

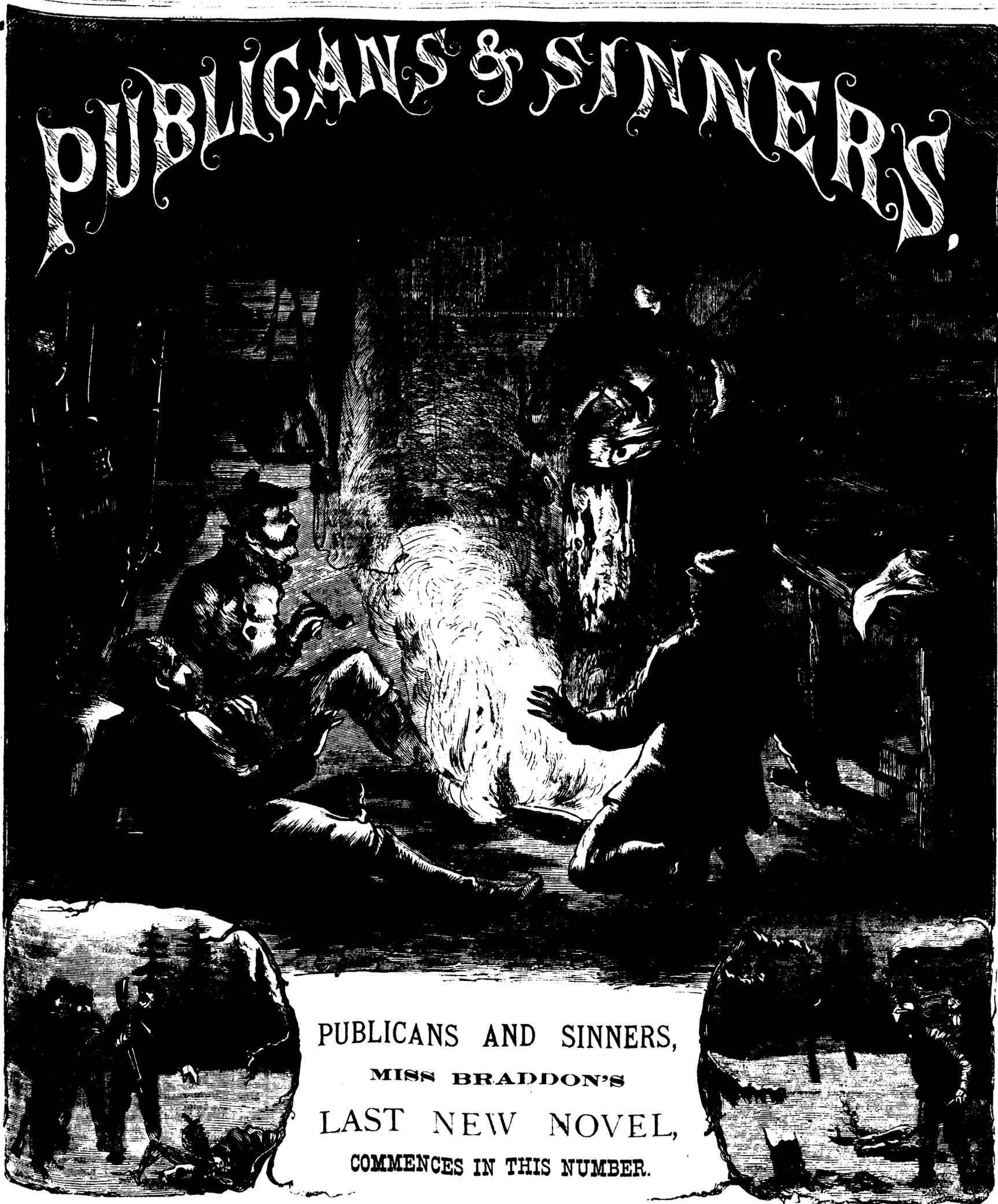
THE MONTREAL MORNING

Vol. II.—No. 4.

MONTREAL, SATURDAY, AUGUST 2, 1873.

PRICE } FIVE CENTS,
OR SIX CENTS, U.S. C.

PUBLICANS & SINNERS



PUBLICANS AND SINNERS,
MISS BRADDON'S
LAST NEW NOVEL,
COMMENCES IN THIS NUMBER.

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PUBLICANS and SINNERS

A LIFE PICTURE.

BY MISS M. E. BRADDON.

Author of "Lady Audley's Secret," "To The Bitter End," "The Outcasts," &c., &c.

PROLOGUE.

IN THE FAR WEST.

CHAPTER I.

"WHERE THE SUN IS SILENT."

Winter round them: not a winter in city streets, lamplit and glowing, or on a fair English country-side, dotted with cottage-roofs, humble village homes, sending up their incense of blue-grey smoke to the hearth goddess; not the winter of civilisation, with all means and appliances at hand to loosen the grip of the frost fiend; but winter in its bleakest, direst aspect, amid barren plains and trackless forests, where the trapper walks alone; winter among snow-huts and savage beasts; winter in a solitude so drear that the sound of a human voice seems more strange and awful than the prevailing silence; winter in an American forest, under the shadow of the Rocky Mountains. It is December, the bleakest, dreariest month in the long winter; for spring is still so far off.

Three men sit crouching over the wood-fire in a roughly-built log-hut in the middle of a forest, which seems to stretch away indefinitely into infinite space. The men have trodden that silent region for many a day, and have found no outlet on either side, only here and there a frozen lake, to whose margin, ere the waters were changed to ice, the forest denizens came down to gorge themselves with the small fish that abound there. They are travellers who have penetrated this dismal region for pleasure; yet each moved by a different desire. The first, Lucius Davoren, surgeon, has been impelled by that deep-rooted thirst of knowledge which in some minds is a passion. He wants to know what this strange wild world is like—this desolate tract between the Rocky Mountains and the Pacific, and if there lies not here a fair road for the English emigrant. He has even cherished the hope of pushing his way still farther northward, up to the ice-bound shores of the polar sea. He looks upon this trapper-expedition as a mere experimental business, an education for grander things, the explorer's preparatory school.

So much for Lucius Davoren, surgeon without a practice. Mark him as he sits in his dusky corner by the fire. The hut boasts a couple of windows, but they are only of parchment, through which the winter light steals dimly. Mark the strongly-defined profile, the broad forehead, the clear grey eyes. The well-cut mouth and resolute chin are hidden by that bushy untrimmed beard, which stiffens with his frozen breath when he ventures outside the hut; but the broad square forehead, the Saxon type of brow, and clear penetrating eyes, are in themselves all-sufficient indications of the man's character. Here are firmness and patience, or, in one word, the noblest attribute of the human mind—constancy.

On the opposite side of that rude hearth sits Geoffrey Hossack, three years ago an undergraduate at Balliol, great at hammer-throwing and the long jump, doubtful as to divinity exam, and with vague ideas trending towards travel and adventure in the Far West as the easiest solution of that difficulty. Young, handsome, ardent, svelte, strong as a lion, gentle as a sucking dove, Geoffrey has been the delight and glory of the band in its sunnier days; he is the one spot of sunlight in the picture now, when the horizon has darkened to so deep a gloom.

The last of the trio is Absalom Schanck, a Dutchman, small and plump, with a perennial plumpness which has not suffered even from a diet of mouldy pemmican, and rare meals of buffalo or moose flesh, which has survived intervals of semi-starvation, blank dismal days when there was absolutely nothing for these explorers to eat.

At such trying periods Absalom is wont to wax plaintive, but it is not of turtle or venison he dreams; no vision of callipash or callipee, no mocking simulacrum of a lordly Aberdeen salmon or an aldermanic turbot, no mirage picture of sirlolin or Christmas turkey, torments his soul; but his feverish mouth waters for the black bread and hard sour cheese of his fatherland; and the sharpest torture which fancy can create for him is the tempting suggestion of a certain boiled sausage which his soul loveth.

He has joined the expedition with half-defined ideas upon the subject of a new company of dealers in skins, to be established beyond the precincts of Hudson's Bay; and not a little influenced by a genuine love of exploration, and a lurking notion that he has in him the stuff that makes a Van Diemen.

From first to last it is, and has been, essentially an amateur expedition. No contribution from the government of any nation has aided these wanderers. They have come, as Geoffrey Hossack forcibly expresses the fact, "on their

own hook;" and if in the progress of their wanderings they should stumble upon a new and convenient North-west Passage, Geoffrey suggests that they should immediately seize upon and appropriate that short-cut to the New World, create a company on the spot, and constitute themselves its chairman and directors, with a view to trading upon the discovery.

"Hossack's Gate would be rather a good name for it," he says, between two puffs of his meerschaum; "like the Pillars of Hercules, you know, Davoren."

"We Hollanders have got more names to blazes than you Englishers," chimes in Mr. Schanck with dignity. "It is our daland to discover."

"I wish you'd discover something to eat, then, my friend Absalom," replies the Oxonian irreverently; "that mouthful of pemmican Lucius doled out to us just now has only served as a whet for my appetite. Like the half-dozen Ostend oysters they give one as the overture to a French dinner."

"Ah, they are good the oysters of Osend," says the Dutchman with a sigh, "and so are ze muzzles of Blankenberk. I dreamt ze oyster night I was in heaven eating muzzles sdeved in vin de madere."

"Don't," cries Geoffrey emphatically; "if we begin to talk about eating, we shall go mad, or eat each other. How nice you would be, Schanck, stuffed with chostnuts, and roasted, like a Norfolk turkey dressed French fashion! It's rather a pity that one's friends are reported to be indigestible; but I believe that's merely a fable, designed as a deterring influence. The Maories, cannibalised from the beginning of time, fed in and in, as well as bred in and in. One nice old man, a chieftain of Rakiraki, kept a register of his own consumption of prisoners, by means of a row of stones, which, when reckoned up after the old gentleman's demise, amounted to eight hundred and seventy-two; and yet these Maories were a healthy race enough when civilization looked them up."

Lucius Davoren takes no heed of this frivolous talk. He is lying on the floor of the log-hut, with a large chart spread under him, studying it intently, and sticking pins here and there as he pores over it. He has ideas of his own, fixed and definite, which neither of his companions share in the smallest degree. Hossack has come to these wild regions with an Englishman's unalloyed love of adventure, as well as for a quiet escape from the trusting relatives who would have urged him to go up for Divinity. Schanck has been beguiled hither by the fond expectation of finding himself in a paradise of tame polar bears and silver foxes, who would lie down at his feet, and mutely beseech him to convert them into carriage-rugs. They are waiting for the return of their guide, an Indian, who has gone to hunt for the lost trail, and to make his way back to a far distant fort in quest of provisions. If he should find the journey impossible, or fall dead upon the way, their last hope must perish with the failure of his mission, their one only chance of succor must die with his death.

Very shrunken are the stores which Lucius Davoren guards with jealous care. He doles out each man's meagre portion day by day with a Spartan severity, and a measurement so just that even hunger cannot quarrel with it. The tobacco, that sweet solacer of weary hours, begins to shrink in the barrel, and Geoffrey Hossack's lips linger lovingly over the final puffs of his short black-muzzled meerschaum, with a doleful looking forward to the broad abyss of empty hours which must be bridged over before he refills the bowl. Unless the guide returns with barrels of flour and a supply of pemmican, there is hardly any hope that these reckless adventurers will ever see the broad blue waters of the Pacific, and accomplish the end of that adventurous scheme which brought them to these barren regions. Unless help comes to them in this way or in some fortuitous fashion, they are doomed to perish. They have considered this fact among themselves many times, sitting huddled together under the low roof of their log-hut, by the feeble glimmer of their lantern.

Of the three wanderers Absalom Schanck is the only experienced traveller. He is a naturalized Englishman, and a captain in the merchant navy; having traded prosperously for some years as the owner of a ship—a sea-carrier in a small way—he had sold his vessel, and built himself a water-side villa at Battersea, half Dutch, half nautical in design; a cross between a house in Rotterdam and half-a-dozen ships' cabins packed neatly together; everything planned with as strict an economy of space as if the dainty little habitation were destined to put to sea as soon as she was finished. As many shelves and drawers and hatches in the kitchen as in a steward's cabin; stairs winding up the heart of the house, like a companion-ladder; a flat roof, from which the Dutchman can see the sunset beyond the westward lying swamps of Fulham, and which he fondly calls the admiral's poop.

But even this comfortable habitation has palled upon the mind of the professional rover. Dull are those suburban flats to the eye that for twenty years has ranged over the vast and various ocean. The Dutchman has found the consolation of pipe and case-bottle inadequate; and with speculative ideas of the vaguest nature, has joined Geoffrey Hossack's expedition to the Far West.

CHAPTER II.

"MUSIC HATH CHARMS."

Three weeks go by, empty weeks of which only Lucius Davoren keeps a record, in a journal

which may serve by and by for the history of the ill-fated expedition; which may be found perchance by some luckier sportsman in days to come, when the ink upon the paper has gone grey and pale, and when the date of each entry has an ancient look, and belongs to a bygone century, when the very fashion of the phrases is obsolete.

Lucius takes note of everything, every cloud in the sky, every red gleam of the aurora, with its ghostly rustling sound, as of phantom trees shaken by the north wind. He finds matter for observation where to the other two there seems only an endless blank, a universe that is emptied of everything except ice and snow.

Geoffrey Hossack practises hammer-throwing with an iron crowbar, patches the worn-out sledges, makes little expeditions on his own account, and discovers nothing, except that he has a non-geographical mind, and that, instead of the trapper's unerring instinct, which enables him to travel always in a straight line, he has an unpleasant tendency to describe a circle; prowls about with his gun, and the scanty supply of ammunition which Davoren allows him; makes traps for silver foxes, and has the mortification of seeing his bait devoured by a wolverine, who bears a life as charmed as that Macbeth was promised; and sometimes, but alas too seldom, kills something—a moose, or betimes a buffalo, O, then what a hunter's feast they have in the thick northern darkness! what a wild orgie seems that rare supper! Their souls expand over the fresh meat; they feel mighty as northern gods, Odin and Thor. Hope rekindles in every breast; the moody silence which has well-nigh grown habitual to them in the gloom of these hungry hopeless days, melts into wild torrents of talk. They are moved with a kind of rapture engendered of this roast flesh, and recognise the truth of Barry Cornwall's dictum, that a poet should be a high feeder.

The grip of the frost-fiend tightens upon them; there is well-nigh no day, only a dim glimmer at dreary intervals, like the very ghost of daylight. They sit in their log-hut in a dreary silence, each man seated on the ground, with his knees drawn up to his chin, and his back against the wall. Were they already dead, and this their sepulchre, they could have worn no ghastlier aspect.

They are silent from no sullen humor. Discord has never arisen between them. What have they to talk about? Swift impending death, the sharp stings of hunger the bitterness of an empty tobacco-barrel. Their dumbness is the dumbness of stoics who can suffer and make no moan.

They have not yet come to absolute starvation; there is a little pemmican still, enough to sustain their attenuated thread of life for five more days. When that is gone, they can see before them nothing but death. The region to which they have pushed their way seems empty of human life—a hyperborean chaos ruled by Death. What hardy wanderer, half-breed or Indian, would venture hither at such a season?

They are sitting thus, mute and statue-like, in the brief interval which they call daylight, when something happens which sets every heart beating with a sudden violence—something so unexpected, that they wait breathless, transfixed by surprise. A voice, a human voice, breaks the dead silence; a wild face, with bright fierce eyes peers in at the entrance of the hut, from which a bony hand has dragged aside the tarpaulin that serves for a screen against the keen northern winds, which creep in round the angles of the rough wooden porch.

The face belongs to neither Indian nor half-breed; it is as white as their own. By the faint light that glimmers through the parchment they see it scrutinising them interrogatively with a piercing scrutiny.

"Explorers?" he asks, "and Englishmen?" Yes, they tell him, they are English explorers, Absalom Schanck of course counts as an Englishman.

"Are you sent out by the English government?"

"No, we came on our own hook," replies Geoffrey Hossack, who is the first to recover from the surprise of the man's appearance, and from a certain half-supernatural awe engendered by his aspect, which has a wild ghastliness, as of a wanderer from the under world. "But never mind how we came here; what we want is to get away. Don't stand there jawing about our business, but come inside, and drop that tarpaulin behind you. Where have you left your party?"

"Nowhere," answers the stranger, stepping into the hut, and standing in the midst of them tall and gaunt, clad in garments that are half Esquimaux, half Indian, and in the last stage of dilapidation, torn moose-skin shoes upon his feet, the livid flesh showing between every rent; "nowhere. I belong to no party—I'm alone."

"Alone!" they all exclaim, with a bitter pang of disappointment. They had been ready to welcome this wild creature as the forerunner of succour.

"Yes, I was up two thousand miles or so northward of this, among icebergs and polar bears and Dog-rib Indians and Esquimaux, with a party of Yankees the summer before last, and served them well, too, for I know some of the Indian lingo, and was able to act as their interpreter; but the expedition was a failure. Unsuccessful men are hard to deal with. In short, we quarrelled, and parted company; they went their way, I went mine. There's no occasion to enter into details. It was winter when I left them—the stores were exhausted, with the exception of a little ammunition. They had their guns, and may have found reindeer or musk oxen, but I don't fancy they can have come to

much good. They didn't know the country as well as I do."

"You have been alone nearly a year?" asks Lucius Davoren, interested in this wild-looking stranger. "How have you lived during that time?"

"Anyhow," answers the other with a careless shrug of his bony shoulders. "Sometimes with the Indians, sometimes with the Esquimaux—they're civil enough to a solitary Englishman, though they hate the Indians like poison—sometimes by myself. As long as I've a charge for my gun I don't much fear starvation, though I've found myself face to face with it a good many times since I parted with my Yankee friends."

"Do you know this part of the country?" "No; it's beyond my chart. I shouldn't be here now if I hadn't lost my way. But I suppose, now I am here, you'll give me shelter."

The three men looked at one another. Hospitality is a noble virtue, and a virtue peculiarly appropriate to the dwellers in remote and savage regions; but hospitality with these men meant a division of their five remaining days' life. And the last of those five days might hold the chance of rescue. Who could tell? To share their shrunken stores with this stranger would be a kind of suicide. Yet the dictates of humanity prevailed. The stranger was not pleasant to look upon, nor especially conciliating in manner; but he was a fellow sufferer, and he must be sheltered.

"Yes," says Lucius Davoren, "you are welcome to share what we have. It's not much. Just five days' rations."

The stranger takes a canvas bag from his neck, and flings it into a corner of the hut.

"There's more than five days' food in that," he says; "dried reindeer, rather mouldy, but I don't suppose you're very particular."

"Particular!" cried Geoffrey Hossack, with a groan. "When I think of the dinners I have turned up my nose at, the saddles of mutton I have despised because life seemed *toujours* saddle of mutton, I blush for the iniquity of civilised man. I remember a bottle of French plums and a canister of Presburg biscuits that I left in a chiffonier at Balliol. Of course my scout consumed them. O, would I had those toothsome cakes to-day!"

"Balliol!" says the stranger, looking at him curiously. "So you're a Balliol man, are you?"

There was something strange in the sound of this question from an unkempt savage, with half-bare feet, in ragged moose-skin shoes. The new-comer pushed aside the elf-locks that overhung his forehead, and stared at Geoffrey Hossack as he waited for the answer to his inquiry.

"Yes," replied Geoffrey with his usual coolness, "I have had the honor to be gated occasionally by the dons of that college. Are you an Oxford man?"

"Do I look like it?" asks the other, with a harsh laugh. "I am nothing; I come from nowhere; I have no history, no kith or kin. I fancy I know this kind of life better than you do, and I know how to talk to the natives, which I conclude you don't. If we can hold on till this infernal season is over, and the trappers come this way, I'll be your interpreter, your servant, anything you like."

"If!" said Lucius gravely. "I don't think we shall ever see the end of this winter. But you can stay with us, if you please. At the worst, we can die together."

The stranger gives a shivering sigh, and drops in an angular heap in a corner of the hut.

"It isn't a lively prospect," he says. "Death is a gentleman I mean to keep at arm's length as long as I can. I've had to face him often enough, but I've got the best of it so far. Have you used all your tobacco?"

"Every shred," says Geoffrey Hossack dolefully. "I smoked my last pipe and bade farewell to the joys of existence three days ago."

"Smoke another, then," replies the stranger, taking a leather pouch from his bosom, "and renew your acquaintance with pleasure."

"Bless you!" exclaims Geoffrey, clutching the prize. "Welcome to our tents! I would welcome Beszebub if he brought me a pipe of tobacco. But if one fills, all fill—that's understood. We are brothers in misfortune, and must share alike."

"Fill, and be quick about it," says the stranger. So the three fill their pipes, light them, and their souls float into Elysium on the wings of the seraph tobacco.

The stranger also fills and lights and smokes silently, but not with a paradisiac air, rather with the gloomy aspect of some fallen spirit, whose lost soul sensuous joys bring no contentment. His large dark eyes—seeming unnaturally large in his haggard face—wander slowly round the walls of the hut, mark the benches filled with dried prairie grass, and each provided with a buffalo robe. Indications of luxury these; actual starvation would have reduced the wanderers to boiling down strips of their buffalo skins into an unsavoury soup. Slowly these great wan eyes travel round the hut. Listlessly, yet marking every detail—the hunting knives and fishing tackle hanging against the wall, Geoffrey's handsome collection of rifles, which have been the admiration of every Indian who has ever beheld them. The stranger's gaze lingers upon these, and an envious look glimmers in his eyes. Signs of wealth these. He glances at the three companions, and wonders which is the man who finds the money for the expedition, and owns these guns. There could hardly be three rich fools mad enough to waste life and wealth on such wanderings. He concludes, that one is the dupe, the other two adventurers, trading, or hoping to trade, upon his folly. His keen eye lights on Hossack, the

man who talked about Balliol. Yes, he has a prosperous stall-fed look. The other, Lucius, has too much intelligence. The little Dutchman is too old to spend his substance upon so wild a scheme.

Those observant eyes of the stranger's have nearly completed their circuit, when they suddenly affix themselves, seem visibly to dilate, and kindle with a fire that gives a new look to his face. He sees an object hanging against the wall, to him as far above all the wonders of modern gunnery as the diamonds of Golconda are above splinters of glass.

He points to it with his bony finger, and utters a strange shrill cry of rapture—the ejaculation of a creature who by long solitude, by hardship and privation, and the wild life of forests and deserts, has lapsed into an almost savage condition.

"A fiddle!" he exclaims, after that shrill scream of delight has melted into a low chuckling laugh. "It's more than a year since I've seen a fiddle, since I lost mine crossing the McKenzie river. Let me play upon it."

This in a softer, more humane tone than any words he had previously spoken, looking from one to the other of the three men with passionate entreaty.

"What! you play the fiddle, do you?" asked Lucius, emptying the ashes from his pipe with a long sigh of regret.

"It is yours, then?"

"Yes; you can play upon it, if you like. It's a genuine Amati. I've kept it like the apple of my eye."

"Yes, and it's been uncommonly useful in frightening away the Indians when they've come to torment us for fire-water," said Geoffrey.

"We tried watering the rum, but that didn't answer. The beggars poured a few drops on the fire, and finding it didn't blaze up, came back and blackguarded us. I only wish I'd brought a few barrels of turpentine for their benefit, or petroleum would have been still better. That would meet their ideas of excellence in spirituous liquors. They like something that scorches their internal economy. They led us a nice life as long as we had any rum; but the violin was too much for them. They're uncommonly fond of their own music, and would sometimes oblige us with a song which lasted all night, but they couldn't stand Davoren's sonatas. Tune up, stranger. I'm rather tired of De Beriot and Spohr and Haydn myself; perhaps you could oblige us with a nigger melody."

The stranger waited for no further invitation, but strode across the narrow hut, and took the violin case from the shelf where it had been carefully bestowed. He laid it on the rough pine-wood table, opened it, and gazed fondly on the Amati reposing in its bed of pale-blue velvet; the very case, or outer husk, a work of art.

