the stage was in the character of Macbeth, on the 26th February, 1861.

IVI.—Montreal first, then Quebec. We have not been able to obtain the address of the gentleman you refer to.

FNI.—Much obliged for the contributions, of which we will avail ourself if possible.

PASTIMES.

We shall be glad to receive from any of our friends who take an interest in the column original contributions of Puzzles, Charades, Problems, &c. Solutions should in each case accompany questions forwarded.

DECAPITATIONS.

When complete, I stand as a quadruped small. I traverse the cottage as well as the hall; For what I receive I return no thanks, And saucily, too, I continue my pranks. But if you behead me, though strange it may seem, I spread into a river, a fair English stream. Though this may surprise, 'tis perfectly true. For when you have seen it 'twill be nothing new. Curtailed and transposed, I'm sure to be seen, Served up as good fare on the banks of the Seine.

CHARADES.

1. I am composed of 22 letters. My 1, 19, 21, 13 is a lady's name. My 12, 15, 4, 9, 17 is one of the United States. My 16, 17, 9, 8, 6, 13 is a part of Italy. My 6, 7, 11, 19, 15 is a country in Asia. My 14, 20, 15, 12 is a country in Asia. My 18, 22, 20, 19, 13 is a river in France. My 10, 7, 1, 12, 22, 18 is a river in England. My 3, 15, 2, 12, 15, 21, 8, 15 is an island. My 5, 13, 18, 10 is to try.

J. E. D. A.

2. 'Twas "harvest-home," and all were merry-making, My first the squire's rural village seat; Each one was of the welcome fare partaking, While toast and song went round with joy replete.

There, whirling 'mid my third's gay mystic mazes, The maid and matron, youth and squire were seen As cheerful as the brightly blooming daisies That interspersed the lively village green.

And some were here, and some were there, engaged In passing round the cheering, "flowing bowl," While others on their lovers and the aged Were happily and ever in my whole.

Thus passed away the time, till day's declining Proclaimed my second's hour near at hand; Then rose the harvest-room, all brightly shining O'er field and wood, and stream sublimely grand.

3. Though mostly small, and always very sour, With joy and frolic pass I many an hour.

DOUBLE ACROSTIC.

- 1. A country of Asia. 9. A faculty of the mind. 2. A short poem. 10. A country of Europe. 3. A fish. 11. The art of writing in ciphers. 4. A bird. 12. A mountain in Asiatic Turkey. 5. An animal. 13. A town in Canada. 6. A metal. 14. A seaport of France. 7. An English river. 8. A bird of prey.

The initials and finals will name two British poets.

PROBLEM.

A general returning from the field of battle, being asked how many men he had lost, killed and wounded, replied: "The number killed is equal to 1/3 that of the wounded, and the sum of both is equal to 2/3 of what I had at first, or 2/3 of what I have at present; and if the number killed and wounded be multiplied together, the product will be equal to the number I had first." Find the number killed and wounded, as also the number of men he had at first.

ANSWERS TO DOUBLE ACROSTIC, &c. No. 70.

Double Acrostic.—W. Gladstone.—Reform Bill.—1. Warbler. 2. Greece. 3. Leaf. 4. Arno. 5. Dneiper. 6. Storm. 7. Thumb. 8. Qui. 9. Novel. 10. Earl.

Decapitations.—1. Shave—have—ave. 2. Cleave—leave—Eva. 3. Scale—laces—sale—ale—le. 4. Speed—deep, Dec.

Charades.—1. Head-ache. 2. Prim-rose. 3. Marriage.

Conundrums.—1. When he puts the colon (coal on). 2. Because he is a sir single (surcingle). 3. The letter r.

Riddles.—Mirror.

The following answers have been received:

Double Acrostic.—Pearl —, Minto, H. H. V. Archie, Ellen B.

Decapitation.—Ellen B., Minto, Geo. H., Pearl, Camp, Argus.

Conundrums.—Argus, Camp, Pearl.

Charades.—H. W. V., Minto, Pearl, Argus, Camp, Geo. H.

Enigma.—Minto, Argus, Camp, Violet, Arthur W.

Received too late to be acknowledged in our last, "Bericus," who answered all.

CHESS.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

D. G. McD. BEAVERTON.—Problem 49 cannot be solved according to stipulation by P takes P (ch.) as the key move. You have overlooked the fact of the Kt being en prise to the Q, which prevents the threatened mate.