Lucius watched him as the young mother watches her first baby in the ruthless hands of a stranger. Would he clutch the fiddle by its neck, drag it roughly from its case, at the hazard of dislocation? The surgeon was too much an Englishman to show his alarm, but sat stolid and in agony. No; the unkempt stranger's bony claws spread themselves out gently, and embraced the polished table of the fiddle. He lifted it as the young mother lifts her darling from his dainty cradle; he laid it on his shoulder and lowered his chin upon it, as if in a loving caress. His long fingers wound themselves about the neck; he drew the bow slowly across the strings. O, what rapture even in those experimental notes!

Geoffrey flung a fresh pine-log upon the fire, as if in honor of the coming performance. The Dutchman sat and dozed, dreaming he was in his cuddy at Battersea, supping upon his beloved sausage. Lucius watched the stranger, with a gaze full of curiosity. He was passionately fond of music, and his violin had been his chief solace in hours of darkest apprehension. Strange to find in this other wanderer mute evidence of the same passion. The man's hand as it hugged the fiddle, the man's face as it bent over the strings, were the index of a passion as deep as, or deeper than, his own. He waited eagerly for the man to play.

Presently there arose in that low hut a long-drawn wailing sound; a minor chord, that seemed like a passionate sob of complaint wrung from a heart newly broken; and with this for his sole prelude the stranger began his theme. What he played, Lucius strove in vain to discover. His memory could recall no such music. Wilder, stranger, more passionate, more solemn, more awful, than the strain which Orpheus played in the under world, was that music: more demonic than that diabolical sonata which Tartini pretended to have composed in a dream. It seemed extemporatory, for it obeyed none of the laws of harmony, yet even in its discords was scarcely inharmonious. There was melody, too, through all—a plaintive undertone of melody, which never utterly lost itself, even when the player allowed his fancy its wildest flights. The passionate rapture of his haggard, weather-beaten face was reflected in the passionate rapture of his music; but it was not the rapture of joy; rather a sharp agony of those convulsions of the soul which touch the border-line of madness, like the passion of a worshipper at one of those Dionysian festivals in which religious fervor might end in self-slaughter, or like the "possession" of some Indian devil-dancer, leaping and wounding himself under the influence of his demon god.

The three men sat and listened, curiously affected by that strange sonata. Even Absalom Schanck, to whom music was about as familiar a language as the Cuneiform character, felt that this was something out of the common way; that it was grander, if not more beautiful, than

those graceful compositions of De Beriot or Spohr wherewith Lucius Davoren had been wont to amuse his friends in their desolate solitude.

Upon Lucius the music had a curious effect. At first and for some time he listened with no feeling but the connoisseur's unmixed delight. Of envy his mind was incapable, though music is perhaps the most jealous of the arts, and though he felt this man was infinitely his superior—could bring tones out of the heart of that Amati which no power of his could draw from his beloved instrument.

But as the man played on, new emotions showed themselves upon his countenance—wonder, perplexity; then a sudden lighting up of passion. His brows contracted; he watched the stranger with gleaming eyes, breathlessly, waiting for the end of the composition. With the final chord he started up from his seat and confronted the man.

"Were you ever in Hampshire?" he asked, sharply and shortly.

The stranger started ever so slightly at this abrupt interrogatory, but showed no further sign of discomposure, and laid the fiddle in its case as tenderly as he had taken it thence ten minutes before.

"Hampshire, Massachusetts?" he inquired. "Yes, many a time."

"Hampshire in England. Were you in that county in the year '59?" asked Lucius breathlessly, watching the stranger with lynx-like gaze as he spoke.

"I was never in England in my life."

"Indeed! Yet you don't speak English like an American," said Lucius doubtfully, and with the same watchful gaze rooted to the other's face.

"Do I not? That comes of a decent education, I suppose, and an ear for music. No man with the latter qualification could talk through his nose, and say 'dew' for 'do.' Besides, I'm not a Yankee. I hail from the Southern States."

"Ah," said Lucius, with a long-drawn sigh, which might indicate either disappointment or relief, "then you're not the man I was half inclined to take you for. Yet that," dropping into soliloquy, "was a foolish fancy. There may be more than one man in the world who plays like a devil."

"You are not particularly complimentary," returned the stranger, touching the violin strings lightly with the tips of his skeleton fingers, repeating the dismal burden of his melody in those pizzicato notes.

"You don't consider it a compliment. Rely upon it, if Lucifer played the fiddle at all, he'd play well. The spirit who said, 'Evil, be thou my good,' would hardly do anything by halves. Do you remember what Corelli said to Strungk when he first heard him play? 'I have been called Arcangelo, but by heavens, sir, you must be Arcidiavolo. I would give a great deal to have your power over that instrument. Was that your own composition you played just now?'"

"I believe so, or a reminiscence; but if the latter, I can't tell you its source. I left off playing by book a long time ago; but I have a reserve fund of acquired music—chiefly German—and I have no doubt I draw upon it occasionally."

"Yes," repeated Lucius thoughtfully, "I should like to play as you do, only—"

"Only what?" asked the stranger.

"I should be inclined to fancy there was something uncomfortable—uncanny, as the Scotch say—lurking in the deep waters of my mind, if my fancies took the shape yours did just now."

"As for me," exclaimed Geoffrey, with agreeable candor, "without wishing either to flatter or upbraid, I can only say that I feel as if I had been listening to a distinguished member of the royal orchestra in Pandemonium—the Pagan of Orcus."

The stranger laughed—a somewhat harsh and grating cachinnation.

"You don't like minors?" he said.

"I was a minor myself for a long time, and I only object to them on the score of impecuniosity," replied Geoffrey. "O, I beg your pardon; you mean the key. If that composition of yours was minor, I certainly lean to the major. Could you not oblige us with a Christy Minstrel melody to take the taste out of our mouths?"

The stranger deigned no answer to that request, but sat down on the rough log which served Lucius for a seat, and made a kind of settle by the ample fireplace. With lean arms folded and gaze bent upon the fire, he lapsed into thoughtful silence. The blaze of the pine-logs, now showing vivid tinges of green or blue as the resin bubbled from their tough hide, lit up the faces, and gave something of grotesque to each. Seen by this medium, the stranger's face was hardly a pleasant object for contemplation, and was yet singular enough to arrest the gaze of him who looked upon it.

Heaven knows if, with all the aids of civilization, soap and water, close-cut hair, and carefully-trimmed moustache, the man might not have been ranked handsome. Seen in this dusky hovel, by the changeful light of the pine-logs, that face was grotesque and grim as a study by Gustave Doré; the lines as sharply accentuated, the lights and shadows as vividly contrasted.

The stranger's eyes were of darkest hue; as nearly black as the human eye, or any other eye, ever is; that intensest brown which, when in shadow, looks black, and when the light shines upon it seems to emit a yellow flame, like the colored light which radiates from a fine cat's-eye. His forehead was curiously low, the hair growing in a peak between the temples; his nose was long, and a prominent aquiline;

his cheek-bones were rendered prominent by famine. The rest of his face was almost entirely hidden by the thick ragged beard of densest black, through which his white teeth flashed with a hungry look when he talked or smiled. His smile was not pleasant one.

"If one could imagine his Satanic majesty taking another promenade like that walk made famous by Porson, and penetrating to these hyperborean shores—and why not, when contrast is ever pleasing?—I should expect to behold him precisely in yonder guise," mused Geoffrey, as he contemplated their uninvited guest from the opposite side of the hearth. "But the age has grown matter-of-fact; we no longer believe in the pleasing illusions of our childhood—hobgoblins, Jack and the Beanstalk, and old Nick."

Lucius sat meditative, staring into the fire. That wild minor theme had moved him profoundly, yet it was not so much of the music that he thought as of the man. Five years ago he had heard the description of music—which seemed to him to correspond exactly with this—of an amateur whose playing had the same unearthly, or even diabolical, excellence. Certainly that man had been a pianist. And then it was too wild a fancy to conceive for a moment that he had encountered that man, whom he had hunted for all over England, and even out of England, here in this primeval forest. Destiny in her maddest sport could hardly have devised such a hazard. No, the thought was absurd; no doubt an evidence of a brain enfeebled by anxiety and famine. Yet the fancy disturbed him not the less.

"Unless Geoff stalks another buffalo before long, I shall go off my head," he said to himself. He brooded upon the stranger's assertion that he was a Southern American, and had never crossed the Atlantic; an assertion at variance with the fact of his accent, which was purely English. Yet Lucius had known at least one American citizen whose English was as pure, and he could scarcely condemn the man as a liar on such ground as this.

"The description of that man's appearance might fit this man," he thought; "due allowance being made for the circumstances under which we see him. Tall and dark, with a thin lissom figure, a hooked nose, a hawk's eye; that was the description they gave me at Wykhamston; I had it from three separate people. There is no palpable discrepancy, and yet—bah, I am a fool to think of it! Haven't I had trouble of mind enough upon this score, and would it do any good to her—in her grave, perhaps—if I had my wish, if God gave me the means of keeping the promise I made five years ago, when I was little more than a boy?"

So his thoughts rambled on as he sat looking into the fire, while the stranger sat beside him on the rough settle, with brooding eyes fixed, like his, upon the flare of the pine-logs.

"By the way," said Lucius presently, rousing himself from that long reverie, "when my friend yonder spoke of Balliol, you pricked up your ears as if the place were familiar to you. That's odd, since you have never been in England."

"I suppose there is nothing especially odd in my having had an English acquaintance in my prosperous days, when even Englishmen were not ashamed to know me. One may be familiar with the name of a place without having seen the place itself. I had a friend who was a student at Balliol."

"I wonder whether he was the man who wrote 'Aratus sum' upon one of the tables in the examiners' room after they ploughed him," speculated Geoffrey idly.

"I tell you what it is, Mr. Stranger," said Lucius presently, struggling with the sense of irritation caused by that wild fancy which the stranger's playing had inspired, "it's all very well for us to give you a corner in our hut. As good or evil for one brought you this way, we could hardly be so unchristian as to refuse you our shelter; God knows it's poor enough, and death is near enough inside as well as outside these wooden walls; but even Christianity doesn't oblige us to harbor a man without a name. That traveller who fell among thieves told the Samaritan his name, rely upon it, as soon as he was able to say anything. No honest man withholds his name from the men he breaks bread with. Even the Indians tell us their names; so be good enough to give us yours."

"I renounced my own name when I turned my back upon civilization," answered the stranger doggedly; "I brought no card-case to this side of the Rocky Mountains. If you give me your hospitality," with a monosyllabic laugh and a scornful glance round the hut, "solely on condition that I acquaint you with my antecedents, I renounce your hospitality; I can go back to the forest and liberty. As you say, death could not be much farther off out in the snow. If you only want my name for purposes of social intercourse, you can call me what the Indians call me, a sobriquet of their own invention, 'Matchi Mohkamarn.'"

"That means the Evil Knife, I believe," said Lucius; "hardly the fittest name to inspire confidence in the minds of a man's acquaintance; but I suppose it must do, since you withhold your real name."

"I'm sure you are welcome to our pasteboards," said Geoffrey, yawning; "I have a few yonder in my dressing-bag—rather a superfluous encumbrance by the way, since here one neither dresses nor shaves. But I have occasionally propitiated ravening Indians with the gift of a silver-topped scent-bottle or pomatum, so the bag has been useful. Dear, dear, how nice it would be to find oneself back in a world in which there are dressing-bags, and

dressing-bells, and dinner-bells afterwards! And yet one fancied it so slow, the world of civilization. Lucius, is it not time for our evening pemmanic? Think of the macaroons and rout-cakes we have trampled under our heels in the bear-fights that used to wind up our wine-parties; to think of the anchovy toasts and various devils we have eaten—half from sheer gluttony, half because it was good form—when we were gorged like Strasburg geese awaiting their euthanasia. Think how we have rioted, and wasted and wallowed in what are called the pleasures of the table; and behold us now, hungering for a lump of rancid fat or a tallow-candle, to supply our exhausted system with nitrogen?"

CHAPTER II.

HOW THEY LOST THE TRAIL.

The slow days pass, but the guide does not return. Geoffrey's sporting explorations have resulted only in a rare bird, hardly a mouthful for one of the four starving men, though they divide the appetising morsel with rigid justice, Lucius dissecting it with his clasp-knife almost as carefully as if it were a subject.

"To think that I should live to dine on a section of wood-partridge without any breast-sauce," exclaimed Geoffrey dolefully. "Do you know, when I put the small beast in my bag I was sorely tempted to eat him, feathers and all. Indeed I think we make a mistake in plucking our game. The feathers would at least be filling. It is the sense of a vacuum from which one suffers most severely: after all it can't matter much what a man puts inside him, so long as he fills the cavity. If there were a roof of pasture uncovered by the perpetual snow I should imitate Nebuchadnezzar, and go to grass!"

Vain lamentations! Vainer still those long arguments by the pine-log fire, in which, with map and compass, they travel over again the journey which has been so disastrous—try back, and find where it was they lost time—how they let slip a day here, half a week there, until the expedition, which should have ended with last September, occupied a period they had never dreamed of, and left them in the bleak, bitter winter: their trail utterly lost sight of, alone in a trackless forest, the snow rising higher around them day by day, until even the steep bank upon which they have built their log-hut stands but a few feet above the universal level.

From first to last the journey has been attended by misfortune as well as mistake. They had set forth on this perilous enterprise fondly hoping they could combine pleasure for themselves, with profit for their fellow-creatures, and by this wild adventure open up a track for future emigrants—a high road in the days to come from the shores of the Atlantic to the Pacific—a path by which adventurers from the old world should travel across the Rocky Mountains to the gold fields of the new world. They had started with high hopes—or Lucius had at least cherished this dream above all thought of personal enjoyment—hopes of being reckoned among the golden band of adventurers whose during has enlarged man's dominion over that wide world God gave him for his heritage, of seeing their names somewhere in that grand muster-roll which begins with Hercules, and ends with Livingstone. They had started from Fort Edmonton with three horses, two guides, and a fair outfit; but they had left that point too late in the year, as the guardians of the fort warned them. They were entreated to postpone their attempt till the following summer, but they had already spent one winter in camp between Carlton and Edmonton, and the two young men were resolutely set against further delay. Absalom Schanck, much more phlegmatic, would have willingly wintered at the fort, where there was good entertainment, and where he could have smoked his pipe and looked out of window at the pine-tops and the snow from one week's end to another, resigned to circumstances, and patiently awaiting remittances from England. But to Lucius Davoren and Geoffrey Hossack the idea of such a loss of time was unendurable. They had both seen as much as they cared to see of the trapper's life during the past winter. Both were eager to rush on to fresh woods and pastures new. Geoffrey moved by the predatory instincts of the sportsman, Lucius fevered by the less selfish and more ambitious desire to discover that grand highway which he had dreamed of, between the two great oceans. The star which guided his pilgrimage was the loadstar of the discoverer. No idle fancy, no caprice of the moment, could have tempted him aside from the settled purpose of his journey; but a mountain sheep—the bighorn—or a wild goat, seen high up on some crag against the clear cold sky, was magnet enough to draw Geoffrey twenty miles out of his course.

Of the two guides, one deserted before they had crossed the range, making off quietly with one of their horses—the best, by the way—and leaving them, after a long day and night of wonderment, to the melancholy conviction that they had been cheated. They retraced their way for one day's journey, sent their other guide, an Indian, back some distance in search of the deserter, but with no result. This cost them between three and four days. The man had doubtless gone quietly back to Edmonton. To follow him farther would be altogether to abandon their expedition for this year. The days they had already lost were precious as rubies.

"En avant!" exclaimed Geoffrey.

"Excelsior!" cried Lucius.

The Dutchman was quiescent. "I sine you lent me to my deaths," he said; "but a man

must die some day. Gismet, as the Durcks say. They are wise heobles, ze Durcks."

The Indian promised to remain faithful, ay, even to death, of which fatal issue these savages think somewhat lightly, life for them mostly signifying hardship and privation, brightened only by rare libations of rum. He was promoted from a secondary position to the front rank, and was now their sole guide. With their cavalcade thus shrunken they pushed bravely on, crossed the mountains by the Yellow Head Pass, looked down from among snow-clad pinnacles upon the Athabasca river, rushing madly between its steep banks, and reached Jasper House, a station of the Hudson's Bay Company, which they found void of all human life, a mere shell or empty simulacrum; in the distance a cheering object to look upon, promising welcome and shelter, and giving neither.

For Hossack, that mighty mountain range, those snow-clad peaks, towering skyward, had an irresistible attraction. He had done a good deal of Alpine climbing in his long vacations, had scaled peaks which few have ever succeeded in surmounting, and had made his name a household word among the Swiss guides, but such a range as this was new to him. Here there was a larger splendour, an infinite beauty. The world which he had looked down upon from Mont Blanc—lakes, valleys, and villages dwarfed by the distance—was a mere tea-board landscape, a toy-shop panorama, compared with this. He drew in his breath and gazed in a dumb rapture.

Or like stout Cortez, when, with eagle eyes,
He stared at the Pacific.

Here, again, they lost considerable time; for even Davoren's stronger mind was beguiled by the glory of that splendid scene. He consented to a week's halt on the margin of the Athabasca, climbed the mountain-steeps with his friend, chased the bighorn with footstep light and daring as the chamols-hunter's; and found himself sometimes, after the keen pleasures of the hunt, with his moccasins in rags, and his naked feet cut and bleeding, a fact of which he had been supremely unconscious so long as the chase lasted. Sometimes, after descending to the lower earth, laden with their quarry, the hunters looked upward and saw the precipices they had trodden, the narrow cornice of rock along which they had run in pursuit of their prey—saw, and shuddered. Had they been really within a hair's-breadth of death?

These were the brightest days of their journey. Their stores were yet ample, and seemed inexhaustible. They feasted on fresh meat nightly, yet, with a laudable prudence, smoked and dried some portion of their prey. In the indulgence of their sporting propensities they squandered a good deal of ammunition. They smoked half-a-dozen pipes of tobacco daily. In a word, they enjoyed the present, with a culpable shortsightedness as to the future.

This delay turned the balance against them. While they loitered, autumn stole on with footstep almost impalpable, in that region of evergreen.

The first sharp frost of early October awakened Lucius to a sense of their folly. He gave the word for the march forward, refusing to listen to Geoffrey's entreaty for one day more—one more wild hunt among those mighty crags between earth and sky.

The sea-captain and Kekek-oarisis, their Indian guide, had been meritoriously employed during this delay in constructing a raft for the passage of the Athabasca, at this point a wide lake spreading its peaceful waters amid an amphitheatre of mountains.

While they were getting ready for the passage of the river they were surprised by a party of half-breeds—friendly, but starving; and anxious as they were to husband their resources, humanity compelled them to furnish these hapless wanderers with a meal. In return for this hospitality, the natives gave them some good advice, urging them on no account to trust themselves to the current of the river—a mode of transit which seemed easy and tempting—as it abounded in dangerous rapids. They afforded farther information as to the trail ahead, and these sons of the old and new world parted, well pleased with one another.

Soon after this began their time of trial and hardship. They had to cross the river many times in their journey—sometimes on rafts, sometimes fording the stream—and often in imminent peril of an abrupt ending of their troubles by drowning. They crossed pleasant oases of green prairie, verdant valleys all abloom with wild flowers, gentian and tiger lilies, cineraria, blueborages—the last-lingering traces of summer's footfall in the sheltered nooks. Sometimes they came upon patches where the forest-trees were blackened by fire, or had fallen among the ashes of the underwood. Sometimes they had to cut their way through the wood, and made slow and painful progress. Sometimes they lost the trail, and only regained it after a day's wasted labor. One of their horses died—the other was reduced to a mere skeleton—so rare had now become the glimpses of pasture. They looked at this spectral equine with sad prophetic eyes, not knowing how long it might be before they would be reduced to the painful necessity of cooking and eating him; and with a doleful foreboding that, when famine brought them to that strait, the faithful steed would be found to consist solely of bone and hide.

So they tramped on laboriously and with a dogged patience till they lost the trail once more, and this time even the Indian's sagacity proved utterly at fault, and all their efforts to regain it were vain. They found themselves in a trackless ring of forest, to them as darksome a circle as the lower deep in Dante's Inferno, and here be-

held the first snow-storm fall white upon the black pine-tops. Here, in one of their vain wanderings in search of the lost track, they came upon a dead Indian, seated stiff and ghastly and headless. Famine had wasted him to the very bone; his skin was mere parchment stretched tightly over the gaunt skeleton; the whitening bones of his horse, the gray ashes of a fire bestrewn the ground by his side. How he came in that gruesome condition, what had befallen the missing head, they knew not. Even conjecture was here at fault. But the spectacle struck them with indescribable horror. So too might they be found; the skeleton horse crouched dead at their feet, beside the ashes of the last fire at which their dim eyes had gazed in the final agonies of starvation. This incident made them desperate.

"We are wasting our strength in a useless hunt for the lost track," said Lucius decisively. "We have neither the instinct nor the experience of the Indian. Let us make a log-hut here and wait for the worst quietly, while Kekek-oarisis searches for the path, or tries to work his way back to the fort to fetch help and food. He will make his way three times as fast when he is unencumbered by us and our incapacity. We may be able to ward off starvation meanwhile with the aid of Geoff's gun. At the worst, we only need death. And since a man can but die once, it is after all only a question of whether we get full or short measure of the wine of life."

"Brezisely," said the Dutchman. "It is true. A man can but die once—Gismet. Yet ze wine of life is petter zan ze vater of death, in most beoble's obinion."

Kekek-oarisis had been absent nearly five weeks at the time of the stranger's appearance, and the length of his absence, had variously affected the three men who waited with a gloomy resignation for his return, or the coming of the other stranger, Death. At times, when Geoffrey's gun had not been useless, when they had eaten, and were inclined to take a somewhat cheerful view of their situation, they told each other that he had most likely recovered the lost track at a considerable distance from their hut, and had pushed on to the fort, to procure fresh horses and supplies. They calculated the time such a journey to and fro must take him, allowed a wide margin for accidental delays, and argued that it was not yet too late for the possibility of his return.

"I hope he hasn't cut and run like that other beggar," said Geoffrey. "It was rather a risky thing to trust him with our money to buy the horses and provender. Yet it was our only resource."

"I believe in his honesty," replied Davoren. "If he deserts us, Death will be the tempter who lures him away. These Indians have nobler qualities than you are inclined to credit them with. Do you remember that starving creature who came to our hut by the Saskatchewan one day while we were out hunting, and sat by our hearth famishing amidst plenty for twelve mortal hours, and did not touch a morsel till we returned and offered him food? I'll forfeit my reputation as a judge of character if Kekek-oarisis tries to cheat us. That other fellow was a half-breed."

"The Greeks weren't half-breeds," said Geoffrey, whose reading had of late years been chiefly confined to the Greek historians and the more popular of the French novelists. "yet they were the most treacherous ruffians going. I don't pin my faith on your chivalrous Indian. However, there's no use in contemplating the gloomiest side of the question. Let's take a more lively view of it, and say that he's frozen to death in the pass, with our money intact in his bosom, exactly where you sewed it into his shirt."

Thus they speculated; the Dutchman venturing no opinion, but smoking the only obtainable substitute for tobacco in stolid silence. Indeed, when hard pressed by his companions, he admitted that he had never had any opinion. "Vat is ze goot ov obinions," he demanded. "One is no petter vor zem, and it is zo much wasted labor of prain. I do not know how to tink. Sometimes I have ask my frens vat it is like, tinkin. Zey cannot tell me. Zey tink zey tink, put zey to not tink."

CHAPTER IV.

"ALL'S CHEERLESS, DARK, AND DEADLY."

The stranger, having had their exact circumstances laid before him, took the gloomiest view of the position. The first deep fall of snow had occurred a week after the guide's departure. If he had not ere that time regained a track with landmarks familiar to his eye, all hope of his having been able to reach the fort was as foolish as it was vain.

"For myself," said the stranger, "I give him up."

This man, who was henceforth known among them as Matchi, a contraction of the sobriquet bestowed on him by the Indians, fell into his place in that small circle easily enough. They neither liked him nor trusted him. But he had plenty to say for himself, and had a certain originality of thought and language that went some little way toward dispelling the deep gloom that surrounded them. In their wretched position any one who could bring an element of novelty into their life was welcome. The desolation of his character suited their desperate circumstances. In a civilized country they would have shut their doors in his face. But here, with death peering in at their threshold, this wild spirit helped them to sustain the horrors of suspense, the dreary foreboding of a fatal

But there was one charm in his presence which all felt, even the phlegmatic Dutchman. With Lucius Davoren's violin in his hand he could beguile them into forgetfulness even of that grisly spectre watching at the door. That passionate music opened the gates of dreamland. Matchi's repertoire seemed inexhaustible, but everything he played, even melodies the world knows by heart, bore the stamp of his own genius. Whatever subject of Corelli, or Vioti, or Mozart, or Haydn, formed the groundwork of his theme, the improvisatore sported with the air at pleasure and interwove his own wild fancies with the original fabric. Much that he played was obviously his own composition, improvised as the bow moved over the strings; wild strains which interpreted the gloom of their surroundings; dismal threnodies in which one heard the sighing of the wind among the snow-laden pine-branches; the howling of wolves at sunrise.

He proved no drone in that little hive, but toiled at such labor as there was to be done with a savage energy which seemed in accord with his half-savage nature. He felled the pine-trunks with his axe, and brought new stores of fuel to the hut. He fetched water from a distant lake, where there was but one corner which the ice had not locked against him; he slept little, and those haggard eyes of his had a strange brightness and vivacity as he sat by the hearth and stared into the fire which his toil had helped to furnish.

Though he talked much at times, but always by fits and starts, it was curious to note how rarely he spoke directly of himself or his past life. Even when Lucius questioned him about his musical education, in what school he had learnt, who had been his master, he contrived to evade the question.

"There are some men who have not the knack of learning from other people, but who must be their own teachers," he said. "I am one of those. Shut me up in a prison for ten years, with my fiddle for my only companion, and when I come out I shall have discovered a new continent in the world of music."

"You play other instruments," hazarded Lucius; "the cello?"

"I play most stringed instruments," the other answered carelessly.

"The piano?"

"Yes, I play the piano. A man has fingers; what is there strange in his using them?"

"Nothing; only one wonders that you should be content to hide so many accomplishments in the backwoods."

Matchi shrugged his lean shoulders.

"There are a thousand various reasons why a man should grow tired of his own particular world," he said.

"To say nothing of the possibility that a man's own particular world may grow tired of him," returned Lucius.

Instead of himself and his own affairs—that subject which exalts the most ungifted speaker into eloquence—the stranger spoke of men and manners, the things he had seen from the outside as a mere spectator, the books he had read; and they were legion. Never was a brain stocked with a more heterogeneous collection of ideas. Queer books, out-of-the-way books, had evidently formed his favorite study. Geoffrey heard, and was amused. Lucius heard, and wondered, and rendered to this man that unwilling respect which we give to intellect unalloyed with the virtues.

Thus three days and nights went by, somewhat less slowly than the days had gone of late. On the morning of the fourth the stranger grew impatient—paced the narrow bounds of his hut like an imprisoned jaguar.

"Death lies yonder, I doubt not," he said, pointing to the forest, "while here there is the possibility—a mere possibility—that we may outlive our troubles; that succor from some unlooked-for source may reach us before we expire. But I tell you frankly, my friends, that I can't stand this sort of life three days longer—to sit down and wait for death, hands folded, without so much as a pipe of tobacco to lull the fever in one's brain! that needs a Roman courage that I possess not. I shall not trouble your hospitality much longer."

"What will you do?" asked Geoffrey.

"Push ahead. I have my chart here," touching the tatters that covered his breast. "I shall push on towards the Pacific with no better guide than the stars. I can but perish; better to be frozen to death on the march—like a team of sleigh-dogs I saw once by the Saskatchewan, standing stark and gaunt in the snow, as their drivers had left them—than to sit and doze by the fire here till death comes in his slowest and most hideous shape—death by famine."

"You had better stay with us and share our chances," said Lucius; "our guide may even yet return."

"Yes," answered Matchi, "at the general muster roll, with the rank and file of the dead."

His words were strangely belied ere that brief day darkened into night. The four men were sitting huddled round the fire, smoking their last pipe—for Matchi had now shared among them the last remnant of his tobacco—when a curious hollow cry, like the plaintive note of a distressed bird, was heard in the distance.

Lucius was the first to divine its meaning.

"Kekek-oarisis!" he cried, starting to his feet. "He has come back at last. Thank God! thank God!"

The call was repeated, this time distinctly human.

"Yes," said Geoffrey, "that's the identical flute."

He ran to the door of the hut. Lucius snatched up one of the blazing pine-branches

from the hearth, and went out waving this fiery brand aloft, and shouting in answer to the Indian's cry. In this moment of glad surprise and hope, the man's return meant succor, comfort, plenty. Too soon were they to be undeceived. He emerged from among the shadowy branches, half limping, half crawling towards them across the snow, which was solid enough to bear that light burden without the faintest impression on its frozen surface. He came into the glare of the pine-branch, a wasted, ghastly figure, more spectral than their own—the very image and type of famine.

He came back to them empty-handed; no dogs or horses followed him. He came, not to bring them the means of life, but to die with them.

The faithful creature crawled about them like a dog, hugged their knees, laid his wasted body at their feet, looked up at them with supplicating eyes, too feeble for words. They carried him into the hut, put him by the fire, and gave him food, which he devoured like a famished wolf.

Restored by that welcome heat and food, he told them his adventures; how he had striven in vain to regain the track and make his way back to the fort; how, after weary wanderings, he had found himself at last among a little band of Indians, whose camp lay southwards of the Englishmen's hut, and who were as near famine as they. Here he had fallen ill with frostbite and rheumatism, but had been kindly succored by the Indians, not of his tribe. He had lain in one of their shelters—not worthy to be dignified even by the name of hut—for a long time, how long he knew not, having lost consciousness during the period, and thus missed his reckoning. With recovery came the ardent desire to return to them, to show them that he had not betrayed his trust. The bank-notes sewn into his garments had escaped observation and pillage, supplanting the Indians inclined to plunder their guest. He asked them to sell him provisions that he might take to his masters, tried to tempt them with liberal offers of payment, but they had unhappily nothing to sell. Buffalo had vanished from that district; the lakes and rivers were frozen. The Indians themselves were living from hand to mouth, and hardly living at all, so meagre was their fare. Convinced at last that the case was hopeless, Kekek-oarisis had left them to return to the hut—a long and difficult journey, since in his efforts to regain the road to the fort he had made a wide circuit. Only fidelity—the dog's faithful allegiance to the master he loves—had brought him back to that hunger-haunted dwelling.

"I cannot help you," he said piteously in his native language; "I have come back to die with you."

"One more or less to die makes little difference," answered the stranger, speaking the man's exact dialect with perfect fluency. "Let us see if we cannot contrive to live. You have failed once in your endeavor to find your way back to the fort, that is no reason you should fail a second time. Few great things have been done at the first attempt. Get your strength back, my friend, and you and I will set out together as soon as you are fit for the journey. I know something of the country, and with your native eyes and ears to help, we can hardly fail."

Kekek-oarisis looked up at him wonderingly. He was not altogether favorably impressed by the stranger's appearance, if one might judge by his own countenance, which expressed doubt and perplexity.

"I will do whatever my masters bid me," he said submissively.

His masters let him rest, and eat, and bask in the warmth of the pine-logs for two days, after which he declared himself ready to set out upon any quest they might order.

The stranger had talked them into a belief in his intelligence being superior to that of the guide; and they consented to the two setting out together to make a second attempt to find the way to the fort. In a condition so hopeless it seemed to matter very little what they did. Anything was better than sitting, hands folded, as the stranger had said, face to face with death.

But Lucius was now chained to the hut by a new tie. The day after the Indian's return, Geoffrey, the light-hearted, the fearless, had been struck down with fever. Lucius had henceforward no care so absorbing as that which bound him to the side of his friend. The Dutchman looked on, phlegmatic but not unsympathizing, and made no moan.

"I shall gatch ze vever aftervarts, no tout," he said, and you will have dwo do nurse. Hart ubon you."

CHAPTER V.

"O, THAT WAY MADNESS LIES."
The fever raged severely. Delirium held Geoffrey's brain in its hideous thrall. Horrid sights and scenes pursued him. He looked at his friend's face with blank unseeing eyes, or looked and beheld something that was not there—the countenance of an enemy.

Lucius felt himself now between two fires—disease on one side, famine on the other. Between these two devastators death seemed inevitable. The Dutchman, sorely wasted from his native plumpness, sat by the hearth and watched the struggle, resigned to the idea of his own approaching end.

Geoffrey's illness reduced them to a far worse situation than they had been in before, since he was their chief sportsman, and had done much to ward off starvation. Lucius took his gun out for a couple of hours every morning, leaving the invalid in Absalom's charge, and prowled the

forest in search of game. But with the exception of one solitary marten, whose tainted flesh had been revolting even to their hunger, his wanderings had been barren of everything but disappointment.

Matchi and the guide had been gone a week, when Lucius set out one morning more desperate than usual, hunger gnawing his entrails, and worse than hunger, a fear that weighed upon his heart like lead—the fear that before many days were gone, Geoffrey Hossack would have set forth upon a longer and a darker journey than that they two had started upon together, in the full flush of youth and hope, a year and a half ago. He could not conceal from himself that his friend was in imminent danger—that unless the fever, for which medicine could do so little, abated speedily, all must soon be over. Nor could he conceal from himself another fact—namely, that the stores he had doled out with such a niggard hand would not yield even that scanty allowance for twenty-four hours longer. A sorry frame of mind in which to stalk buffalo or chase the moose!

Again Fortune was unkind. He wandered farther than usual in his determination not to go back empty-handed, knowing too that in Geoffrey's desperate state there was nothing his experience could do that Absalom's ignorance could not do as well—in fact that there was nothing to be done. The patient lay in a kind of stupor. Only the gentle nursing-mother Nature could help him now.

He came upon a circular patch of prairie in the heart of the forest, and surprised a buffalo, the first he had seen for more than a month. The last had been shot by Geoffrey some days before the guide's departure on his useless journey. The animal was scratching in the snow, trying to get at the scanty herbage under that frozen surface, when Lucius came upon it. His footsteps, noiseless in his moccasins, did not startle the quarry. He stole within easy range, and fired. The first shot hit the animal on the shoulder; then came a desperate chase. The buffalo ran, but feebly. Lucius fired his second barrel, this time at still closer quarters, and the brute, gaunt and famished like himself, rolled head downwards on the snow.

He took out his hunting-knife, cut out the tongue and choicer morsels, as much as he could carry, and then with infinite labor buried his prey in the snow, meaning to return next morning with Absalom to fetch the remainder, always supposing that the snow kept his secret, and wolves or wolverines did not devour his prize in the interval. He was able to carry away with him food that would serve for more than a week. No matter how hard or skinny the flesh might be,—it was flesh. Darkness had closed round him when these labors were finished, but stars shone faintly above the pine-tops, and he had a pocket-lantern which he could light on emergency. Where was he? That was the first question to be settled. He found some difficulty in recalling the track he had taken. Great Heaven! if he had strayed too far afield, and found return impossible! Geoffrey yonder dying, without his brotherly arm to support the drooping head, his loving hand to wipe the brow on which the death-damps gathered! The very thought made him desperate. He looked up at the stars, his only guides, shouldered his burden, and walked rapidly in that direction which he supposed the right one.

During their enforced idleness, Geoffrey and Lucius had made themselves tolerably familiar with the aspect of the forest within a radius of ten miles or so from their hut. They knew the course of the river, and its tributary streams. They had even cut rude avenues through the pine-wood, in their quest of fuel, cutting down trees in a straight line at a dozen yards apart, so that within half a mile of their encampment there were on every side certain roughly-marked approaches.

But to-night Lucius had lost ken of the river, and knew himself to be a good ten miles from any tree that he or Geoffrey had ever hewn asunder. He stopped after about half-an-hour's tramp; felt himself at fault; lighted his lantern, and looked about him.

An impenetrable forest; a scene of darksome grandeur, gigantic pine-trees towering skyward, laden with snow; but over all a dreadful monotony, that made the picture gloomy as the shores of Acheron. Nor could Lucius discover any landmark whereby he might steer his course.

He stopped for some minutes, his heart beating heavily. It was not the fear of peril to himself that tormented him. His mind—rarely a prey to selfish fears—was full of his dying friend.

"To be away at such a time!" he thought; "to have shared all the brightest hours of my youth with him, and not to be near him at the last!"

This was bitter. He pushed on desperately, muttering a brief prayer; telling himself that heaven could not be so cruel as to sever him from the friend who was dear as a brother, who represented to him all he had ever known of brotherly love.

He paused suddenly, startled by a sight so unexpected that his arm dropped nerveless, and his burden fell at his feet. A light in the thick forest; the welcome glare of a traveller's fire. Not the far-spreading blaze of conflagration, the devouring flames stretching from tree to tree—a spectacle he had seen in the course of his wanderings—but the steady light of a mighty fire of heaped-up pine-logs; a fire to keep wolves and grisly bears at bay, and to defy the blighting presence of the frost-fend himself.

Lucius resumed his burden, and made straight for the fire. A wide and deep circle, making a

kind of basin, had been dug out of the snow. In the centre burned a huge fire, and before it a man lay on his stomach, his chin resting on his folded arms, lazily watching the blazing logs; a man with wild hair and wilder eyes; a man whose haggard face even the red glow of the fire could not brighten.

"What!" cried Lucius, recognising him at the first glance; "have you got no farther than this, Matchi? A sorry result of your boasted cleverness! Where's the Indian?"

"I don't know," the other answered shortly. "Dead, perhaps, before this. We quarrelled and parted two days ago. The man's a knave and a ruffian."

"I don't believe that," said Lucius despondently. "He persevered, I suppose; pushed on towards the fort, and you didn't. That's the meaning of your quarrel."

"Have it so, if you like," returned the stranger with scornful carelessness. Then seeing that Lucius still stood upon the edge of the circle—a bank of snow—looking down at him, he lifted his dark eyes slowly, and returned the gaze.

"Have things brightened with you since we parted company?" he asked.

"How should they brighten, unless Providence sent some luckier wanderers across our track; not a lively event at this time of year. No, the aspect of our affairs has darkened to the deepest gloom. Geoffrey Hossack is dying of fever."

"Amidst universal cold—strange anomaly!" said the other, in his hard unplying voice. "But since death seems inevitable for all of us, I'd gladly change lots with your friend—burn with fever—and go out of this world unconsciously. It is looking death in the face that tortures me: to lie here, looking into that fire, and calculate the slow but too swift hours that stand between me and—annihilation. That gnaws my vitals."

Lucius looked down at the strongly-marked passionate face, half in scorn, half in pity.

"You can see no horizon beyond a grave under these pine-trees," he said. "You do not look upon this life as an education for the better life that is to succeed it."

"No. I had done with that fable before I was twenty."

A hard cruel face, with the red fire shining in it—the face of a man who, knowing himself unfit for heaven, was naturally disposed to unbelief in the other place, thought Lucius.

"Can you help me to find my way back to the hut?" he asked, after a meditative pause.

"Not I. I thought I was a hundred miles from it. I have been wandering in a circle, I suppose."

"Evidently. Where did you leave Kekekooarsis?"

The stranger looked at him doubtfully, as if hardly understanding the drift in the question. Lucius repeated it.

"I don't know. There is no "where" in this everlasting labyrinth. We disagreed, and parted—somewhere!"

Lucius Davoren's gaze, wandering idly about that sunken circle in the snow, where every inch of ground was fitfully illuminated by the ruddy glare of the pine-logs, was suddenly attracted by an object that provoked his curiosity—a little heap of bones, half burnt, at the edge of the fire. The flame licked them every now and then, as the wind blew it towards them.

"You have had a prize, I see," he said, pointing to these bones. "Big game. How did you manage without a gun?"

"A knife is sometimes as good as a gun!" said the other, without looking up. He stretched out his long lean arm as he spoke, and pushed the remainder of his prey farther into the fire.

In a moment—before the other was aware—Lucius had leaped down into the circle, and was on his knees, dragging the bones back out of the fire with his naked hands.

"Assassin! devil!" he cried, turning to the stranger with a look of profoundest loathing; "I thought as much. These are human bones."

"That's a lie," the other answered coolly. "I snared a wolf, and stabbed him with my clasp-knife."

"I have not worked in the dissecting-room for nothing," said Lucius quietly. "Those are human bones. You have staved off death by murder."

"If I had, it would be no worse than the experience of a hundred shipwrecks," answered the other, glancing from Lucius to his gun, with an air at once furtive and ferocious, like some savage beast at bay.

"I have half a mind to shoot you down like the wolf you are," said Lucius, rising slowly from his knees, after throwing the bones back into the blaze.

"Do it, and welcome," answered the stranger, casting off all reserve with a contemptuous tone, that might be either the indifference of desperation or mere bravado. "Famine knows no law, I have done only what I daresay you would have done in my situation. We had starved, literally starved—no half rations, but sheer famine—for five days, when I killed him. It was a mercy to put him out of his misery. If he had been a white skin, I should have tossed up with him which was to go, but I didn't stand on punctilio with a nigger. It may be my turn next, perhaps. Shoot me, and welcome, if you've a mind to waste a charge of powder on so miserable a wretch."

"No," said Lucius, "no one has made me your judge or your executioner. I leave you to your conscience. But if ever you darken the threshold of our hut again—he your errand what it may—by the God above us both, you shall die like a dog!"

Lucius Davoren spent that night in the forest,

by a fire of his own kindling, after having put some distance between himself and that other wanderer. He recruited exhausted nature with a buffalo steak, and then sat out the night by his lonely fire; sometimes dozing, more often watching, knowing not when murder might creep upon him with stealthy footfall across the silent snow. Morning came, however, and the night had brought no attack. By daylight he regained the lost trail, found his way back to the hut, laden with his spoil, and to his unspeakable joy found a change for the better in the sick man.

"I have given him his traft, bongdual," said the Dutchman, pointing to the empty medicine bottle, "and he is cooler; he berspires."

Yes, perspiration had arisen, nature's healing dew, not the awful damps of swift-coming death. Lucius knelt down by the rough bed, and thanked God for this happy change. How sweet was prayer at such a moment! He thought of that murderous wretch in the forest, waiting for the death he had sought to defer by that last loathsome resource; that revolting expedient which it was horror to think of—a lost wretch without a hope beyond the grave, without belief in a God.

On his knees, his breast swollen by the rapture of gratitude and glad surprise, Lucius thought of that wretch almost with pity.

He made a strong broth with some of the buffalo flesh, and fed his patient by spoonfuls. To rally from such prostration must needs be a slow process; but once hopeful of his friend's recovery, Lucius was content to wait for the issue in quiet confidence.

He told Absalom his adventure in the forest, the hideous discovery of the faithful Indian's fate.

"And when he has digested the Indian, and feels again what poor Geoffrey used to gall a vaguum, he will goe and ead us," said the Dutchman despondently.

"He will not cross this threshold. What! do you think I would let that ravening beast approach him?" pointing to the prostrate figure of the bed. "I have told him what I should do if he came here. He knows the penalty."

"You will gill him."

"Without one scruple."

"I think you are in your right," answered Absalom tranquilly. "It is an onpleasant itea do be eaden."

Two days passed slowly. Geoffrey rallied. Very slow was the progress towards recovery—almost imperceptible to the non-professional eye, but it was progress. Lucius perceived it, and was thankful. He had not slept since that night in the forest, but watched all night beside the patient's bed—his gun within reach of his hand, loaded with ball.

On the third night of his watch, when Geoffrey had been wandering a little, and then had fallen into a placid slumber, there came a sound at the door—a sound that was neither the waving of a pine-branch nor the cry of bird or beast; a sound distinctly human.

Lucius had barricaded his door with a couple of pine-trunks, placed transversely, like a St. Andrew's cross. The door itself was a fragile contrivance—three or four roughly-hewn planks nailed loosely together—but the St. Andrew's cross made a formidable barrier.

He heard the door tried with a rough impatient hand. The pine-trunks groaned, but held firm. The door was shaken again; then, after a moment's pause, the same impatient hand shook the little parchment window. This offered but a frail defence; it rattled, yielded, then with one vigorous thrust burst inward, and a dark ragged head and strong bony shoulders appeared in the opening.

"I am starving," cried a hoarse voice, faint, yet with a strange force in its hollow tones. "Give me shelter, food, if you have any to give. It is my last chance."

He widened the space about him with those strong desperate arms, and made as if he would have leapt into the hut. Lucius raised his gun, cocked it, and took aim deliberately, without an instant's hesitation.

"I told you what would happen if you came here," he said, and with the words fired.

The man, fell backwards, dragging the thin parchment window and some part of its fragile framework with him. His death-clutch had fastened on the splintered wood. A wild gust of north-east wind rushed in through the blank space in the log wall, but Lucius Davoren did not feel it.

"Great God!" he asked himself, a slow horror creeping through his ice-cold veins, "was that a murder?"

END OF PROLOGUE.

PRESERVATION OF ARTICLES OF FOOD.—Some striking illustrations of the value of applying a low temperature in the preservation of articles of food has recently been recorded by M. Bous-singault. He has found that beef tea, submitted to a temperature of four degrees Fahrenheit for several hours, has remained in a perfectly good condition for eight years. A sample of sugarcane juice, similarly treated, has also been found in an excellent state of preservation after having been kept for years. Both the sugar juice and the beef tea had been kept in carefully closed vessels.

CHOLERA PREVENTATIVE.—Use sulphur in the socks. A half-teaspoonful in each sock every morning is enough. This will charge the system with sulphurated hydrogen, which Dr. Herring—high authority with the homœopaths—says is a bar to cholera.

PERSIAN ETIQUETTE AND PECULIARITIES.

It is singular how little we know about Persian manners and customs, considering how long we have held diplomatic intercourse with the King of Kings. Yet the subject is not devoid of interest, especially at the present moment. The Persian tongue has long been the language of Oriental diplomatists, and Persian etiquette is remarkable for its elaboration. Indeed, Persia is now almost the only country where Oriental etiquette is kept up in all its ancient purity.

The customs of the Court of the present Shah are very different from those which prevailed in the time of the celebrated Futeh Ali Shah, who died in 1835. When he took his mid-day meal, or dinner, he used first of all to seat himself and taste some of the dishes; then, on a given signal his wives came in and stood round the room. At the same time the princes, his sons and grandsons, were summoned from the ante-chamber, and stood round the table-cloth without saying a word. On a given signal from the Shah they squatted down in their appointed places, and silently proceeded to eat. The dishes which stood next them might be to their tastes or the contrary, but it was not etiquette to ask for anything, or to help themselves from a dish at a distance. The Shah only spoke to the senior prince, who sat by his side. During the whole time his Majesty's favorite wife remained seated behind him. Every now and then the Shah would shove a handful of food into her mouth, and as his handfuls were remarkably large, the poor creature was nearly choked. When the time allotted for the repast expired, the princes rose and quitted the room without washing their hands, for this indispensable termination to an Eastern meal is not permitted to take place in the presence of royalty. The Shah himself used to linger over his dinner after their departure, for he was very fond of the pleasures of the table. Sometimes of an evening gambling would take place in his apartments. Of course, it was etiquette to lose to his Majesty, and moreover it was the custom for one-tenth of all winnings to go to the Shah, who placed them in a vessel shaped like a duck. Consequently nearly all the ready cash in the assembly had by the end of the sitting taken one direction, and the Shah, shaking his singular cash-box, would observe laughingly, "The King's bird has been fortunate to-night." In George the Third's reign gambling used on stated occasions to take place at St. James', but it was the groom porter, not the Sovereign, who profited by the transaction.