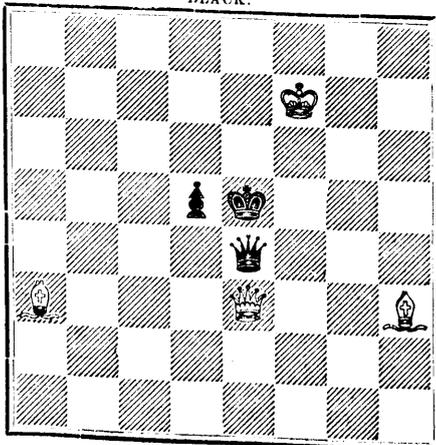
I. R.; M. H. HAMILTON.—Solution of 48 is correct. If in 49, Black plays 1. Q to R 3, instead of the move you suggest, how can the mate be effected?

G. G. ST. CATHARINES.—We have mislaid N. M's. position; can you furnish a duplicate?

PROBLEM No. 51.

By I. R.; M. B. HAMILTON, C. W.

BLACK.



WHITE.

White to play and mate in three moves.

SOLUTION OF PROBLEM, NO. 49.

- WHITE. 1. Q to Q Kt 7. 2. R to K Kt 8. 3. Mates. (a.) 1. Q takes B (ch.) 2. Q takes B (ch.) 3. P takes P Mate. (b.) 1. Q to Q 5 (ch.) 4. B to Q Kt 2 Mate. BLACK. R takes Q or (a. b.) Any move. K to Kt 2. K to R 3. P takes P. K to Kt 2.

The following brilliant little game was played some time since at the London Chess Club, between Herr Steinitz and a member of the Club, the former giving the odds of the Queen's Knight, which is to be removed from the board:

- WHITE, (Herr Steinitz.) 1 P to K 4. 2 P to K B 4. 3 Kt to K B 3. 4 B to B 4. 5 Castles. 6 Q takes P. 7 P to K 5. 8 B takes P (ch.) (a.) 9 P to Q 4. 10 B to K 3. 11 Q to R 5 (ch.) (b.) 12 R takes P (ch.) 13 R takes Kt (ch.) (c.) 14 B to Q 4 (ch.) 15 R to B sq (ch.) (d.) 16 Q to K 5. 17 Q to Q 5 (ch.) 18 Q to K Kt 5. 16 Q to Q 8 (ch.) 20 Q to K 8 and wins. BLACK, (Mr. —) 1 P to K 4. 2 P takes P. 3 P to K Kt 4. 4 P to Kt 5. 5 P takes Kt. 6 Q to B 3. 7 Q takes P. 8 K takes B. 9 Q takes P (ch.) 10 Q to K B 3. 11 Q to Kt 3. 12 Kt to K B 3. 13 K takes R. 14 K to B 2. 15 K to Kt sq. 16 B to Kt 2. 17 Q to K 3. 18 Q to K R 3. 19 B to B sq.

(a.) This move was first adopted by Morphy. Curiously enough there is no mention made of it in the recently published works in Germany.

(b.) The masterly style in which Herr S. conducts the game, evidences, in a high degree, his great power in attacking positions.

(c.) This is all very clever.

(d.) We invite the attention of our readers to this peculiarly interesting position; White has now a forced won game, but it is not so easy to discover the moves. Let the reader, before proceeding with the game, try to find out the modus operandi.

WITTY AND WHIMSICAL.

THE LARGEST ROOM IN THE WORLD.—The "room for improvement."

WHY are good husbands like dough?—Because women need them.

"You want nothing, do you?" said Pat. "Bedad, an' if it's nothing you want, you'll find it in the jug where the whisky was."

An Irish editor, in speaking of the miseries of Ireland, says: "Her cup of misery has been for ages overflowing, and is not yet full."

A GRAND RESOLVE.—A despairing swain, in a fit of desperation, recently declared to his unrelenting lady-love that it was his firm determination to drown himself, or perish in the attempt.

"I wish you would pay a little attention to what I am saying, sir," roared an irate lawyer at an exasperating witness. "Well, I am paying as little as I can," was the calm reply.

A PHILOSOPHER, who married a vulgar but amiable girl, used to call his wife brown sugar, because, he said, she was sweet but unrefined.

PHELIM explains that his wife and he fell out because they are of one mind—she wants to be master and so does he.

GIVEN AWAY AND SOLD.—Which is the cheaper, a bride or bridegroom?—The bride; she is always given away; the bridegroom is sometimes sold.

THE entire assets of a recent bankrupt were nine children. The creditors acted magnanimously, and let him keep them.

WHEN a young lady offers to hem a cambric handkerchief for a rich bachelor, she means to sew in order that she may reap.

"BOOTS OF A GOOD MORAL CHARACTER."—An advertisement says:—"Wanted, a female who has a knowledge of fitting boots of a good moral character."

BASSOMPIERRE, French ambassador to Spain, was telling Henri Quatre how he entered Madrid. "I was mounted on the very smallest mule in the world." "Ah," said Henri, "what a very amusing sight, to see the biggest ass mounted on the smallest mule." "I was your majesty's representative," was the rejoinder.