Among other customs enforced by etiquette is the rule that where a superior dines with an inferior the latter brings in the first dish himself, a practice not without precedent at Western Courts. The bringing in a dish is, however, no light undertaking, and requires considerable skill, strength and practice, for the manner in which the operation is performed is, especially at court, strictly prescribed. The dish or tray must be held at arm's length, carried perfectly horizontally, and deposited precisely in the right place at once. Some ludicrous stories are related about this practice. One old gentleman with a magnificent beard had to bring in a large tray containing several dishes, and place it in front of the Shah. The tray was heavy, the bearer was feeble, and, to make matters worse, just as he was about to deposit it a candle, which he had not observed, set fire to his magnificent beard. For a moment he was in a state of the utmost perplexity. To put down the tray elsewhere than in its appointed place, an operation which required some deliberation, was out of the question. To allow his cherished beard to be consumed was also impossible. He was equal to the occasion, and plunging his flaming beard into a dish of curds which stood on the tray he calmly completed his task, amidst the applause and amusement of the beholders.

All marks of respect are observed by the Persians with the utmost punctiliousness and exactitude. On the Shah entering the throne-room on a State occasion and seating himself, an official shouts out, "He has passed!" and all present bow by stooping the body and placing the palms of the hands lightly on the knees. The "eye of the State" then walks backwards from the Shah, and, moving down the assembly, gives handfuls of silver coins from a golden sallow. Inferior officers distribute sherbet from jewelled cups and bowls of rare china. The next incident is the recital by a Mulla of the prayer for the sovereign, and the whole affair winds up with an ode spoken by the Poet Laureate. Such is an abstract of Mr. Eastwick's description of a reception by the present Shah some eleven years ago.—*London Globe*.

FRICASSEE OF COLD ROAST BEEF.—Cut the beef into very thin slices, season it with a little pepper and salt, shred a bunch of parsley very small, cut an onion into pieces, and put all together into a stewpan with a piece of butter and three-quarters of a pint of good broth. Let it all simmer slowly, then stir in the yolks of two well-beaten eggs, a teaspoonful of vinegar, or the juice of half a lemon, and a wineglass of port wine. Stir it briskly over the fire, and turn the fricassee into a hot dish. If the flavor of shalot is liked, the dish can be previously rubbed with one.

BAKING POWDER.—One part of carbonate of soda (by weight), one part tartaric acid, two parts Double ground rice, mixed well together. The above makes a first-class powder.

LONGFELLOW.

BY HENRY T. SNELL.

Poet, thy tender notes do touch my heart,
Like the sweet wailing of some love-lorn bird,
Or as some simple ballad faintly heard
In the dim twilight: thou dost rend apart
The things which hide my nature from the
sun,
Making my heart and all earth's heart but one.
Thou plays't me strange weird music with thy
skill;
It is the music of the mountain pines,
Which comes to me amid the peaceful vines;
And lo! my thoughts are subject to my will,
For thou dost make me mourn the mis-spent
years,
And leave my nature all dissolv'd in tears.

DESMORO ; OR, THE RED HAND.

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

CHAPTER XXXIV.

On the following day Neddy returned from Sydney, whither he had been for the purpose of obtaining possession of the dead Jew's money, bequeathed to the bushranger, Desmoro.

Neddy appeared with an important visage, and an old valise strapped across his stooping shoulders.

"Good luck, mister," said the man, by way of salutation.

"I am right glad to see you back again, Neddy," was Desmoro's thankful rejoinder.

"An' you'll also be glad to see what I've brought, or else I'm much mistaken, mister," added the other, unstrapping the valise, and placing it on a table before him.

Desmoro's eyes glistened at seeing the bulky bag, remembering that it contained the means of his emancipating himself from the colony, from a life of hazard and sin—from a life which had now become perfectly repugnant to all his feelings. Never again would Red Hand be met on either highway or bridle-track—never again would he cry "Stand, or I fire! your money or your life!" No; such days of guilt and terror were past, never more to return to him.

Neddy had now undone the fastenings of the valise, and thrown it open, showing rolls and rolls of dirty, flimsy paper, each bundle being tied up and labelled according to the value of the notes and the amount they reckoned in full.

Desmoro stared, and proceeded to inspect the riches thus spread out before his amazed and delighted sight. Beneath the bank papers there was found a small canvas-bag, the neck of which was carefully secured and sealed, thereby denoting that the bag contained something of great importance.

Bewildered and breathless, Desmoro ripped open the canvas, when a shower of glittering stones, diamonds of the finest water, shone forth.

"We are as rich as a couple of Indian nabobs, Neddy," said the owner of all this wealth.

The man winked his eyes knowingly. Of late years, Neddy had acquired considerable knowledge concerning many matters. He had learned that diamonds were more precious far than either silver or gold, and that their size and lustre greatly increased their value.

Desmoro sat down, and pencil and paper in hand, at once began to reckon up the vast sum to which he was the heir, Neddy silently watching him all the while.

At the expiration of an hour Desmoro lifted up his face, in utter perplexity.

"I cannot credit my senses," he breathed aloud. "The sum appears to me a fabulous one! We are, without doubt, the richest men in the whole colony of New South Wales!"

"We!" repeated his companion.

"Ay. Hitherto one fortune has been ours; and, as it has been thus far, so it shall still continue."

Neddy answered not, but his features were all in a quiver.

"But I have not yet inquired how you managed to gain possession of the Jew's legacy," added Desmoro.

"Oh, easily enough, mister," replied the man. "The house at Shark Point, being untenanted, I waited until night, when I clambered the roof and descended the chimney. Then, when daylight appeared, I lifted the flooring which nobody as yet had disturbed, and soon found what I was seeking for. You see, we hadn't let no time slip through our fingers. We made hay while the sun shone; while they, the precious pleece, was a-waiting for a opportunity of sacking the whole place. They'd stuck the Government seal on all the doors and windows, but none on the chimney—ha, ha!" added Neddy, with a quiet laugh. "Well, well; they'll find out their 'straordinary wisdom when they discover that the door-lock has been tampered with, and the treasure, if they ever dreamed of their being one, vanished entirely."

"You are deserving of much praise for the able manner in which you have managed matters," said Desmoro, stretching out his hand, and grasping that of his tried companion.

Neddy grinned pleasurably, delighted to receive Desmoro's commendation.

There was no packing for them to accomplish; the old valise, with its valuable contents, claimed all their attention at the present time. There were heaps of ill-got property lying about, but there was nothing amongst those heaps that Desmoro cared to carry away with him—nothing that he wished to retain.

He cast one hurried glance at the stone walls of his dwelling; and then, strapping the bag once more on Neddy's shoulders, prepared to quit the cavern. He had made his ally thoroughly acquainted with all his intentions, and Neddy had signified his approval of everything that Desmoro proposed, and his willingness to accompany him all round the world, and back again, if Desmoro should find any occasion to perform such a lengthy journey on his own account.

"Now, my lad," said Desmoro, "should it so happen that we should be so unfortunate as to meet with any dangerous obstruction in our way, do you, against whom nothing criminal can be brought, at once make off with our treasure, and seek a refuge in my father's house. You understand, eh?"

"I should think I do, mister. I aren't lived all these many years with such a clever master as yourself to be quite as big a silly now as I was at first. I'll take good care of this portmanteau, never you fear fur that part of the business. I'll lay my head on it at night, an' I'll nurse it all the day long. I knows the vally of the article, an' all the services we expects it to do for us, eh?"

"Exactly, Neddy. I see you fully comprehend the importance of your charge," Desmoro said, in light, cheery tones, which belied the feelings of his heart.

And, mounting the horse which Neddy had prepared, they both rode away, under the light of a full moon.

Desmoro's spirits were singularly depressed and out of tune; his thoughts were occupied with so many different and weighty matters. He was on the eve of attempting a hazardous flight, of embarking on a new and better existence; and last, though not the least matter in his mind, he was in love with a beautiful woman, who fully reciprocated his affection.

As it was necessary that they should reach Sydney by daylight, our travellers made all the speed they could in order to perform the distance thither in the desired time. They pursued the bridle-track through the bush, and avoided the highway as long as they could, making short cuts across the country, and thereby saving themselves many a tedious mile of travel.

When the moon went down, they were on the highroad, along which the horse could proceed at a far swifter rate than before.

At length the town was reached—reached in the first grey light of morn. Here the men alighted, and, much against Desmoro's will, here the brave steed was left to become the property of any one who had the luck to find him. Desmoro patted the animal's handsome neck, and uttered a kindly farewell to him, which, under present circumstances, was all that he could do for him.

The men now pursued their way on foot until they arrived at the residence of Colonel Symure, who, warned by Marguerite d'Auvergne of his son's probable coming, was on the alert, watching anxiously at a casement for Desmoro's expected approach.

Desmoro was admitted on the instant, and folded to his father's heart.

"Ah, Neddy!" exclaimed the Colonel, kindly recognising his son's humble but faithful friend, and giving him a hearty grip of the hand. Then the Colonel led the way to his own chamber, whither Desmoro and his companion, followed him.

The Colonel made fast the door of the room, and the two weary travellers seated themselves.

"Thank heaven you are here, safe under my roof, at last!" cried the Colonel, addressing his son. "We must now think of how I can contrive to keep your presence here a secret, and of where I can conceal you. Neddy is wholly unknown to everybody save ourselves, therefore he will cause us no anxiety whatsoever, for he can safely mix amongst the members of my household."

Desmoro meditated for some few minutes before he spoke, in answer to his father's.

"I must have, at once, a suit of well-cut, fashionable garments," said Desmoro.

The Colonel's face expressed amazement and perplexity. "You are surely not thinking of showing yourself abroad?" the gentleman queried.

"Dressed as you are now I should never be recognised by any one," Desmoro answered, glancing at his father.

The Colonel shook his head, and looked very grave, and very uneasy likewise. But this son of his had great influence over his father, and the end of the matter was, that Desmoro was soon provided with a complete and excellent wardrobe, fit for any gentleman in the land.

Affairs were so arranged now that Desmoro lived openly under his parent's roof, as his honored guest, as the reputed son of one of the Colonel's most esteemed friends.

Neddy was installed in office, as Desmoro's valet—as the valet of the handsome, quiet gentleman, who always wore his left arm in a sling.

The Colonel saw but little company at any time; now he saw none at all. He was completely devoted to his new guest, whom the servants believed to be recently arrived from India, where, it was represented, he in a tiger-hunt, had received a severe injury to his left hand, an injury which compelled it to be always supported in a sling.

It was Neddy, I must tell you, who, under his

master's instructions, had set this tale afloat. The man had been well-schooled in his lesson, and he delivered his story with a very serious face, wisely refraining from making to it any additions of his own. Neddy was aware of his own deficiency in the knowledge of tiger-hunting, and, therefore, said as little as possible upon the subject, observing, whenever he was requested to give a graphic account of the way in which his master had met with his accident, that "them tiger-fellers was all on 'em too horrible a lot to talk about."

Of course, the good-natured, though not over-sage, consul was taken into the Colonel's confidence, and the Count d'Auvergne was put in full possession of the whole particulars of Desmoro's cruel history.

"Aha!" remarked the fussy little Frenchman, on hearing the strange narrative, related with much real feeling by the Colonel. "Aha! I perceived the thorough-bred look in him; there's no escaping my penetration, you see, Marguerite," he added, turning to his daughter, who was sitting at an open window, talking to Desmoro, who, attired in his novel garb—a garb such as he had never worn till now—looked quite another Desmoro to every eye but hers.

Marguerite answered her father's words with a bright flush which spread itself over her face, her neck, and her arms, and with drooping eyelids. She was thinking, that as far as she herself was concerned, his penetration was sadly at fault just now.

But if the lively little Count's perceptions were at fault with regard to his daughter's feelings towards the somewhat bushranger, Colonel Symure's were not so. Desmoro's parent saw plainly the condition of the lady's heart; and he likewise saw that her affections were fully reciprocated by him upon whom those affections were bestowed.

Colonel Symure was not astonished that the beautiful Marguerite should be in love with the fine lion-hearted fellow by her side; he thought it a very natural event that she should admire him, and that he should return that admiration in the manner he thought best. But not for a single moment did the Colonel dare to speculate further. He knew that the Count had a great deal of family pride, and that it was not probable he would ever yield his consent to his daughter's union with a dishonored man—with a convict, whose neck (were he caught) the hangman's noose was waiting for. No—no matter for his altered circumstances, and the changed mode of his life, his name and fame could never be thoroughly purified. He might seek refuge in another land, and in another name, likewise, but he would always be condemned to an existence of anxiety and dread; the past, the horrible and irrecoverable past, would ever be present to his view, ever be marling every hour of his life.

The Colonel sighed as he reflected on all this, feeling that he could never reproach himself sufficiently for what he had done. He knew that he had planted the root whence had emanated this giant disgrace, this frightful stain upon the ancient name of Symure. Had he in his youth been a man of honorable principle, of generous and upright feeling, how very different at this time things would have been with him and his!

Alack, alack, for the wisdom and the goodness which only come to us with our riper years, when our leaves are beginning to fade, and our withered looks remind us that autumn presages winter—that winter which brings to us sickness, weakness, weariness, and death!

Active-minded, vigorous, and daring as he was Desmoro soon begun to pine for his full liberty of action—to go abroad as other men went, and to enjoy the open air, either on foot or on horseback.

Colonel Symure was arranging his affairs preparatory to his quitting the service and the colony; and Desmoro was awaiting the time when all should be settled for his father's and his own departure from Australia.

The Colonel would not lose sight of Desmoro; the father and son, so recently brought together, would not separate from each other. No positive plan of flight had, as yet, been fixed upon by Desmoro; he was leaving everything in the hands of his parent and the warm-hearted little consul, assured that it would be safest for them to move alone in a business which required so much secrecy and care, and in which so much danger to himself was involved.

"Father, I shall stagnate, body and mind both, unless I have a scamper or a whirl through the fresh air," Desmoro said to the Colonel one day. "Don't fear for me," he added, with one of his old, ringing laughs; "none will recognise Red Hand in this novel gear, and in the company of Colonel Symure."

"I do not know that," answered the other, cautiously, his cheeks losing a shade of color as he spoke.

"Nonsense!" cried Desmoro. "Looking in the mirror, I can scarcely recognise myself; how then is it probable that others will do so?"

The Colonel shook his head gravely, and repeated the old proverb of "Safe bind, safe find."

Desmoro looked disappointed; his confinement indoors had become irksome to him, and he was longing to go abroad, and to secure to himself frequent opportunities of seeing Marguerite d'Auvergne.

"Once clear of this hateful country, Desmoro," pursued the Colonel, "and you will have an open field before you, and may go where you please, and do as you list; always keeping prudence within view, you must remember."

"You have a spare horse in the stable, father?" demanded Desmoro, gaily.

Colonel Symure shrugged his shoulders in si-

lence. Desmoro was looking so handsome that his father found it a difficult matter to deny him anything he asked for.

"I would not of choice put my head into the mouth of a hungry lion," proceeded the sometime bushranger. "I prize my life far too highly to willingly, and willfully, place it in any positive danger. But Mademoiselle d'Auvergne takes her daily rides in the Government Domain, and in that fact lies considerable temptation for me."

At these words, Colonel Symure became very pale and very uneasy as well. Desmoro had half confessed to his love; yes, the last few syllables he had spoken had fully revealed the state of his affections.

The Colonel hemmed two or three times; but, not knowing what to say, he wisely held his peace.

But Desmoro had resolved on carrying out his point, and his determination in that respect was not to be shaken, or in the least disturbed. He would not have made this unwise proposition had Marguerite been present at the time, feeling assured that she would have strongly opposed his wishes. Marguerite had a large share of honest, common sense, which would never have permitted her to advise so rash a step as this contemplated by Desmoro.

But the mischief was done before she could lift up her voice to prevent it; Desmoro was already abroad by his father's side, boldly challenging every eye he met.

Marguerite, who was taking an airing in her carriage, met the Colonel and his son both on horseback. She started, almost screamed, at the sight of our hero, who was here in the broad face of day, his noble figure and manly bearing inviting the observance of every one he met.

She instantly checked her coachman, and awaited the approach of her two friends. She was nearly as white as her muslin dress, and her whole body was trembling with terror. But she contrived to conceal her feelings lest any passer-by might remark her strangely agitated manners.

She held out her hand to the Colonel. Desmoro kept aloof for a second or two, knowing that his presence there would not meet with her approval, and in some sort of dread lest he should arouse the displeasure of the woman he loved.

"Great heaven, Colonel!" exclaimed she, significantly glancing at Desmoro.

The father replied not; he only looked at her deprecatingly.

"Oh, you are both surely crazy," she went on, in an agitated whisper. "Colonel Symure, why, why did you countenance this rash proceeding on the part of your son?"

"Nay, mademoiselle, there is nothing to be apprehended, since his appearance is so entirely changed."

Thus spoke the Colonel, as Desmoro himself drew his horse to the side of Marguerite's equipage. "Fear not," breathed he, imploringly, and in low accents. "I wanted to have opportunities of seeing you more frequently, and—"

"Therefore you thus expose yourself before your enemies? Oh, Desmoro, Desmoro, you are to blame in this!" she hastily returned. "Turn your horse's head round, and speedily make your way homewards," she added in entreatling syllables.

The Colonel did not hear her entreaties, else he would have strengthened them by some of his own.

Just at this moment a man of clumsy build halted by the vehicle, and, suddenly coming to a stop, stared up into Desmoro's face, then at the Colonel.

Marguerite and her two companions were too much engaged at the time to remark the man's impertinent observation.

"It is the first urgent request I have made to you since you have given me the privilege to make requests to you," continued the lady, very earnestly addressing Desmoro. "Will you then suffer me to sue to you in vain?"

"No, Marguerite; I will return home at once," he rejoined, in a somewhat disappointed tone. "I am sorry that my conduct has vexed you," he added, with a lingering look of love.

"Vexed me!" echoed she. "The subject in question is one far too grave to cause only vexation; I am filled with absolute terror at your temerity in thus appearing here in the broad face of day! You are courting your utter destruction! Lose no time then, I beseech you, in regaining the shelter of your father's roof! Hasten away, fast, fast as your horse can gallop!"

Desmoro turned to the Colonel, and spoke to him in low, hurried tones; while Marguerite looked around, up the drive, and down the drive, her heart full of anxiety and alarm.

Presently the Colonel and his son raised their hats to the Count's daughter, and then rode away, in the direction of home.

Marguerite sank back, sick and faint with apprehension, and her carriage moved on, and once more fell into the stream of equipages.

At the heels of Desmoro was running a man with a limping gait, his face flushed with excitement, his eyes flashing with a vengeful, wicked light.

On and on flew the two steeds, bearing the father and son—a turn in the road, and their pursuer would lose sight of them.

The man panted and labored along for upwards of a mile, keeping Desmoro in view all the while. Then came a sharp turn in the carriage way, and the equestrians were no longer to be seen.

Seeing the utter uselessness of further pursuit, the man now stopped, and flung himself upon a neighboring hillock, and there sat gasping for breath.

Taking off his broad-brimmed, sunburnt Marilla hat, he drew out a red-cotton handkerchief, and wiped his knotted, gnarled brow. Presently he fell into a train of thought, of which the following is a faithful transcript. "Oho, my foine gentleman, so I've gotten the sent of yo again, hev I? I've missed of ketchin of yo to-day, but I'se be moor sharp after yo to-morrow. What be he doin' of in those broad-cloth clothes of his, perked out as grand as the governor hisself, I'd just loik to know? I knowd him the vary minute I set my two eyes on him! I'se up to the arm-sling business: livin' in theatres, amongst play-actor folk, makes one bright an' cute. He little thought I war so near him, the red-fisted thief! I aren't forgotten that he shot at me—that he would hev had my life if he could! I aren't forgotten heaps o' other things that I means to pay him out fur. I'se live to see him hanged yet, and then my revenge will be satisfied. Who war the ould fellar with him, I wonder? I only ketched one look on him, as his head war turned from me. Who war he? I seems to recollect the cut on his phiz, as folks says. Wheer, wheer hev I seen him afore?"

And Pidgers—you have recognised the rascal—leaned his head on his hand, and mused deeply, searching his memory for some knowledge of Desmoro's companion, Colonel Symure.

"Darn my stoopid pumpkin!" he went on, thumping his head as he spoke. "I knows that chap's feace, I'se sure I do! Wheer, wheer hev I seen it afore?"

Then again the man cogitated.

By-and-by, he slapped his knee, and cried out, "Hooray! hooray! I'se gotten him now—I'se gotten him fast enough! How on earth coom it that I was sichen fool as not to remember him at once? Heh, but I'se gotten Maister Desmoro atwixt my vary finger an' thumb, now! I sees my way as plain as I sees yander ships in the bay! To think as how I couldn't remember wheer and when I'd seen him, the ould sooger-officer as war alus a wantin' to know sammut about Desmoro Desmoro, who I got transported to this here country, an' who I'll yet see hanged high! I'se content now ontill to-morrow; then I'se see to doin' some business in my own particular way!"

And, rising, Pidgers made his way out of the Government Domain, crossed the racecourse, and regained the town.

CHAPTER XXXV.

Nearly all that night Pidgers lay awake, concocting his plans of vengeance and wickedness. He knew where the Colonel lived, and he had no fear for the success of his schemes. He was a bold-faced, stout-hearted ruffian, who, so long as he obtained his point, cared but little by what means he did so. He loved money, and he likewise loved revenge, both of which he would gain by giving information of Desmoro—by betraying him into the hands of authority.

Pidgers had just lost his situation at the theatre, and not having secured any other employment, he had his whole time on his hands, and could do with that time as he pleased.

Day after day he loitered before the Colonel's residence, watching each and all that entered or came forth from it; but he saw not the man he waited for—he caught no glimpse of Red Hand.

But Pidgers had a great deal of patience of his own, so he did not relax his vigilance, but, on the contrary, continued it closer than before.

"They're a set o' deep ones!" the knave said within himself; "but, deep as they is, I'se manage to be a good deal deeper. They've gotten their match in me, I thinks, as they'll find out to their sorrow by-and-by, when they least expects it."

One day Pidgers accosted Neddy, whom he had frequently seen coming in and out of the Colonel's dwelling. Neddy's simple countenance seemed to give assurance of a loose tongue, upon which fact Pidgers was speculating at the present moment.

"Dun yo know of anyone that wants a stable-lad, or a fellar to do odd jobs about a house?" asked Pidgers, stopping Neddy on his way.

"I'se an emigrant, wee a excellent character," he added, in a whining tone. "I'se be much obliged to yo if so be as yo knows on ought that'll suit me."

Neddy shook his head, saying that he really did not know of any such situation as the other had named.

"An' yo a servint yorsel, an' hasn't heard of anny one as wants a smart chap, wee his wits all about him, that'll never break no plates nor dishes, an' wants to get into a respectable place wheer they'll let him goo to church once every Sunday?"

Again Neddy negatively shook his head.

"Yo lives in that their house?" pursued Pidgers, pointing to that belonging to Colonel Symure.

"Yes," was the brief rejoinder.

"Hev yo gotten a good place ther?"

"Yes."

"Yo're a lucky chap, yo are, eh? Who dun yo sarve?"

Neddy was taken aback a little by this abrupt question, and did not immediately answer it.

"Eh?" persisted Pidgers.

"What business is it of yours who I serves, or who I does not serve?" the other queried, somewhat sharply.

"Business!" repeated Pidgers, somewhat abashed for an instant. "Oh, I doesn't purtend to have no business about the matter. I was only a bit curious, as everybody is, moor or less, accordingly."

Neddy did not feel reassured by the innocent

air assumed by his interrogator. Neddy had lived such a life of constant distrust and alarm, that he could not help being always on the alert, always full of suspicion now.

Pidgers had caught hold of his companion's sleeve, and was thereby detaining him.

"Hev yo gotten a good situation um?" persevered the scoundrel.

"What's that to any one?" returned the other, snappishly. "Mind yer own affairs, and I'll mind mine."

"In course yo will, I knows it," Pidgers made answer, in his most amiable manner, a spice of satire in his tones. "Yo knows what yo knows, I'se no doubt, and I knows what I knows," he concluded, in marked accents.

Neddy looked at the speaker in some surprise, and, feeling very uncomfortable, strove to get away from him. But Pidgers had him fast by the sleeve, and there was no immediate escape for him.

"Can't yo be civil to a fellar?" proceeded the last speaker.

"I've got my work to attend to: I can't afford to waste my time in this sort of idle gossip. Let me go, if yer please!" cried Neddy—pressing his hand on his brow, which was throbbing with pain.

"Let yo goo! Not jest at present," responded Pidgers. "I'se gotten a little proposition to make to yo furst. Do yo loike money?"

Neddy writhed, and endeavored to draw his arm out of the other's grasp; but Pidgers' fingers were like a vice, and Neddy's strivings to liberate himself were all in vain.

"In course, yo loikes money: weel, I'se jest a-wantin' yo an' me to make a lump on it."

"What do yer mean?" queried Neddy, quakingly. Pidgers grimaced diabolically.

"I wish to gracious ye'd let go of me!"

"I'd goo halves wee yo: I'd act honestly by yo."

"Blest if I understand a single syllable yer a saying of."

"They're now offerin' a reward of two hundred pounds for the fellar, alive and dead."

In an instant Neddy's body became quite limp, while a dense perspiration oozed out of his every pore. Pidgers felt his victim tremble, and triumphed accordingly.

"Come, now yo knows weel enough whaten I be a drivin' at?"

"I knows yer to be a impertent sort of a chap, that what I knows," retorted Neddy, beginning to lose his temper a little.

"Oh, yo does, does yo?"

"Yes; and I wants to hev nothink at all to do with yer, or the likes of yer," he added, still more boldly than before. "Stopping a gentleman's gentleman in this sort of a way aren't the right thing to do, I can tell yer," he continued, assuming an air of consequence.

Pidgers's disengaged hand was clenched ready to strike; but the ruffian restrained his wicked purpose, and relaxing his hold of Neddy, violently flung him off.

Then the scoundrel, quite baffled, thrust both his hands into his pockets, turned on his heel, and halted down the road, muttering curses all the way he went.

Neddy scratched his ear and shivered; and again he pressed his brow as he watched the man slowly disappear.

"What did he mean?" he exclaimed, inwardly, a scared expression in his face. "He surely couldn't suspect anything about him—the mister? It seemed as if he did by his talking about the two hundred pounds that's being offered for him, alive or dead. "Who could he be?" he added, reflectively. "Shall I keep this affair to myself? No, better not: I'll go at once and tell the mister all about it."

So saying, Neddy entered the Colonel's dwelling, and went to seek his master, whom he did not like to disturb, seeing that he was at dinner at the time, and deeply engaged in conversation with his father and the Count d'Auvergne.

Neddy had had a raging headache all the day, and now that headache was becoming worse and worse, and at last the man was fain to seek his chamber, and lay himself down on his bed to rest awhile.

He did not attempt to seek an interview with Desmoro, that night, he found himself much too ill to leave his pillow; and the morning of the following day found the man light-headed, with madly-throbbing pulses and a scarlet face.

The doctor, who was summoned, instantly saw what was the matter with his patient. Neddy had the scarlet fever.

This was serious intelligence to Desmoro and his father, just at the time when they were on the very eve of seeking an escape from the colony. But there was no help for them in the matter; they could not arrest the fell strides of a malignant disease; they could only soothe the sufferer and patiently await the issue of his illness.

But in the meantime the Colonel was exceedingly busy, making many needful preparations for the projected flight of his hapless son. He had to proceed in this business with great caution, lest he should betray Desmoro, and deliver him into the very fangs of the law, into the hands which were longing to clutch him.

Lying in the harbor there was a fine vessel, the commander of which had the reputation of being a most generous and noble-hearted man. Having sought and informed Captain Williams that he wished to take his passage in the ship Mary Ann, the Colonel, in a friendly way, invited the sailor to dine with him.

This invitation, although the gentlemen were total strangers to each other, did not in the least surprise the good-humored captain, who was a

welcome guest at prouder tables than that of Colonel Symure.

The Colonel had a task of great difficulty before him, but he knew the importance of the occasion, the hazard to which he was about to expose himself, and did not shrink now when the moment of action had arrived. He wished to make some reparation to the being he had so deeply and cruelly wronged—all the reparation in his power, in fact—the sacrifice of his very life itself, if that sacrifice would be of any service to his son. He had resolved to stand by Desmoro, come weal or woe, and to serve him and shield him at every cost and every risk to himself.

The Colonel and the sailor dined together alone, it being deemed imprudent for the somewhat bushranger to show himself on this particular occasion. The Colonel was very bland, and strove to entertain his guest with many lively anecdotes and messroom jests, and the hours sped swiftly and pleasantly with one of the party, the kind-hearted sailor, who laughed at his host's stories, and enjoyed himself amazingly, all the while rejoicing that he was likely to have so pleasing a companion during the forthcoming voyage.

Over their wine, while the captain was brimming over with good humour, the Colonel suddenly became very thoughtful, and there ensued an uncomfortable silence, which the soldier was the first to break.

Colonel Symure's mouth twitched and his tongue grew parched as he prepared himself to speak on the subject nearest his heart.

"Captain," commenced he, his voice strangely tremulous and hoarse, "I am about to confide in you. I am about to solicit your friendly help in an affair in which my happiness, nay, my very life itself, is concerned."

The sailor, who was leisurely peeling a peach, looked up into his host's face, but made no reply. He was astonished at the gentleman's words, and probably imagined that he had been imbibing a little too freely of wine.

"May—may I confide in you? You are a man of generous feelings, and I am sure you will never take advantage of the trust I am about to repose in you."

"Really," stammered the sailor, somewhat confused at this address of the Colonel's,— "really, 'pon my honor, I don't quite understand you."

"No, I daresay you do not," hesitated the other, at a loss how to broach his subject, his eyes vacantly fixed on the table before him.

Then there was another embarrassing pause, during which the Colonel gulped down a glass of wine, almost unconscious of the act, while his guest sat staring at him, wholly unable to comprehend matters.

The Colonel, who felt vexed at his own lack of courage, now seized resolution to speak more boldly.

"Captain Williams, the story which I am about to entrust to your ear is one most painful for me to narrate. Pray listen to me with patience, and do not deny me your sympathy."

The sailor thrust away his plate, and leaned back in his chair, ready to hearken to his companion's relation.

"I shall be very happy to give you my best attention," answered he, inwardly wondering what the other could possibly have to tell him, and suspiciously watching the decanters, an idea having taken possession of him that the Colonel had been making far to free with their contents.

Colonel Symure then proceeded to briefly relate his history, and likewise that of his son, carefully avoiding the mention of Desmoro's name, or the *soubriquet* by which he had been so long known, the Captain listening to all in utter amazement.

"Now you are acquainted with my painful and terrible position," proceeded the narrator, at the conclusion of his tale. "I am a father, and I wish to preserve my own son—to bear him hence to another land, where he may lead a new life, and repair the errors of the past. Now I ask you whether you will run the risk of assisting me in my proposed project, whether you will afford my son a secret passage home in your ship? I am aware that I am making a very serious request, but I am willing to repay your kindness and services to any extent; name, therefore, the sum you may deem an equivalent for the needful help I implore at your Christian hands, and I will treble that sum whatever its amount may chance to be."

Captain Williams meditated for a few seconds before he replied.

"Colonel Symure," said he, "you are asking my aid in a most dangerous affair. I am sorry for you, deeply and truly sorry for you; but I am afraid to promise you the help you stand in need of."

"The Mary Ann is your own property?"

"I'm proud to say she is, Colonel."

"You carry your own cargo, I have likewise been told."

"Your information, in that respect, is perfectly correct, Colonel," the sailor rejoined.

"I cannot see that you would incur much hazard in the matter," returned the Colonel, very earnestly. "The ship being your own, you are, to intents and purposes, the master of it. Come, Captain Williams, I will, at once, make you an offer: I will give you a draft on my banker for a thousand pounds, on condition that you afford my son, self, and confidential servant, a passage home in your ship. Now, what say you?"

The sailor reflected.

"Come, Captain, the same thing has been done over and over again, and oftentimes with the most successful result."

"Yes; I am aware of that fact, but—"

"Let me introduce you to my son, and suffer him to add his entreaties to mine. You are a young man, Captain, and, perchance, may feel for one near your own age." And as he spoke, the Colonel rang the bell, which was answered at once—not by a servant, but by a man of handsome and distinguished appearance, by none other than Desmoro himself.

"My son, Captain," said Colonel Symure—a gleam of fatherly pride in his eyes.

Captain Williams looked at the new-comer in absolute amazement. He had expected to see a slouching figure, and a sinister face, and lo! here was a perfect Adonis in form and features both—a man of graceful, noble port, and well-bred manners.

At the first glance, the sailor liked the Colonel's son, and, upon hearing his voice, the Captain was won to hearken to every syllable he said.

"Captain Williams has received my entire confidence," spoke Colonel Symure, addressing Desmoro; "but I am sorry to say that I have not yet obtained his final answer to my proposal."

Desmoro smiled—few could smile so sweetly—and, taking his seat near the sailor, he at once entered upon one of the subjects nearest his own heart.

Captain Williams, who was quite fascinated by Desmoro's manners, gave every attention to his speech, which, on this particular occasion, was soft and persuasive in the extreme.

"If I could but see my way in the business!" uttered the sailor, meditatively.

Here the Colonel's heart gave a great bound. He could hear the clarion of hope sounding, and he could see the flag of succour waving, and his bosom felt lighter and easier than it had done for many and many a day before.

"If I could but see my way!" repeated the Captain, musing.

At this moment, as it had been previously arranged by Margaret and Desmoro, the Count d'Auvergne arrived, and joined the gentlemen.

Captain Williams's face flushed with pleasure at being introduced to the little French noble. He was not a vain or a weak man, nevertheless he liked being the companion of men of title, and this new arrival was a most acceptable addition to the little party.

The Count was in one of his happiest humors—his face covered with sunny smiles, his accents full of merriment. He knew well wherefore the sailor had been asked to dine with the proud and exclusive Colonel Symure, and he had come thither to lend a helping hand in a cause in which he felt deeply interested.

"My dear friend," said the Colonel, speaking to the Frenchman, "we are in the very middle of a business affair of great importance; perhaps you will be able to lend us some of your valuable counsel?"

"With pleasure, Colonel," chirped the little man, making himself quite at home here, and assisting himself to a glass of the Colonel's old port.

"He knows all, and he hesitates to undertake the risk," sighed the Colonel.

"Hesitates! Wherefore?" inquired the Count, lightly. "Pooh, pooh!—nonsense! The Captain will, I am sure, take a more agreeable view of the matter, which, after all, will cause him merely the anxiety of an hour or two—certainly, nothing more. Then, when once fairly upon the open sea, all danger and all care regarding the business will be over entirely."

"Ay, when out at sea!" returned the sailor, significantly shaking his head. "These fellows of the water-police are confoundedly sharp, I can tell you. It would take a cleverer chap than I pretend to be to evade their vigilance."

The Colonel looked disappointed, but not despairing. Presently he renewed the attack.

"My friend, the Count d'Auvergne, and his daughter, will accompany us as fellow-passengers," said he. "I cannot help thinking, Captain, that you are standing somewhat in your own light," he added, in a quiet but nervous manner.

"To be sure he is—To be sure he is!" seconded the little Frenchman. "My dear Captain Williams, do give the case a little kindly consideration. I'm sure that you will never have any reason to repent doing so."

Then Desmoro spoke up, and his words, though simple in the extreme, carried with them a potent eloquence—an eloquence which the sailor found it impossible to resist.

Captain Williams silently held out his hand to Desmoro, whose fingers willingly clasped those of the sailor.

The Colonel's bosom was beating hard with expectation.

Presently the Captain spoke.

"I'll meet your proposals, Colonel Symure," he said, in a bluff, genial manner. "You shall have a passage home in my ship."

At these words, Desmoro's father suddenly started up, and then sat down again, too much overcome to express his thanks, save by his grateful looks.

Thus it was arranged that this quartette of friends should sail for dear old England in the ship Mary Ann.

(To be continued.)

Among the replies to an advertisement of a music committee for a candidate for organist, music teacher, etc., a vacancy having occurred by the resignation of the organist in office, was the following: "Gentlemen, I noticed your advertisement for an organist and music teacher, either lady or gentleman. Having been both or several years, I offer you my services."

FEUDAL TIMES; OR, TWO SOLDIERS OF FORTUNE. A Romance of Daring and Adventure.

(Translated especially for the FAVORITE from the French of Paul Duplessis.)

CHAPTER XLII.

AN INTERVIEW.

At the thought of presenting himself before Diane, the Chevalier Sforzi felt himself as weak and trembling as he has shown himself firm and courageous in the face of death.

With an irresolute, almost faltering step, he followed Lehardy. Although Raoul, not learn-

ing from Maurevert of Diane's arrival in Paris, was ignorant that she was acquainted with his conduct, he firmly resolved, in leaving the Stag's Head, to make a full confession to the young girl of her wrongs; only, he had prepared, — necessarily palliative to this avowal, a justification which, without entirely excusing his momentary faithlessness, at least extenuated much of its importance, and left opportunity for a generous pardon.

When Lehardy, after having scraped, — according to the custom of the times, — at the door of his mistress' apartment, announced "Chevalier Sforzi" the unhappy young man, troubled from the depths of his heart, forgot his beautiful speech, and remained immovable, his eyes cast down, without daring to cross the sill of the sanctu-

ary. "Ah! Lehardy, why have you disobeyed me thus!" exclaimed Diane, not less affected than Raoul.

At the sound of this voice so dear, Sforzi uttered an exclamation of impassioned joy, and fell upon his knees at the feet of Mademoiselle d'Erlanges.

"Diane!" cried he, throwing in this single word all the fervor of his soul.

"The poor child, paler than death, attempted to control her weakness, to resist her sensibility; but it was in vain. Overcome, subdued by an emotion stronger than her will, she quickly placed her hands upon her heart, and in a voice which spoke much more love than reproach:

"You are here, then at last, Monsieur Sforzi!" she murmured, and she burst into nervous sobbing. A protracted silence followed the mutual outbreak of the two *flancets*; Diane was the first to terminate it.

She gently disengaged from Raoul's grasp the hand which the young man had taken and retained in his own, then rising from her armchair, and retreating a step, — "Monsieur Sforzi," she faltered, still agitated, "I should regret to see you misapprehend the cause of the emotion which your sudden arrival has just caused me. You must attribute my agitation to the dear and painful memories your presence has suddenly awakened in me. Of all the persons I know, were you not, Monsieur Sforzi, the last whose glance rested upon my loved and honored mother, Countess d'Erlanges, lying upon her death bed?"

"Mademoiselle," said Raoul, sadly, "your remark is of useless cruelty; your determined intention not to receive me, teaches me well enough the hatred you bear me, the horror with which I inspire you!"

Diane's first impulse was to protest against this unjust accusation, and allow her heart to assert itself; but almost immediately the thought of Raoul's unfaithfulness presented itself keenly to her mind, and the pride of an injured woman took the place of the tenderness of a young girl; therefore it was with a voice whose firm, measured tones made Sforzi start, that she answered him.

"I was wrong, indeed, sir Chevalier," said she, "to refuse you an interview. I rejoice now at the chance which procures me this last conversa-

tion. I wish that in removing yourself forever from me, you take not with you an ill and unmerited opinion of my loyalty and sentiments. My frankness will equally prove to you, Monsieur Sforzi, how irrevocably fixed is my resolution to see you no more. Chevalier, I beseech you, listen to me without interrupting me. If I must, to the already heavy burden which I impose upon myself, add the fatigue of a discussion I feel that my strength will betray my courage."

"Upon my honor, I will not interrupt you, Mademoiselle," said Raoul, in a dull voice. "Speak without fear."

"Monsieur Sforzi," replied Diane after meditating some seconds, "something has occurred to me so incomprehensible, so strange, so improbable, that I know not how to explain it to you. It seems to me you are not the same Chevalier Sforzi whom I saw for the first time at Tauve. My heart has kept for him a sister's tenderness proof against all events. I still hear his voice. I see his form, I interchange with him those inmost secrets that formerly made the hours pass so rapidly, and I repeat over and over again to myself that I can never succeed in getting over his death!... Nothing in you,

she felt her voice ready to break into sobs and she paused a moment.

The chevalier eagerly improved this moment of silence.

"Mademoiselle," said he, in a pleading voice, "when I promised not to interrupt you I did not know that you would bring against me the gravest of all accusations—that of perjury!... I beg you with clasped hands to allow some explanations!... My desire is not to appeal from the unsparing and terrible sentence you have just pronounced! My career is finished on earth, I aspire to no more than the rest of the grave! A sacred custom respects the last wish of a condemned criminal! That custom I invoke! My crime is already unpardonable enough of itself, without calumny coming to increase it. I shall change the truth in nothing, should that truth bring, instead of your indifference, your hatred and contempt. The heart of man, and I speak now of an honest, noble, loyal man, encloses, mademoiselle, disgraceful secrets— which your sublime candor cannot suspect. It is for me to snatch roughly away the veil from your pure innocence. May the Lord pardon me this profanation! Diane, it is an inflexible truth, that the man called superior pays by a

explanations far from calming Diana's agitation, served only to increase it.

"Monsieur Sforzi," said she in a voice scarcely audible, so much was she trembling, "you were wrong to sacrifice thus the brilliant future which was offered to your youth, your ambition. Now that I have released you from your vows, return to this great lady! She will bring you to account, no doubt, for the feeling of exaggerated delicacy which forced you to flee from her. Her generous forgiveness will reward you for your loyalty. Farewell, Monsieur Sforzi, farewell forever."

Although the emotion of the young girl was so great that with all her efforts she was unable to conceal it, it was, nevertheless, with a firm step she proceeded towards the sally-port. Raoul did not dream of detaining her; his powerful faculties, benumbed by a grief so deep, left him buried in a kind of lethargy; he was as if exhausted.

Already had Diane crossed the threshold when several blows from a hammer suddenly resounded from outside, and made the house tremble.

Diane paused, and turned pale.

"They are your assassins, Monsieur Sforzi!" she exclaimed.

Raoul passed his hand across his burning brow several times. "Ah! yes, I remember. Some banditti who wish to kill me! They are welcome, I go to meet them."

"Stop, Chevalier!"

"Mademoiselle," said Lehardy, who during the conversation of the two young people, had modestly withdrawn to one side, "it is hardly probable the banditti would dare attack thus by open force, in full view of Paris, an occupied house. Is it not more likely to be your aunt, — returned unexpectedly from her journey? Very likely they may be some courtiers who, after supper, amuse themselves by running through the streets and rousing the country people. Yes, that is it—they are heard no more. They have passed on."

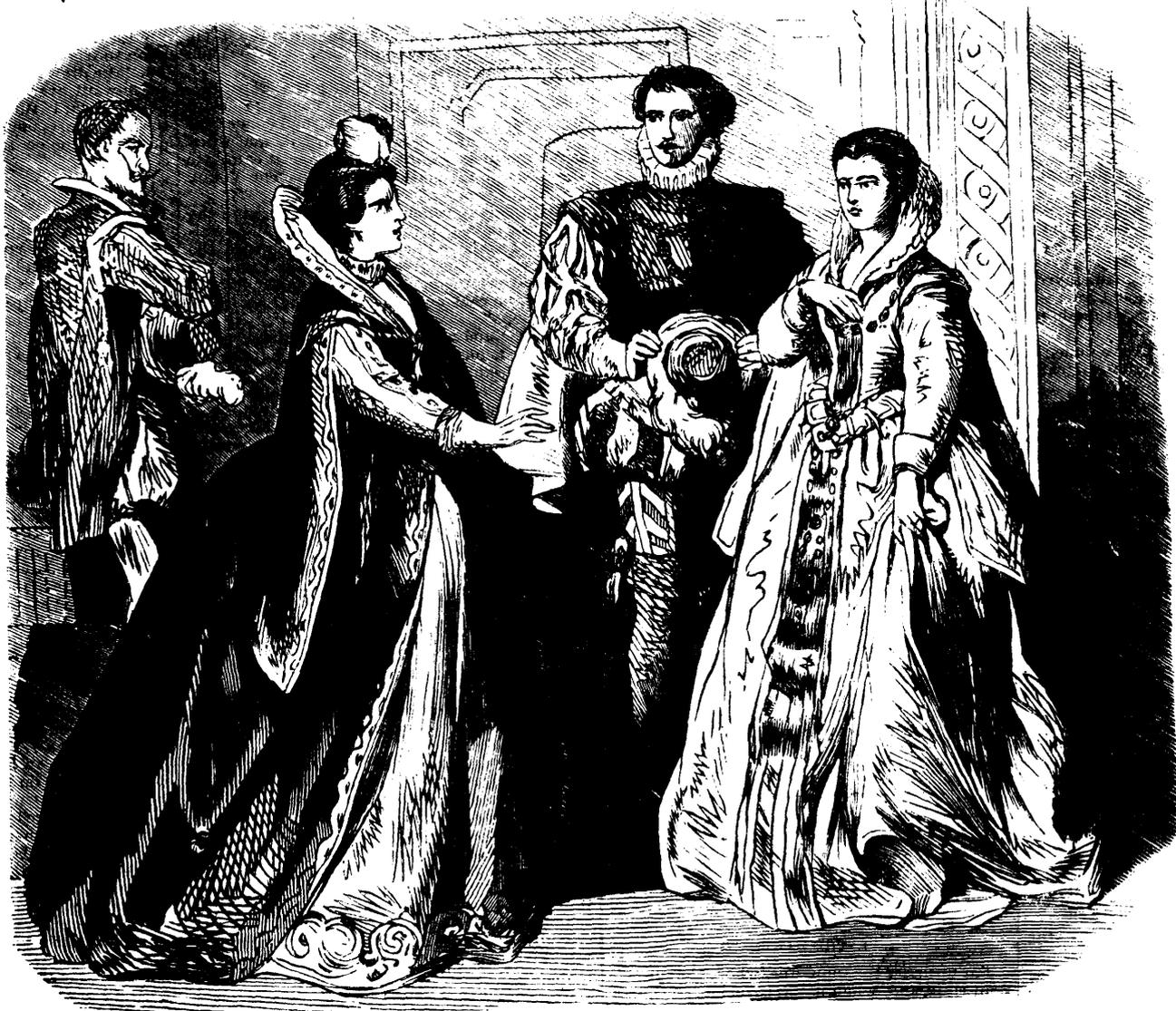
Lehardy was yet speaking when renewed blows, more numerous and violent than the first, shook the door.

"Do not be frightened, Mademoiselle," cried Raoul, "I hasten to ascertain for myself."

"Stop, Chevalier, I insist," quickly interrupted Diane. "It shall not be said that I was wanting in the duties of hospitality!"

At a sign from his mistress, Lehardy went out. The servant was absent scarcely a half-minute. When he returned to Diane's apartment, his face expressed both anger and indignation.

"Mademoiselle," said he, bowing low before the young girl, "what ought I to do? It is an



"MARIE PRESENTED HERSELF WITH A PROUD AND LOFTY GAIT, AND ANGRY BROW."

chevalier, nothing absolutely nothing, I repeat—recalls to my mind the chosen brother of my heart!... Just now, however, when you entered, I was the sport of a peculiar hallucination! I trusted in a supernatural apparition, I found again in you the Sforzi of former days! Alas! that false impression soon vanished like a dream! Pitiless death yield not up his prey!"

"Chevalier," continued Diane, after another and shorter pause, "it remains for me now, for I would not for anything in the world you should consider it your right to accuse me of inconstancy or trifling, it remains for me to enter upon a delicate and painful subject!... Be sufficiently just and generous, I pray you, not to attribute my language to a mean feeling of wounded self-esteem! It certainly is not my intention to accuse you; so far from that, I think only of justifying in your eyes the change that has taken place in myself. Chevalier, I am aware of the love you feel for one of the highest ladies in the kingdom. I know that all your feeling absorbed by this strong passion, are raised even to frenzy. Once more, Monsieur Sforzi, I do not blame you, I state a fact, I assert the motive of my indifference to your regard, nothing more.

"Besides, upon cool reflection, you are not culpable. How with your ardent ambition, could you resist the enticement of power, of wealth?"

"It would have been necessary for you to exert a superhuman strength. No, Monsieur, you are not to blame; you have only obeyed your instinct. If God grants my prayers, no cloud will ever obscure the splendor of your horizon."

Despite the firmness Diane assumed, despite her determined efforts to deceive herself even

weakness and a vice, each one of the qualities which places him above the mass. The consciousness of our strength leads us to injustice; of our intellect to pride; of our clear sightedness to deceit, Diane, if I love as few, I am sure, know how to love, it is because nature has given me a passionate disposition! The sensibility which this fatal quality gives to my mind, is alas! sadly compensated by the lamentable ease with which I am governed by my passions.

"So I confess, for a moment I was dazzled, fascinated, I will not say by love, that would profane the holy word, but by a feverish folly. You see, Diane, that I keep my promise of being sincere, that I seek neither to palliate nor to hide my fault. Ah, well! before God who hears me, and who sees my remorse, by my hope of eternal life, by my honor as a gentleman, never—even at the height of this guilty delirium—has my love for you ceased to be absolute, boundless! Yes, I understand your doubts, and I approve them! Indeed, how can one reconcile so much weakness on the one side with so much love on the other? I know not, Diane! But, I repeat, I swear it to you, I tell you the whole truth, nothing but the truth! One word more,—when I learned, scarcely an hour ago, of your arrival in Paris, my first thought was to confess my sin to you. Besides, Mademoiselle, my paroxysm of folly had but the duration of a dream; I have broken this very day the fragile bond of this scarcely formed intimacy. I have regained, not my freedom, for my heart never ceased to belong entirely to you, but my honesty."

Raoul's words betrayed such deep grief, entire frankness, and great repentance that his

unknown lady who imperiously demands to be admitted to your presence, and to see Chevalier Sforzi."

Diane allowed, without knowing it, a glance of tender reproach to fall upon Raoul, and addressing herself to Lehardy:—

"Bring in this lady," she answered, in a firm tone. "Reassure yourself, Monsieur Sforzi; I promise to use every effort to exculpate you. I will say to this lady the moment she enters, you came to take an eternal farewell from me, and you can prepare to return with her. She loves you,—she will forgive you."

"Then you have never loved me, since you are so pitiless," murmured Sforzi.

The young girl answered this ill-timed reproach with an icy glance.

At the same instant, Lehardy appeared at the door of the apartment, and announced with a loud voice:

"Her Highness the Duchesse de Monpensier!" Marie, like the Juno of the ancient poets, presented herself with a proud and lofty gait, and angry brow.

"Ten thousand devils! here is my gentle Sforzi safe and sound. I breathe easy!" cried De Maurevert, who followed the duchess. "By Venus and Cupid!" continued the adventurer, in a low, aside to himself, "the position of my brave companion may be for all that painful and embarrassing enough. These ladies are going to tease him in a rough manner. Bah! no matter; the bullies of Epernon would have killed him; the duchess and Diane will content themselves with scratching him; this dear Sforzi gains by the change. What are scratches compared with sabre-thrusts?" (To be continued.)

THE "PITCH-IN."

How did I get this mark on my cheek,
And the long black scar on my brow?
Oh, never mind—it would take a week,
And you can't want to know it now.
You do! Very well, you shall have it then,
All the same—a bit rough in the style;
For you can't spect stories from railway men,
Nor poems from sons of the soil.
You know as I drives the Hector, eh?
Express on the North great gauge;
I only drove one of the shorts that day,
And of course was much lower in wage.
We stopped at all stations from London out,
And we stopped at each signal in;
The work made a man thin, no matter how
stout,
And it never made stout the man thin.
For you see on that line there were tunnels a
score,
And cross-lines all forming a net;
And points in one tunnel where Jack Braddon
swore
We should some day be in for it yet.
Old Jack was my stoker—a "pitch-in" he
meant,
But he'd stoked for so many a year
That his mind had got sooty, his back rather
bent,
And his eyes had a fiery leer.
He was good mate and true, though, to me in
those days,
And many's the mile we have run.

Poor Jack! he was out and out queer in his
way,
But, there, I shall never be done.
There was down in the tunnel, and always had
been,
Beside of the switches, a hole,
With a lamp for the signals—a red and a
green,
You know—on the top of a pole.
And here, like a sentry, a signalman stayed,
Controlling each train that should run;
For the up that came on—there, it made me
afraid
To think what neglect would have done.
For, you see, while one up on the rail came
full dash,
Were the red lamp of danger not shown,
A down might run on, cross the metals, and—
crash!

How the line would with murder be strown!
And this in a tunnel with darkness and death—
This crash in a place black as ink;
Good God! just to think—there to give up
your breath!

I tell you I shuddered to think.
And many's the time I have drawn a long sigh
As we rattled along past the box,
After seeing the signalman right, going by,
At his post, where the wires he blocks.
There came though a day when, I don't know
how 'twere,
Jack Braddon was down in the dumps;
And I caught him a-looking at me with a
stare,
As he stopped just to throw in the lumps.
"What's up Jack?" I says, as we ran along
trim,
"You'd look 'most as green as a leek,
If that phisog of yours as Wallisend warn't
grim!

But there man, look! screw down the brake."
Jack screwed down the brake, and we came
to a stop,
And then, as we ran on once more,
Jack says to me soft, as he let his voice drop,
"Dick Dallas, who's on at the shore?"
"We called that the "shore," there—the
tunnel, I mean,
Where our line crossed the up, by the hole;
For it looked grim as any foul drain I have
seen,
And black as our tender of coal.
"Who's on at the shore, Jack?" I says, "why,
what odds?
There's steady chaps 'pointed, a heap."
"Right, Dick, then," says Jack, "and our
lives they are God's—
But suppose as that chap was asleep!"

We were dashing along in a pretty good race,
With the mouth of the tunnel ahead,
When Jack spoke; and then if the cutting—
each place—
Didn't spin round as if I'd been bled.
"Confound you!" I says, in a voice full of
spite,
As I whistled, and put on more steam;
For there in the distance the green shone "all
right,"
Though it seemed quite a sickening gleam.
"Here, shove on more coal," I says, "quick,
and don't talk;
Wait till out of this tunnel we get.
"You're a nice sorter mate," I says, "by a
long chalk—
Not that I at your gammon shall fret."
I hardly had roared out them words to poor
Jack,
When we dashed by the box with a leap;
And there in a moment, I saw, leaning back,
The signalman—helpless!—asleep!!
The next flash ahead showed an engine's two
lamps—
My God! I can't tell you my fears.
"Turn steam off, turn on!" Why, look here,
my face damps,
As I tell you the tale after years.
"Screw down! curse you, screw!" He had
done it before;
But what was the use of the brake?
The points they were clanking out loud, as I
swore.

And the tunnel was filled by a shriek
As the up engine's whistle rang out long and
shrill,
And then—can't you picture it well?
Two trains in a tunnel—a crash—then all still;
And then each loud agonized yell.
The cries of the frightened more loud than the
crushed;
And then the loud hiss of the steam,
As from out of the bruised pipes it sullenly
rushed;
And the wreck in the lamp's sickly gleam.

It's to me like a dream, as I giddily rise
From the midst of a great heap of coal;
My face and hands bleeding, all misty my eyes,
As I grope my way out from the hole.
Then I know I went back with the porters
and guards,
With the passengers trembling each man;
And struggled to drag out the injured there,
barred
By each splintered-up carriage and van.

Not any too soon, for before we had done
The furnaces fired the heap;
And racing and licking the walls as they'd run,
The flames roared and rushed with a leap.
I remember, too, now, all the wounded and
dead—
A score at the least when all told—
As they lay in the station; and then the guard
said,
"Where's Braddon?" and then I turned cold.
For it struck me at once, in the shore he must
lie,
With the flames roaring hard at his side;
And of all who were present not one dared to
try
To again tread that furnace-hole wide.
I thought of Jack's young 'uns, I thought of
his wife;
And then, with a "God help me!" ran
Down the great ruddy tunnel, now scared for
my life,
And climbed on, each corner to scan.

It was raging, that heat—it was scorching my
skin,
And all beaten I felt I must fall;
When from under an axle that wedged him
tight in,
I heard my poor mate's helpless wail.

He called me by name. Then through smoke
and through steam,
With the fire even singing my head,
I managed to free him; and out, by the gleam
Of the fire, I bore him—but dead.

For, before I had stumbled o'er sleeper and
rail,
One half of the distance, he sighed—
"Oh, God help my little ones!" Then, with
a wail—
"Oh, Polly," he whispered, and died.

You asked me about this old mark here—this
seam,
And the scar of the burn on my brow:
It was all in that pitch-in, that seems like a
dream,
A signalman sleeping—that's how!

GUNNAR: A NORSE ROMANCE.

PART I.

I. THE LAKE.

Far up under the snow-line, where the sun sel-
dom rises, and, when it rises, seldom sets, is a
lake. In the long summer days, grave fir-trees
and barren rocks, wearing on their brows the
wrinkles of centuries, reflect their rugged heads
in its mirror; but it is not often that gentle
spring and summer find their way hither on
their wanderings round the earth, and when
they do, their stay is brief. And again winter
blows his icy breath over the mountains; stiff
and dead lie the waters, and the fir-trees sigh
under the burden of the heavy snow.

At the northern end of the lake, the Yokul,
the son of winter, lifts his mighty head above
the clouds, and looks in cold contempt down
upon the world below; with his arms, the long,
freezing glaciers, he embraces the landscape
around him, hugging it tightly to his frosty
bosom.

On the eastern side the rocks open wide
enough for a little brook to escape from the
mountains into the valley; and as it runs chat-
tering between the ferns and under the tree-
roots, it tells them from year to year an endless
tale of the longings of the lake and of the des-
potic sway of the stern old Yokul. But once
every year, when spring comes with merry
birds and sunshine, the little brook feels itself
larger and stronger, and it swells with joy, and
bounds laughing over the crooked tree-roots and
throws in its wantonness a kiss of good-by to
its old friends, the ferns. Every spring the
brook is glad; for it knows it will join the river,
it knows it will reach the ocean.

"The flood is coming," said the old people in
the valley, and they built a dam in the open-
ing of the rocks, where the brook had flowed,
and stopped it. Farther down they put up a
little mill with a large water-wheel, which had
years ago belonged to another mill, so that the
whole now looked like a child with its grand-
father's hat and spectacles on.

"Now we will make the brook of some use,"
said they; and every time the lake rose to the

edge of the dam, they opened the flood-gate;
the water rushed down on the mill, the water-
wheel turned round and round, and the mill-
stones ground the grain into flour. So the brook
was made of use.

But up on the mountain the snow lay deep
yet, and the bear slept undisturbed in his wintry
cave. Snow loaded the branches of the pines,
and the ice was cold and heavy on the bosom of
the lake. For spring had not yet come there;
it always came first to the old folks down in the
valley. It was on its way now up the moun-
tain-side.

A mild breeze stole over the rocks and through
the forest, the old fir shook her branches and
rose upright. Masses of snow fell down on the
rock; they rolled and grew, as they rolled, until
with a heavy thump they reached the lake. A
loud crash shot through the ice from shore to
shore.

A few sunbeams came straggling in through
the forest, struck the fir, and glittered on the ice,
where the wind had swept it bare.

"Spring is coming," said the old tree, doubt-
ing whether to trust her own eyes or not; for
it was long since she had seen the spring. And
she straightened herself once more, and shook
her tough old branches again.

"Spring is coming," she repeated, still speak-
ing to herself; but the stiff pine, standing hard
by, heard the news, and she told it to the birch,
the birch to the dry bulrushes, and the bul-
rushes to the lake,

"Spring is coming," rustled the bulrushes,
and they trembled with joy. The lake heard it,
and its bosom heaved; for it had longed for
the spring. And the wind heard it, and whis-
pered the message of joy, wherever it came, to
the rocks, to the glaciers and to the old Yokul.
"Spring is coming," said the wind.

And the lake wondered; for it thought of the
swallows of last spring, and of what the swal-
lows had said. "Far from here," chirped the
swallows, "is the great ocean; and there are
no pine-trees there, no firs to darken the light of
the sun, no cold and haughty Yokul to freeze the
waters."

"No firs and no Yokul?" said the lake, wond-
ering, for it had never seen anything but the firs
and the Yokul.

"And no rocks to bound the sight and hinder
the motion," added the swallows.

"And no rocks," exclaimed the lake; and
from that time it thought of nothing but the
ocean.

For two long years the lake had been think-
ing, until at last it thought it would like to tell
somebody what it had been thinking; the old
fir looked so wise and intelligent, it felt sure
that the fir would like to know something about
the ocean. But then it wondered again what
it had to tell the fir about the ocean, and how
it should tell it, until at last spring came, and
it had not yet spoken. Then the fir spoke.

"What are you thinking about?" said the
fir.

"About the ocean," answered the lake.
"The ocean?" repeated the fir, in a tone of
inexpressible contempt; "what is the use of
thinking about the ocean? Why don't you think
of the mill?"

"Have you ever seen the ocean?" asked the
lake, timidly.

"Seen the ocean? No; but I have seen the
mill, and that is a great deal better." And the
fir shrugged her great shoulders, as if pitying
both the ocean and those that could waste a
thought on it.

Then for a long time the lake was silent, until
it felt that it could no longer hold its peace;
then it spoke. This time, it thought it would
speak to the pine; the pine was younger and
might perhaps itself once have had longings
for the ocean.

"Have you ever longed for the ocean?" said
the lake to the pine.

"I have longed for the mill," answered the
pine harshly, and its voice sounded cold and
shrill; "and that is what you had better long
for too," it added. The pine looked down into
the clear water, and saw its own image; it shook
its stately branches, and seemed greatly pleased
with its own appearance.

"But," began the lake again, "would you not
like to see the ocean?"

"No," cried the pine, "my father and my
father's father grew up, lived, and died here;
they never saw the ocean, and they were just as
well off without it. What would be the use of
seeing the ocean?"

"I do not know," sighed the lake, and was
silent; and from that time it never spoke about
the ocean, but it thought the more of it, and
longed for the spring and the swallows.

It was early in June. The sun rose and shone
warm on the Yokul, night and day. To the
lake it seldom came, only now and then a few
rays would go astray in the forest, peep forth
between the rugged trunks, and flash in the
water; then hope swelled in the bosom of the
lake, and it knew that spring was coming.

At last came spring, and with it the sea-winds
and the swallows. And every evening, when
the sun shone red and dreamy, the lake would
hear the sea-wind sing its strange songs about
the great ocean, and about the tempests that
lifted its waves to the sky; it would listen to
the swallows, as they told their wonder-stories
of the blooming lands beyond the ocean, where
there were no firs, no rocks, and no Yokul, but
in their stead palm-trees with broad glittering
leaves and sweet fruits, beautiful gardens and
sunshiny hills, looking out over the great bound-
less ocean.

"And," said the swallows, "there is never
any snow and ice there; always light and sun-
shine."

"Always light and sunshine?" asked the
lake, wondering; and its thoughts and its long-
ings grew toward the great ocean and that sun-
shiny land beyond it.

The sun rose higher and shone on the Yokul
warmer than ever before; the Yokul sparkled
and glittered in the sunshine; it was almost
merry, for it smiled at the sun's trying to melt
it.

"It is no use trying," said the Yokul; "I
have been standing here so long now, that it is
of no use trying to change me." But change it
did, although it was too stubborn to own it; for
it sent great, swelling rivers down its sides,
down into the valley, and into the lake.

And as the sun rose, the lake grew; for there
was strength in the sunshine, the old fir shook
her head, and shrugged her shoulders; but still
the lake kept growing, growing up over her feet,
until the old fir stood in the water above her
knees. Then she lost her patience.

"What in all the world are you thinking
about?" exclaimed the old tree.

"About the ocean," said the lake; "O that I
could see the ocean!"

"Come," whispered the sea-wind, dancing
down over the mountain-side, "come to the
ocean."

"Come," chirped the swallows, "come to the
ocean."

"I am coming," said the lake, and it rushed
upon the dam; the barrier creaked and broke.
The lake drew a full breath, and onward it leap-
ed, onward over the old mill it staggered and
fell; onward through fields and meadows,
through forests and plains; onward it rushed,
onward to the ocean.

II. HENJUMHEL.

Where the valley is narrowest, the mountain
steepest, and the river swiftest, lies Henjumhel.
The cottage itself is small and frail, and smaller
and frailer still it looks with that huge rock
stooping over it, and the river roaring and foam-
ing below; it seems almost ready to fall. The
river, indeed, seems to regard it as an easy prey,
for every spring, when it feels lusty and strong,
it draws nearer and nearer to the cottage, flings
its angry foam in through the narrow window-
holes, and would, perhaps, long ago have hurled
the moss-grown beams down over its brawling
rapids, if it had not been for the old rock, which
always frowns more sternly than ever when the
river draws too near the cottage. Perhaps it
was the same fear of the river which induced
Gunnar Thorsen Henjumhel, Thor Gunnarson's
father, to plant two great beams against the east-
ern and western walls; there is now but little
danger of its falling, and Thor Gunnarson has
lived there nearly ten years since his father,
Gunnar, felled that great fir, which felled him-
self, so that he had to be brought home to die.
Now, how old Gunnar, who was known to be
the best lumberman in all the valley, could have
managed to get that trunk over his neck, was a
matter which no one pretended to understand,
except Gunhild, his widow; and every one
knew that she was a wise woman. This was
what she said:—

"There was an old fir, the finest mast that
ever struck root on this side the mountains; but
the tree was charmed, and no one dared to fell
it: for it belonged to the Hulder,* and it was
from the top of that old fir that she called with
her loof her herds of motley cattle; many a
time she had been seen sitting there at eventide,
counting her flocks, and playing her mournful
loof until not a calf or a kid was missing. No
man had dared to fell the tree, for it would have
been that man's death. Then there came one
day a lumber-merchant from town; he saw the
mast and offered two hundred silver dollars for
it. Old Lars Henjum said he might have it, if
he could find the men who had the courage to
fell it. Now, that thing was never made which
Gunnar was afraid of, and he would like to see
the woman, said he, either with tail or without
it, who could scare him from doing what he had
made up his mind to do. So he felled the mast,
and paid with his life for his boldness. For be-
hind the mast stood the Hulder, and it was not
for nothing that the last stroke of the axe
brought the huge trunk down on the lumber-
man's head. Since then ill luck has ever fol-
lowed the family, and ever will follow it," said
the old Gunhild.

Before his father's death Thor Henjumhel had
been the first dancer and the best fighter in all
the valley. People thought him a wild fellow,
and the old folks shrugged their shoulders at
his bold tricks and at his absurd ideas of going
to sea to visit foreign countries, or of enlisting
as a soldier and fighting in unknown worlds.
Why did he not, like a sensible man, marry and
settle down as his father and his father's father
had done before him, and work like them for
his living, instead of talking of the sea and fore-
ign countries? This puzzled the good old folks
considerably; but in spite of their professed dis-
like for Thor, they could never help talking

* The Hulder is a kind of personification of
the forest; she is described as a maiden of wond-
erful beauty, and only in this respect different
from her mortal sisters, that she has a long
cow's-tail attached to her beautiful frame. This
is the grief of her life. She is always longing
for the society of mortals, often ensnares young
men by her beauty, but again and again the
tail interferes by betraying her real nature. She
is the protecting genius of the cattle.

† The loof is a straight birch-bark horn, wid-
ening toward one end. It is from three to six
feet long, and is used for calling the cattle home
at evening.

about him; and, in spite of all his wildness, they could not help owning that there really was something about him which made even his faults attractive. Strange it was, also, that, although Thor was only a houseman's son, many a gardman's wife had been seen smiling graciously upon him: when her fair daughter was leaning on his arm in the whirling spruce-dance. But since the day he had found his father in the forest, bloody and senseless, under the Hulder's fir, no one recognized in him the old Thor. He settled down in the little cottage by the river, married according to his mother's wish, worked as hard and as steadily as a plough-horse, and nevermore mentioned the sea or foreign countries. Old Gunhild was happier than ever; for although she had lost her husband (poor soul, anybody might have known that he would come to a sudden end), she had found her son. And as for Birgit, her daughter-in-law, she was the gentlest and most obedient creature that ever was, and did exactly as Gunhild bade her; thus they lived together in peace and unity, and were not even known to have had a single quarrel, which is a most remarkable circumstance, considering that they were daughter-in-law and mother-in-law, and lived under the same roof and even in the same room. But Birgit had as firm a belief in Gunhild's superiority of sense and judgment as she had in the old silver-clasped Bible or in Martin Luther's Catechism, and would no more have thought of questioning the one than the other. Her husband she had never known in his wild days, and although she had heard people tell about the gay and daring lad, who could kick the rafter in the loftest ceiling, and whose arm the proudest maiden was fain to rest, she somehow never could persuade herself to believe it. To her he always remained the stern, silent Thor, to whom she looked up with an almost reverential admiration, and whose very silence she considered the most unmistakable proof of superior wisdom.

Nearly a year had Birgit been at Henjumhel, and Christmas came round again. It was on Christmas eve that Gunnar Thorson was born; for of course the boy was christened Gunnar, after his grandfather. Thor came home late from the woods that night. Gunhild was standing in the door, looking for him.

"It is cold to-night, mother," said he, pulling off his bear skin mittens, and putting his axe up in its old place under the roof.

"You may well say so, son," said Gunhild. Thor fixed an inquiring look on his mother's face. She read the look, and answered it before he had time to ask.

"A boy," she said, "a beautiful child."

"A boy," repeated Thor, and his stern features brightened as he spoke. He took off his cap before he went in that night. Gunhild followed.

"Wonderful child, indeed," said she, "born on a Christmas eve." Then she went out again, took a large knife, polished it until it shone like silver, and stuck it with the point in the door.

"Now, thank God," muttered she to herself, "the child is safe and no hill-people will dare to change it."

Days came and days went, and a month had passed. The child grew, and the mother faded; and every night when Thor came home from his work he looked more and more troubled. Gunhild saw it.

"When spring has crossed the mountains, she will get well," said she.

But spring came; the sun shone bright and warm on the Yokul and the western glaciers; the icy peaks reflected its light into the narrow valley, and the Yokul sparkled like a crystal palace.

"Now spring is coming," said Gunhild. It was early in June, and spring's first flower came just in time to adorn Birgit's coffin. All the neighbors were at the funeral; and no man, who saw the dense crowd in the churchyard, would have supposed that this was the funeral of a houseman's wife. When the ceremony was over, the pastor came up to shake hands with Thor and Gunhild.

"A hard loss, Thor," said the pastor.

"A hard loss, father," said Thor.

"Unexpected?"

"Unexpected. Mother thought spring would make her well." His lip quivered, and he turned abruptly round.

"And spring did make her well, Thor," said the pastor warmly, grasping Thor's hand and giving it a hearty parting shake.

If the cottage of Henjumhel had ever seen such wild deeds as it did while that boy was growing up, it surely must have been very long ago. For there was no spot from the chimney-top to the cellar to which he did not scramble.

"And it certainly is a wonder," said his grandmother, "that he does not break his neck, and tear the house down ten times a day. The cottage contained only one room, with an open hearth in a corner, and two beds, one above the other, both built between the wall and two posts

* In the rural districts of Norway there is a sharp distinction between a "gardman," or a man who owns his land, and a "houseman," who pays the rent of his house and an adjoining piece of land large enough to feed a cow or two, by working a certain number of weeks or months a year for the gardman.

† The hill-people are a kind of ugly pygmies with big heads and small bodies. They often steal new-born infants and place their own in the plundered cradle. Such changelings have large glassy eyes with a blank stare, and eat immensely, but never grow very large, and can never learn to speak.

reaching from the floor to the roof. There was no ceiling, but long smoky beams crossing the cottage. A few feet above these were nailed a dozen boards or more, crosswise from one rafter in the roof to another on the opposite side. This is called Hemsedal, or the bed where strangers sleep. There the beggar and the wanderer may always find a sack of straw and a bed of pine branches whereon to rest their weary limbs. These beams were Gunnar's special delight. He was not many years old, before he could get up there by climbing the door; each beam had its own name from stories which his grandmother had told him, and he sat there and talked to them for hours together. On the one nearest the hearth was an old saddle which had been hanging there from immemorial times; its name was "Fox," and on it he rode every day over mountains, seas, and forests to free the beautiful princess, who was guarded by the Troid with three heads.

In the winter, as soon as the short daylight faded, he would spend hours in Hemsedal; and to his grandmother's inquiry about what he was doing there, he would always answer that he was looking at the dark. Although Gunhild never liked to have the boy sit up there, and often was herself frightened at the strange things he said, she never dared bid him come down; for her superstition peopled the cottage as well as all nature round her with elves and fairy spirits, whom she would not for any price offend. They might, indeed, some time in the boy's life, prove a potent protection to him.

There was only one thing which Gunnar liked better than riding Fox and looking at the dark, and that was to listen to grandmother's stories; for grandmother could tell the most wonderful stories. Thor was very fond of his son, but it was not his way to show his fondness, and still less to speak of it; but, though nothing was said, it was always understood that he wished to have the boy near him in the evening when the day's work was done. Then he would light his old clay-pipe, and take his seat on one side of the hearth; on the low hearth-stone itself his mother would sit, and little Gunnar on the floor between them. It was on such evenings, while Thor was busily smoking and carving some wooden box or spoon, and grandmother knitting away on her stocking, that she would tell her stories about Necken,* who had loved in vain, and plays his sad tunes in the silent midsummer night; such she knew also of the Hulder, whose beauty is greater than mortal eye ever beheld. But the finest story of all was one about the poor boy who walked thousands of miles, through endless forests and over huge mountains to kill the Troid, and free the beautiful princess. Gunnar never could weary of that story, and grandmother had to tell it over and over again.

One night Gunhild had just told of the boy and the princess for the third time. The fire on the hearth threw its red lustre upon the group. There was no candle or lamp in the room, only a drowsy stick of fir flickered from a crevice in the wall. Gunnar sat staring into the dying embers.

"What are you staring at, boy?" said his father.

"O father, I see the Troid, and the boy, and the princess, and all of them, right there in the fire," cried Gunnar eagerly.

"You had better go to bed," said Thor.

Now Gunnar would have liked to hear something more about the poor boy, but he durst not disobey; so he reluctantly climbed up to his grandmother's bed, undressed, and went to sleep. But that night he dreamed that the cottage was an enchanted palace, that his grandmother was an enchanted princess, and his father the three-headed Troid who kept the charm. The next morning he cautiously suggested the idea to his grandmother, whom he frightened so thoroughly that she promised herself never in her life to tell the child any Troid story again. And she never did. But the story had made too deep an impression upon the boy's mind ever to be forgotten. He tried repeatedly to learn more from his grandmother about the later fate of the poor boy and the princess; but the grandmother always lost her temper whenever he approached the subject, and stubbornly refused to satisfy his thirst for knowledge. Then he determined to make explorations at his own risk; for he knew it would be of no use asking his father. There must surely be more than one beautiful princess in the world, thought he, and more than one Troid, too; and he knew a boy who would not be afraid to meet any number of Trolds, for the sake of one beautiful princess.

Few people ever came to Henjumhel, for it was very much out of the way, being far from the churchroad, and the river was too swift to be crossed so far up. Farther down the current was not so strong, and there a skilful boatman could row across without danger. Now and then a beggar would find his way up to the cottage, and, as these visits brought many bits of pleasant gossip and parish news, and, moreover, formed Gunhild's only connection with the world outside, through the long dark winter, they were always gratefully accepted, and the visitor never went away unrewarded. Of course Thor never knew of what was going on in the valley, and every girl in the parish might have married, and every other man emigrated, for all he cared. He had enough to do with his

* As the Hulder is the spirit of the forest, so Necken is the spirit of the water. He lives in the wildest cataracts, where he plays his violin, or, according to others, a harp, and he listens closely may hear his wonderful music above the roaring of the water.

own affairs, he said, and so had his neighbor with him. This was a point of constant disagreement between Gunhild and her son; for she was naturally of a social disposition, and led this lonely life more from necessity than from choice. As for Gunnar, he knew nothing about the people in the valley, and consequently felt no interest in them; but still he enjoyed the visits of the beggars as much as his grandmother; he always looked upon them with a kind of reverential awe, and would not have been in the least surprised if he had seen their rags suddenly turn into gold and purple. The boy had lived so long in a world of his own imagination, and had had so very little to do with the world of reality, that he was not able to distinguish the one from the other.

III.—THE GARDMAN FOLKS.

About a mile down the river, where the valley opens widely toward the fjord and the sunshine, lies Henjum, the largest estate within hundreds of miles. Atle Larsson Henjum is the first man in the whole parish, and even the pastor himself pays him his regular visits after the Christmas and Easter offerings. In church he always takes the foremost seat, nearest the pulpit, and the pastor seldom commences his sermon before Atle is in his seat. On the offering-days he is always the first man at the altar. Atle Henjum is only a peasant, but he is proud of being a peasant. "My father and my father's father, and again his father, as far back as Saga records, were peasants," he would say, "so I do not see why I should wish to be anything else." Atle always likes to speak of his father and his father's father, and he is sure never to think of doing anything which they have not done before him. It is because his father always had occupied the foremost seat in church that he feels bound to do it; as for himself, it makes no difference to him where he sits. Everybody who could remember Lars Atleson, Atle's father, said that never had a son followed more closely in father's footsteps than Atle did. As far back in time as memory goes, Atle's ancestors had lived on Henjum, and their names had been alternately Lars Atleson and Atle Larsson; consequently, when Atle's son was born, he would probably rather have drowned him than given him any other name than Lars.

Henjum holds as commanding a position over the rest of the valley as its lord over his fellow-parishioners. The fresh-painted, red, two-story building, with its tall chimneys and slated roof, looks very stately indeed on the gently sloping hillside, with the dark pine forest behind it and the light green meadows below.

Atle Henjum owned a good deal more land than he could take care of himself; more than half of his estate he leased to his housemen, in lots large enough to hold a cottage and feed one or two cows. These housemen, of which Thor Henjumhel was one, paid the lease of their land by working a certain number of weeks on the "gard," as they called the estate to which they and their lots belonged. Atle himself was called the gardman, and his family the gardman folks.

Atle's father and father's father had been hard workers, and so was Atle himself; and the housemen who expected to remain long in his service must follow his example; next, he must have no will of his own, but do exactly as he was told, without saying one word for or against. To this last rule, however, there was one exception; Thor Henjumhel was a man of as few words as his master, but of all the housemen he was the only one who was allowed to speak his opinion, or, more, who was requested to do so. There was a singular kind of friendship between the two, founded on mutual respect. Atle knew well that Thor was as stiff and at bottom as proud as himself, and Thor had the same conviction with regard to Atle. Seldom was any new land broken, a fallow field sown, or a lumber bargain settled before Thor's opinion was heard.

Atle Henjum had two children, Lars, the boy, was by two years the older; he was of just the same age as Thor's son, Gunnar. The daughter's name was Gudrun.

The Henjum estate stretch straight to the river, on either side of which was a boat-house, one belonging to Henjum, and the other to Rimul. Rimul was a large and fine estate, though not quite as large as Henjum; the house was only one story, and did not look half as stately as the big Henjum building; but it had such a friendly and cheerful look about it, that nobody could help wishing to step in, when he chanced to pass by. Ingeborg Rimul herself was the stateliest woman you might see; indeed, she was not Atle Henjum's sister for nothing. Atle had never had more than this one sister, and while she was at home he had always been proud of her stately growth and fair appearance. Of course Ingeborg had a suitor for every finger, while she was a maiden; but when anybody asked her why none of the young lads found favor with her (and there were many mothers of promising sons who put that question to her), she always answered that she was in no hurry. Then one day a young man from the city came to visit the parsonage. He had studied for the ministry at the University of Christiania, wore a long silk tassel in his cap, and spectacles on his nose. His name was Mr. Vogt. He had not been long in the valley before he discovered in church a girl with long golden hair and a pair of eyes which interested him exceedingly. Ingeborg received many invitations from the parsonage in those days, even so many that Atle began to suspect mischief, and forbade her going there altogether.

Ingeborg of course dared not disobey her brother. She never went to the parsonage again while Mr. Vogt was there. But somebody thought he had seen a long silk tassel and a pair of bright blue eyes down on the shore late one dreamy summer evening; and another, who thought he had seen more, was not sure but it was fair Ingeborg's golden head he had recognized resting on Mr. Vogt's bosom one moonlight night, under the great birch-tree by the river. Whether true or not, sure it was that all the valley was talking about it; but strange to say, the last to hear it and the last to believe it was Atle Henjum. In fact, it made him so angry, when somebody congratulated him on his new brother-in-law, that no one from that day dared mention Vogt's name in his presence. But Atle also had his eyes opened before long. For one day Mr. Vogt came marching up the hills to Henjum, and asked to see Atle. What passed between them no one ever knew; all that was known is that Mr. Vogt left the parsonage that very night, and went back to the city; that Ingeborg, against her custom, did not appear either at church or anywhere else for several weeks, and that the next time she did appear, people thought she looked a little paler, and carried her head somewhat higher than usual. Before the year passed she was married to Sigurd Rimul, who was several years younger than herself. Atle made the wedding, and a grand wedding it was; it lasted from Wednesday till Monday; there was drinking and dancing, and both pastor and judge were invited. Never had a bride on this side of the mountain brought such a dowry; there was wool and linen and silver enough to cover the road from the church to the bridal-house; so she had every reason to feel happy, and, if she did not, it was not her fault, for she tried hard. Since that time Mr. Vogt was never seen, and seldom heard of in the valley. The parson told somebody who asked for him, that he had married a wealthy man's daughter, and was settled as pastor of a large parish near the city.

It was now about seven or eight winters since Ingeborg's wedding; if she had not known sorrows before, as indeed she had, her married life did not begin with too bright a prospect. Sigurd was a good husband; so everybody said, and no one was readier to praise him than his wife. People said, however, that Ingeborg still had everything her own way, and that Sigurd had "to dance to his wife's pipe." But if anybody had dared hint such thing in Sigurd's presence, there is no knowing what he might have done; for kind and gentle as he was, the saying was, that he had one tender point, and when any one touched that he was wilder than a bear. Sigurd was proud of his wife; he thought her the most beautiful and most perfect woman who ever lived; and he would not have been afraid to strike the king himself, if he had gainsaid him on that point. Still, there were those in the parish who were of a different opinion; for rejected suitors are not apt to make very warm friends afterwards, and their mothers and sisters still less so. To Ingeborg it mattered little what people said; she carried her head as high after her wedding as she had done in her maiden days and shook hands with the parishioners on Sundays after service as friendly as ever. They something happened which made a change in her life.

Erick Skogstod had been one of Ingeborg's warmest admirers. She had refused him twice, but still he did not despair. He was present at her wedding, and had been drunk even on the second day. The sixth winter after, he invited Sigurd and Ingeborg to his own wedding. They both rode to church with the bridal party, but Ingeborg excused herself from coming in the evening; she could not leave her baby, she said; so Sigurd went alone. The second night more than half of the guests were drunk, and even the bridegroom himself had clearly looked "a little too deep into the glass." Sigurd was displeased. He left the hot, noisy hall, where the din was almost deafening, and went out into the yard to cool himself. The moon shone bright, and there was a clear frost. He had meant to steal away unnoticed, when the bridegroom and three or four guests met him in the yard and stopped him. "Where is your wife?" asked Erick.

"She is at home."

"Why didn't she come? Perhaps she thought herself too good to come to Erick Skogstod's wedding."

"She could not leave her baby," replied Sigurd calmly, taking no notice of the latter remark.

"Could not leave her baby, hey?" cried Erick; "if she cannot leave her baby, then you may tell her from Erick Skogstod not to send her baby to a wedding alone another time." And seizing Sigurd with both hands by the coat-collar, he thrust his face close up to his and burst into a wild laughter.

"What do you mean?" said Sigurd, releasing himself from Erick's grasp.

"I mean that you are a baby, and that you had better go home and put one of your wife's petticoats, and not come here and mingle with men." Erick was very much amused at his own taunts, and turned round to his attendants, laughing. They all laughed and looked scornfully at Sigurd. His arm trembled; he struggled hard to keep calm.

"You are afraid now, Sigurd Rimul," cried the bridegroom, again seizing him by the collar.

"Never shall you see the day when Sigurd Rimul is afraid." A heavy blow sent Erick headlong to the ground; for a moment he lay silent and moved not a finger; then with a fearful yell he bounded to his feet, lifted his huge

fast, and rushed furiously against his opponent; but Sigurd was prepared, and warded off the blow with his arm. Erick foamed with rage; he felt for his knife, but fortunately it was gone, or that night must have been a bloody one. Then with both arms he caught his guest round the waist, and tried to throw him. The other struggled to free himself; but before he succeeded, Erick had tripped him, and his head struck heavily against the frozen ground, with Erick's large body upon it. Erick rose and looked at Sigurd: Sigurd did not rise.

It was about midnight. Ingeborg was sitting up with her sick child; she heard a noise in the hall, laid the child on the bed, and opened the door. Four men came into the room, bearing something between them. They laid her husband upon the bed. "Almighty God, what have you done with him?" she shrieked.

"He quarrelled with Erick Skogstod and got the worst of it," said one of the men.

Sigurd was never himself again. The doctor said that he had received a severe shock of the brain. He was like a child, and hardly knew anybody. A year after he died, and before long the oldest child followed him.

Four winters had passed since Ingeborg buried her husband; still she was the same stately woman to look at, and people saw little change in her. Now she lived as a rich widow on a large estate, and again people began to whisper of suitors and wooing. But they soon ceased, for the widow of Rimul was not backward in showing the lads in the valley that she had not changed her mind since her maiden days.

Ragnhild Rimul, Ingeborg's daughter, was fairer than Spring. If Ingeborg's hair had been fair and golden, her daughter's was fairer still; if Ingeborg's eyes had been deep and blue, Ragnhild's were deeper and bluer. The young birch is light and slender; and when by chance it grows alone in the dark, heavy pine forest, it looks lighter and more slender. Ragnhild was a birch in the pine-forest. Spring and sunshine were always about her.

The sitting-room at Rimul was large and light. The windows looked east and south, and the floor was always strewn with fresh juniper-needles. In the corner between the windows was a little book-shelf with a heavy silver-clasped Bible, a few hymn-books, and a "house-poster," or a book of daily devotions. Under the book-shelf was what Ragnhild called her corner, where she had a little chair, and kept her shells, pieces of broken china, and other precious things. There was no stove in the room, but an open hearth, before which stood a large arm-chair, which in former times had belonged to Sigurd's father and grandfather, and had been standing there ever since. The room had a ceiling of unpainted planks, and the timber walls still retained the pleasant color of fresh-hewn pine beams. A door led from the sitting-room into the chamber where Ingeborg and her daughter slept. In another building across the yard were the barns, the stables, and the servant-hall. The maids slept in the cow-stable which almost rivalled the dwelling-house in comfort and neatness. Behind the buildings the land rose more abruptly towards the mountains, but the slope was overgrown with thick-leaved groves, whose light foliage gradually shaded into the dark pine forest above. The fields of Rimul reached from the mansion down to where the river joined the fjord.

Sunshine had always been scarce there in the valley; Rimul, however, had the advantage of all other places, for the sun always came first there and lingered longest. Thus it had sun both within and without.

IV.—LAYS AND LEGENDS.

Old Gunhild had been a good singer in her time; indeed, she had quite a fine voice even now, perhaps a little husky at times and rather low for a woman. But Thor and Gunnar, at least, both thought it wonderfully melodious, and there is no doubt but it was remarkably well adapted to the wild and doleful lays it was her wont to sing.

One winter night the fire burnt cheerfully on the hearth, and they were all gathered round it as usual; Thor smoking, and working at his spoons and boxes, Gunnar eagerly listening to his grandmother's stories.

"Sing, now, grandmother," demanded the boy, as a marvellous Trolld-story had just been finished.

"Very well. What do you want?" For grandmother was always ready to sing.

"Something about the Hulder." And she sang of a young man who lay down in the woods to sleep, but could not sleep for the strange voices he heard from flower and river and mountain; then over them all stole the sad, joyful yearning tones of the Hulder's loor; and anon he beheld a beautiful maiden in scarlet boddice and golden hair, who fled before him night and day through the forest, till he heard the sound of the Sabbath-bell. He whispered the name of Christ:—

"Then saw I the form of the maiden fair
Vanish as mist in the morning air.

"With the last toll of the Sabbath-bell
Gone was the maiden and broken the spell.

"O young lads and maidens, beware, beware,
In the darksome woods,
The treacherous Hulder is playing there,
In the darksome woods."

After running through some wild mournful notes, Gunhild's voice gradually sank into a low, inarticulate murmur. Thor's box was no nearer done than when the song commenced, and his pipe had gone out. Gunnar's eyes rest-

ed dreamily in the fire. For a while they all sat in silence. Gunhild was the first to speak.

"What are you staring at, child?" said she. Gunnar did not hear.

"What are you looking for in the fire, child?" repeated the grandmother a little louder. Gunnar seemed to wake up as from some beautiful dream, which he tried to keep, but could not.

"Why, grandmother, what did you do that for?" said he, slowly and reluctantly turning his eyes from the flickering flames.

"Do what, child?" asked his grandmother, half frightened at the strange look in his eyes.

"You scared her away," said he gloomily.

"Scared whom away?"

"The Hulder with scarlet bodice and golden hair."

"Bless you, child! Whatever you do, don't look at me in that way. Come, let the Hulder alone, and let us talk about something else."

"Another story?"

"As you please, another story."

But Gunhild knew very little about other things than Necks, Hulders, and fairies, and before long she was deep in another legend of the same nature. This was what she told:—

"He who is sorrowful knows Necken, and Necken knows him best who is sorrowful. When the heart is light, the ear is dull; but when the eye is dimmed by the hidden tear, then the soul is in the ear, and it can hear voices in the forest and sea which are dumb to the light-hearted. I remember the day when old Gunnar first told me that I was fair, and said his heart and his cottage would always have a place for me. I was gay and happy then; my heart danced in my bosom, and my feet beat the time on the ground. I went to the old cataract. It cared little for my joy; it looked cold and dreary.

"Two years from that day the church-bells tolled over my first-born. My heart was heavy, and my eye so hot that it burned the tear before it could reach the eyelid. Again I sat on Necken's stone at the cataract, and from the waters arose strange music, sad but sweet and healing, like the mild shower after the scorching heat. Then the tears started and I wept, and the music wept too; we wept together, and neither of us knew who stopped first. Since then I have always loved the old cataract; for now I know that it was true, as the legends say, that Necken plays his harp there amid the roar of the waters. And Necken knows sorrow; he loved, but he loved in vain.

"Love is like fire, child; love is like fire. Wounds of fire are hard to heal; harder still are those of love. Necken loved a mortal maiden; fair was she like the morning, but fickle as the sea-wind. It was a midsummer morning he saw her last, and midsummer night she had promised to wed him. Midsummer night came, but she came not. It is said to be years and years ago; but still the midsummer night has never missed him, as he raises his head above the water, looking for his bride, when the midnight hour strikes. Strangely, then, do the mournful chords tremble through the forests in the lonely night; for he calls his bride. If they ever reached her ear, no one knows; but that lad or that maiden, who comes to the cataract at the midnight hour, will hear the luring music, and he who loves in truth and loves in sorrow will never go away un comforted. Many a fair maiden has spoken there the desire of her heart, and has been heard; many a rejected wooer came there with a heart throbbing with love and heavy with sorrow; he has called for help and help he has found, if he was worthy thereof. For Necken knows the heart of man; he rewards him who is worthy of reward, and punishes him who deserves punishment. Many a lad wooed a maiden, but loves her gold. Such also have sought the cataract at the midnight hour; they have never since been seen, for they never returned. An invisible arm has hurled them down into the whirling pools, and their cries have been heard from afar, as they were seized by the seething rapids.

"Long ago, when my forehead was smooth like the fjord in the summer morning, when my cheek was as fresh as the early dawn, and my hair like a wheat-field in September, then I knew a lad whom no one will forget who had ever seen him; and that lad was Saemund of Fagerlien. Never eagle, however high its flight, was safe from his arrow; never bear made his den too deep for him to find it; never a beam was built beyond the reach of his heel.

"Saemund's father was a houseman; had no farm for his son, no silver spoons or costly linen. But if you wanted to see sport, you ought to have gone to the dance, when Saemund was there. Never that girl lived, gardman's or houseman's daughter, who did not feel her heart leap in her bosom when he offered to lead her in the lusty spring-dance. He never challenged a man to fight but too late that man repented who offered him a challenge.

"The sun shone on many fair maidens in those days; but strength is falling now, and beauty is fading, and the maidens nowadays are not like those who lived before them. But even then no lad who had cast his eyes on Margit of Elgerfold would wish to look at another maiden. For when she was present, all others faded, like a cluster of pines when a white birch sprouts in the midst of them. Thorkild of Elgerfold was at that time surely the proudest, and, likely enough, also among the richest in the parish. He had no other child than Margit, and there was no lad in the valley he thought good enough for her.

"I have often heard old and truthful people say, that there were more wooers in one week at Elgerfold in those days than all the other

maidens of the valley saw all the year round. Old Thorkild, Margit's father, did not fancy that wooing-business; but Margit had always been used to have her own way; so it was just as well to say nothing about it.

"Then came winter, and with winter came gay feasts, weddings, and merry dancing-parties. Of course Margit was there, and as for Saemund, no wedding or party was complete without him; they might as well have failed to ask the bridegroom. But people would say, that during that winter he led Margit of Elgerfold in the dance perhaps a little oftener than was agreeable to old Thorkild, her father. He was only a houseman's son, you know, and she was a rich man's daughter. And if you did not try to shut your eyes, you could not help noticing that Margit's sparkling eyes never shone as brightly as when Saemund asked her to dance, and the smile on her lips never was sweeter and happier than when she rested on his arm.

"When winter was over, Margit went to the saeter* with the cattle; the saeter-road was quite fashionable that summer; probably it was more frequented than even the highway. And a gay time they had up there; for there was hardly a lad, gardman's or houseman's son, who did not visit the saeter of Elgerfold, and especially on Saturday eves, when scores of young men would chance to meet on the saeter green. The girls from the neighboring saeters would be sure to end with a whirling spring-dance. But one was missed in the number of Margit's visitors, and that happened to be he who would have been most welcome. Saemund had shouldered his gun and spent the long summer days hunting. He had never been at the saeter of Elgerfold; and as there were no parties at that season, he and Margit hardly ever saw each other.

"People were busy talking at that time, as people always are. Why did Margit, said they, before summer was over, dismiss every one of her suitors, even the sons of the mightiest men in the parish? Of course, because she had taken it into her foolish head, that she wanted somebody who did not want her, and the only one who did not seem to want her was Saemund of Fagerlien. Now parish talk is not altogether to be trusted, but neither is it altogether to be disbelieved; for there always is some truth at the bottom, and the end showed that this was not gathered altogether from the air; either, as the saying is. Margit had gold, and she had beauty; but for all that she was but a weak woman, and what woman's heart could resist those bottomless eyes of Saemund's? Surely, Margit had soon found that she could not. So she thought the matter over, until at last she discovered that there was hardly one thought in her soul which was not already his. But what should she do? "Here at home he will never come to see me," said she to herself, "for he knows father would not like it. I had better go to the saeter, and have the boys come to visit me there; then, when all the rest go, he will hardly be the only one to stay away." But summer came and went, and saeter-time was nearly gone. Yet he had not come. "This will not do," thought Margit; "perhaps he imagines I intend to marry some one of the gardman's lads, since they come here so often." And she dismissed them all. Now he must surely come. But autumn came, and the fall storms, the messengers of winter, swept through the valley and stripped the forest of its beauty. Yet he had not come. It was cold on the saeter then, and thick clouds in the east foreboded snow. Then old Thorkild himself went to the saeter, and wanted to know why his daughter had not come home with the cattle long ago. It certainly was madness to stay in the mountains now, so late in the season, when the hoar frost covered the fields and the pasture was nearly frozen. Perhaps the hoar frost had touched Margit's cheeks too, for the spring-like roses were fading fast, and the paleness of winter was taking their place. "She has caught a bad cold," said her father; "she stayed too late in the mountains."

"People seldom saw Saemund that summer. All they knew was that he was in the highlands hunting. Now and then he would appear in the valley at the office of the judge with two or three bear-skins, and receive his premiums. Nobody could understand why he did not go to the Elgerfold saeter, like all the other lads; for there was no doubt he would be welcome. But Saemund himself well knew why he stayed away. If he had not felt that Margit of Elgerfold was dearer to him than he even liked to own to himself, he might perhaps have seen her oftener. It is only a foolish fancy, thought he, at first; when summer comes it will pass away. But summer came, and Saemund found that his foolish fancy was getting the better of him. He did not know what to make of himself. How could he, a low-born houseman's son, have the boldness to love the fairest and richest heiress in all the valley? How could he ever expect to marry her? The thought was enough to drive him mad.

"Winter came, and Margit was waiting still. Winter went; Saemund had not yet come. Spring dawned, the forest was budding, and midsummer drew near.

"There is no other way," thought Margit, as

* Saeter is a place in the mountains where the Norwegian peasants spend their summers, pasturing their cattle. In the interior districts the whole family generally goes to the saeter, while in the lower valleys they send only their daughters and one or more maid-servants.

† A common expression in Norway for something that seems to have originated without any apparent cause or foundation.

she sat in her garret-window and saw the silence of the midsummer night stealing over the fjord, the river, and the distant forests. Even the roaring of the cataract sounded half smothered and faint. "There is no other way," repeated she. "I will try, and if I am wrong—well, if I am wrong, then may God be merciful to me." She went to the door of her father's room and listened; he slept. She wavered no longer. The cataract was not far away; soon she was there. The doleful cry of an owl was the first sound to break the silence; she stopped and shuddered, for the owl is a prophet of evil. Then an anxious hush stole through the forest, and in another moment the silence was breathless; Margit listened; she heard but the beating of her own heart, then something like a strange whispering hum below, overhead, and all around her. She felt that it was the midnight hour coming. It seemed to her that she was moving, but she knew not whether her feet carried her. When her sight cleared, she found herself at the edge of the cataract. There she knelt down. "Necken," prayed she, "hear me, oh hear me! Margit's heart is full of sorrow, and none but thou canst help her. Long has she loved Saemund, long has she waited, but he would not come." "Margit, he has come," whispered a well-known voice in her ear, and Margit sank in Saemund's arms. Long had she waited, at last he had come; and as their hearts and their lips met, they heard and they felt the sounds of wonderful harmony. It was the tones of Necken's harp. Both had sought and both had found him.—*Hjalmar Hjorth Boyesen.*

A SUMMER SONG.

BY SHELDON CHADWICK.

'Twas in the golden prime of June,
The flowers were hung with diamond drops,
And birds atilt in the tree tops
Sang till the woods were all in tune.

Warm goddess dreaming airily
Upon her couch in the balmy East,
Like Rosy Danae of Love's feast,
Clasping the green earth fairly.

Crushing in earth's wreathed cup rich wine,
Until her goblet gleamed brimful,
Never was bride so beautiful,
The dainty reveller seemed divine.

Rich strains of Orphean music stole
Out of the copses morn and even,
The vocalizing light of heaven
Awoke the Memnon of each soul.

She twined gay garlands 'mid her curls,
While tripping over cowslip bowers;
Her gracious smile fell on her flowers,
Like some coy virgin's on her pearls.

The sunbeams hung in blazing sheaves
Among the glad breeze-billowed corn
The rich-hued butterfly was born,
And soft winds kissed the panting leaves.

Take heed where'er such raptures fall,
Such glowing love is passing sweet,
As mourning dew-drops fair and fleet,
And tempered May-Love best of all.

A CURIOUS CASE.

In that quiet time of year when none of the dangerous and treacherous little storms so frequent in the Mediterranean—known to sailors by the name of white squalls—disturb the tranquil serenity of its deep blue waters; when by day the warm and brilliant rays of the sun make the crest of every little ripple glitter and sparkle, till the surface of the sea resembles a dewy meadow at sunrise; and when at night the moon always rises clearly and brilliantly into a deep blue expanse of cloudless sky, studded with myriads of stars that shine with a softer and purer radiance than they ever do when seen through the foggy, misty atmosphere of our beloved England.

It was at such a time, and on such a night as this, somewhere between Beyrout and Malta, that the noble frigate *Aster* was cleaving her way through the dark waters—so quietly and smoothly that, but for the phosphorescent line of light which she left in her wake, and the ripples of brilliant foam which she scornfully dashed, with a murmur as of protest at their unwonted disturbance, from her shapely bow, could an observer have been near her, he might have thought he gazed on some beautiful vision of a ship, with all her belying sails gleaming white in the moonlight against a dark background of sky, instead of a solid reality of oak and canvas, freighted with living men.

Captain Richard Montague had left his orders for the night, and had turned in some hours before. The middle watch had been mustered, and were stretched about the deck, amongst the ropes, and between the guns, seeking such repose as the hard planks afforded their weary limbs—lulled to sleep by the almost imperceptible motion of the ship, and the soft, cool breeze, which was just sufficient to fill the swelling sails. Lieutenant Jones, the officer of the watch, was pacing up and down the quarter-deck, keeping a watchful eye on the sails and the helmsman, his hands buried deep in the pockets of his loose, easy-fitting monkey jacket, and whistling softly to himself, "Home, sweet home." For myself, I was listlessly swinging

my legs on the capstan, in a peaceful and contented frame of mind, drinking in the placid beauty of the star-spangled sky, and letting my thoughts idly roam away to my far-off English home, in which direction they were probably carried by the soft, low whistling of the lieutenant.

A tinkling sound was suddenly heard from below, and Mr. Jones stopped in his walk and his whistling to listen.

"The captain's bell, sir," said I, jumping off the capstan.

And so it was, as the sentry informed us in due time, with the additional information that I, the midshipman of the watch, was wanted in his cabin. So down I went, wondering not a little what he could possibly want.

Now, Captain Richard Montague, who was in command of her Britannic Majesty's ship *Aster*, was not a crotchety or fidgety man; nor had he any of those bullying propensities that, alas! too many of our otherwise inestimable captains notoriously evince. He was a kind, courteous, gentlemanly man, firm, and straightforward; very different from the old school of blustering, swearing, rough and ready old sea-dogs that every reader of Marryat's wonderful stories is inclined to associate with the idea of a "navy captain." He was one who maintained strict discipline in his ship, without the exercise of any undue severity. On shore he was jovial and affable to all, a keen sportsman, and an enthusiastic promoter of athletic sports, shooting matches, dramatic performances, and games for the amusement of his men—inciting both officers and men to a wholesome rivalry in such diversions, at all of which he himself was an adept. He was a man habitually cool and courageous in time of trouble and danger, and had won honors and distinctions for personal gallantry from a grateful country.

But when I went into his cabin on this particular night, he was not himself. Something appeared to have shaken the equilibrium of his habitually steady intellect, and I knew that it must be an affair of great importance, for his hand shook as he beckoned me to come closer, and he was looking pale and agitated in the extreme.

He was in his dressing-gown, sitting by a table, on which a light was burning, and beside him was placed a glass of strong brandy and water.

He seemed about to communicate something; but, after some hesitation, appeared to change his mind, and asked abruptly if I went the rounds of the ship below regularly during my watch, according to his orders.

"That's right," he said, apparently a little relieved. And then, after a pause, he asked me, with considerable earnestness of tone and manner, if I had done so in that watch.

And, as he asked, he looked eagerly into my eyes, as if to make sure that I was not deceiving him.

I answered that I had, most strictly and conscientiously. He then asked me several other questions of a similar nature, to all of which I suppose I returned satisfactory answers, for he seemed much relieved, and dismissed me with a short laugh, and a pleasant "Good night. Thank you." And before I shut his door I heard him mutter, "Pshaw! folly!" and laugh again.

To say that I was surprised by this extraordinary and unusual conduct on the part of Captain Montague would not express half what I felt. There was much in the agitated manner of such a man to excite apprehension; for I knew him sufficiently well to be sure that he would not be frightened by a fancy. He was a sensible, well-educated man; and I had heard him sometimes, when the conversation had happened to turn on such subjects, ridiculing in an assumed manner the foolish superstitions of the ignorant and timid. I could not think that he was suffering from nightmare, brought on by indigestion, for he was always exceedingly temperate. He had not been entertaining that evening, and he was in good health. Besides, I felt sure that he would himself have attributed such a thing, had it been the case, to its true cause; and the more I thought of it, the more convinced I became that there must be something of a serious and practical nature to have such a powerful effect on a man possessed of such a healthy nervous organization.

I was not, however, so much alarmed as curious. There arose in me a determination to solve the mystery—to discover if there really was anything wrong in the ship, and what it was. Conjecture on conjecture flitted through my puzzled brain, all equally wild and unreasonable. I had no clue to work on; but still I felt a burning desire to find out the meaning of it. So, briefly telling Lieutenant Jones that the captain had been talking about the rounds, and that I thought I had better go over the vessel again, I started off on my voyage of discovery, with a corporal and two lanterns, in quest of I knew not what.

I felt as if on the eve of some wonderful discovery, as I began to go along the decks, peering with my lantern into the dark shade between the guns, through the men's messes, and into every dark hole or corner large enough to conceal a rat; but nothing rewarded my search. A large cat jumped out from under the muzzle of a gun, and startled me once; but that was all. Everything was quiet; only the heavy breathing of the watch below disturbed the stillness of the night between decks.

Down I went into the lower depths of the ship, thinking to myself that now I should know what it was. Here or nowhere must be concealed—what? I didn't know, but I thought

I must find something; but no, nothing rewarded my toll. I looked everywhere. I turned over everything, peered into the water tanks, tried the store-room doors, crept into dusty recesses that, perhaps, no one had ever thought of trying to get into before since the ship was built; but the only result was, as might have been expected, to send a score or two of rats scampering in alarm over the deck, and get myself covered all over with dust and white-wash. So at last I had to give it up, hot and tired with my search, and just as wise as when I started.

Lieutenant Jones was clearly in a bad temper when I returned on deck.

"Where have you been all this time?" he demanded.

"Going the rounds, sir," I replied.

Mr. Jones, however, would not believe I had taken so long to perform this duty, and made some unpleasant remarks about "skulking."

The fact of the matter was, that during my absence it had suddenly struck him that he was very thirsty, and that he would be the better for a glass of grog. Now, there was a bottle of rum in his cabin, also a tumbler and water. He was very fond of rum and water; but duty forbade his going to get it. He did not dare send one of the men into his cabin; and, as I was the only other person he could send, it is scarcely to be wondered at that he should have become more and more incensed with me as the time wore on and his thirst increased. As soon as I saw how things were, I came to the obvious conclusion that the best method of appeasing his wrath was to quench his thirst. I went down to his cabin as quickly as I could, and mixed him a glass of extra strength to compensate him for the delay.

I was hurrying on deck with it, when, just as I reached the top of the hatchway, I saw what arrested my footsteps, and rooted me to the spot in amazement.

The captain had come up the after-ladder, which was close to his cabin door, and was advancing quickly forward—a bright streak of moonlight, from which I was shaded by the sails, throwing a light as strong almost as day over and around him. His coat was open, as if thrown hurriedly on, his feet were slipped, his cap was pushed back on his head, exposing to view a face on which the signs of horror were strongly marked, eyes starting forward and bloodshot, lips apart and quivering, and cheeks the pallor of which appeared quite ghastly in the cold blue moonlight.

He evidently did not observe me—though I could see him sufficiently well to note every detail of his appearance—but, with hurried footsteps, made straight for the officer of the watch, who was standing on the end of the bridge, with his back turned to him, trying to make out a light that had been reported on the weather bow.

As soon as I recovered from the shock his wild and extraordinary appearance had given me, I went back to Mr. Jones's cabin, and put down the glass of grog—for it was out of the question that an officer of the watch should take such a thing when the captain was on deck—and came up again at once.

"Quick, the carpenter!—quick!" I heard the captain shout as I came up the ladder, and his voice was strangely agitated.

"What can be the matter? One would think the ship was sinking. She must have sprung a bad leak in his cabin," I thought.

"Quick—the carpenter! Send for him!" he shouted again, catching sight of me.

And I sent two men after the two or three who had already gone in search of that officer.

Presently the carpenter came up, rather astonished, as may be supposed, by such an unusual and hurried summons, and not a little alarmed.

"What is the matter, sir?" he whispered as he passed me.

"I'm sure I don't know," I replied; "but make haste. The captain's in a dreadful way about something or other."

The bell struck four times, signifying that it was two o'clock. The captain started at the sound, and again called for the carpenter.

"Coming, sir," replied Mr. James, as he sprang on the bridge.

"Bring that case on deck," said the captain.

"What case, sir?" said Mr. James.

"In the foremost locker, the starboard side of your store-room, is a case, marked 'Ward-room Officers.' Bring it on deck, quick."

There was no disobeying this peremptory order—there was no questioning it; but it was a very odd one to give. What could the captain want with a case, the property of the ward-room officers, in the first place? and, in the second, how came he to find out, in the middle of the night, that it was there, in a place where it certainly had no right to be? and, then, why was it there at all, and not in the proper store-room? It was strange, too, most of all, that a case of ward-room stores could have agitated the captain in the way it appeared to have done, and have actually brought him on deck in the middle of the night, for no other purpose seemingly than to send down for it. Why could he not have waited till the morning, at least, if he was determined to have it brought up? What could it contain? That was the puzzling question I could not settle; and the carpenter could give me no information.

"I don't know what it is," he said. "It came on board just before we left Beyrout. The captain was out of the ship at the time, I remember, and the paymaster asked me to stow it away in my store-room, as they had filled theirs up. I thought it was only pickles or jam; but we shall soon see what's in it."

The case came on deck, and some men ac-

companied it, with tools for forcing it open. I drew the captain's attention to them, for he was looking the other way. He turned round, and looked at the box, and said—

"Yes, that's it. Now, two men take it up very carefully—don't let it fall, mind!—and bring it up here on the bridge."

His voice was rather husky; but he seemed to have regained his composure, though his face was still very pale.

There was nothing peculiar outwardly about the case in which so much interest was centered.

It was about three feet long, by a foot and a half wide and deep, made of common deal, roughly put together, and with a narrow iron band round each end. The name of some dealer at Beyrout was stamped on it in black letters, but so much defaced as to be almost illegible. Underneath that was printed, "Ward-room Officers, H. M. S. *Aster*." Outwardly, it was nothing. What could it contain?

"Now," said the captain, when the two men were beside him, "give it a good swing, and launch it overboard. One, two, three, and over!"

A dull splash—the mysterious case was gone! Down, down, through many fathoms of blue water it sank, and with it carried a secret of such dread import that it had blanched the cheek and palsied the hand of a man accustomed to the perils of the sea from his youth, and who, in the most critical moments of danger, had never before shown to those around him that the sensation of fear was known to him.

Down, down it sank, the waters closed over it, the mighty sea took it to her-self, for ever hiding it from the sight of men. The clear, bright moon shone on the place; the bubbles that marked the spot burst and melted away. The restless ocean showed no trace of the place where the mysterious box was engulfed; but the ripples danced to and fro in the moonbeams as they had danced before, and the ship glided silently and swiftly away.

I was sorely disappointed. I thought, of course, when the case was ordered to be brought on deck, that it would be opened before the captain's eyes, and I should be made acquainted with the reason of his unusual excitement.

The old carpenter stared aghast. "Good Lord!" he ejaculated, "what have come over him? Depend upon it, he's seen a ghost."

And he wiped the perspiration from his brow, for he was a superstitious old man.

"Ghost! What's a ghost got to do with a box of pickles?" sneered old Tom Raffles, the boatswain's mate—a privileged oddity. "It's my opinion he's gone stark, staring mad."

"Them things in that 'era box weren't his'n to chuck overboard. He'll be a chuckin' my bag over next," grumbled another man—a discontented and insubordinate character.

I moved away. The conversation was not meant for my ears, and I had no wish to play the eavesdropper.

Full an hour did Captain Montague pace up and down the deck with the officer of the watch; and for that space of time I had to curb my impatience to hear the story which I knew he would have to tell me, and for the same length of time had the thirsty lieutenant to wait for his glass of grog; but when at last the captain did again seek his cabin, I lost no time in bringing him up the long delayed refreshment, and, whilst drinking it, he detailed to me the following particulars:

Captain Montague had turned in as usual after giving his orders for the night to the officer of the first watch, and having nothing to disturb him; and being in good health, he was soon fast asleep. How long he slept he did not know; but suddenly he heard a loud cry of "Fire!" Only half awakened, and not sure whether the voice was in his cabin or outside, he started up, and involuntarily said—

"Where?"

To which question he distinctly heard a voice in his cabin answer—

"A case of inflammables in the foremost locker, starboard side of the carpenter's store-room, marked 'Ward-room Officers,' has ignited."

Just then the bell struck four times. He sprang out of bed, and searched for the owner of the voice; but no one was there. Then he rang his bell, and summoned the sentry outside, and questioned him as to who had come into his cabin; but the sentry—a reliable man—was certain that nobody had passed his post. The time, too, was close on eight bells. So, satisfied that he must have been dreaming, and rather ashamed of having agitated himself about nothing, he dismissed the sentry, and proceeded to turn in once more, but he could not succeed in quite dismissing the subject from his mind, and when he at last fell asleep again, he was visited with this fearful dream:—

The vessel was the victim of that most awful catastrophe that can happen to a ship at sea—she was in flames. He was on deck, amidst a scene of confusion and horror perfectly indescribable, enveloped in hot and choking smoke, through which the lurid glare of the angry flames cast a dingy red light on the forms of dead and choking men; while on all sides the shrieks of anguish and despair, wrung from the scorched and drowning sailors mingled with the roar of the flames and the splashing and hissing of the burning fragments of the vessel, as they separated themselves from her hull, and fell into the water.

He woke. Everything was quiet and peaceful. The moon was shining brightly through the port, and the steady tread of the sentry

keeping time to the ticking of his clock was the only sound to be heard.

Having steadied his nerves with a glass of brandy and water, and trying to dismiss the terrible recollection of his hideous dream from his mind, he again fell asleep; but only to suffer a repetition of the horrible nightmare.

This time he sent for me on waking, and excited my curiosity and apprehension, as I have related, by his agitated manner; but still my assurance of the safety of the vessel was insufficient to banish the vision.

A third time he imagined himself in the burning ship; again he was a spectator of all the horrors of the conflagration; again was he standing amid that fearful scene of confusion and death, with all its dread reality intensified; again he saw hundreds of his own men dying fearful deaths around him, without being able to render the least assistance, while the hot flames darted their forked tongues at him; and again, as the dense suffocating smoke closed around him, did he find himself the victim of mad despair. Again, too, he woke to find it but a dream, and all still and quiet as before.

He could not bear it no longer; the vision was too palpable—too awful. He thought of the mysterious voice. Could it be a supernatural warning? He did not believe in such things; but then he dared not risk a repetition of the dream. So he rushed on deck, and sent for the case, of the existence of which he had no positive certainty until it was brought up, which wonderful corroboration of what he had just heard convinced him at once of its dangerous character, and induced him to order it to be immediately thrown overboard.

Such was the story that Mr. Jones related to me. How much of it originated in his own brain, aided by the glass of grog, I cannot say; but all that I had remarked in the captain's behaviour was singularly corroborative of his tale. I will therefore leave the reader to form his own conclusions, and account for this "curious case," if he can; only remarking, by the way, that it was afterwards ascertained to have been filled with some tins of a dangerously inflammable oil for burning in the ward-room lamps.

GEORGE ELIOT AS A NOVELIST.

For artistic finish and breadth, taken together, George Eliot has no equal among novelists. Miss Austen rivalled, perhaps excelled, her in the former, and Sir Walter Scott surpassed her in the latter quality; but neither of them even approached her in the combination of the two. Certainly George Eliot cannot compare for a moment with Sir Walter Scott in historical portraiture. Savonarola is a mere shadow beside the splendid portraits of Mary Queen of Scots, or James I., or Louis XI., or Charles the Bold, all of which remind one of the full, rich paintings of Titian's days. But with this great exception—of the art of reanimating the past—where, even in Scott, is such a store of faithful and finished pictures of character to be found? Which of Sir Walter's ordinary heroes or heroines—his Ivanhoes and Nevilles, his Rowenas and Isabel Wardours, with plenty of other lay-figures of the kind—will compare for truth with Seth Bede, Tom Tulliver, Silas Marner, Tito, or Lydgate, or Dinah, Maggy, Nancy Lemeter, and Dorothea? Where are there in George Eliot's stories such fantastic and unreal figures as Fenella in "Peveril of the Peak," or Meg Merrilies in "Guy Rannering?" George Eliot paints with Miss Austen's unerring humor and accuracy, and with Sir Walter's masculine breadth. Not only her provincial figures, but almost all her figures, are as good as his Edie Ochiltree and his Councillor Pleydell. She can draw not merely eccentric characters, but perfectly simple and normal characters of to-day, with all the humor and truth that Scott reserved for his special studies. She has Miss Austen's accuracy and instinct combined with a speculative sympathy with various grooves of thought which gives depth to the minutiae of real life, and which enables her to interest the intellect of her readers, as well as to engross their imagination. And these great powers have never been brought out with anything like the full success achieved in "Middlemarch." As our author's object in this tale is to show the paralysis, and the misleading diversions from its natural course, which a blunt and unsympathetic world prepares for the noblest idealism of feeling that is not in sympathy with it, it was essential for her to give such a solidity and complexity to her picture of the world by which her hero's and heroine's idealism was to be more or less tested and partly subjugated, as would justify the impression that she understood fully the character of the struggle. We doubt if any other novelist who ever wrote could have succeeded equally well in this melancholy design, could have framed as complete a picture of English county and county-town society, with all its rigidities, jealousies, and pettiness, with its thorough good-nature, stereotyped habits of thought, and very limited accessibility to higher ideas, and have threaded all these pictures together by a story, if not of the deepest interest, still admirably fitted for its peculiar purpose of showing how unpliant is such an age as ours to the glowing emotion of an ideal purpose.—*British Quarterly Review*.

Mr. Charles G. Leland, having made visit to the Nile, is out with a record of travel which he calls "The Egyptian Sketch-Book."

THE SEA.

O changeful sea! thy face to me
Hath many a different aspect worn;
I've roamed by thee in hours of glee,
And when my heart with grief was torn.

With deepening roar upon the shore
Thy billows beat, and find no rest;
In storm or calm their ceaseless psalm
Hath waked sweet echoes in my breast.

But now my heart can only start
To hear their moan with shuddering dread;
For every wave beats o'er a grave—
The grave wherein my love lies dead.

He was so young, so brave and strong,
Hope sat so radiant on his brow;
No shadow fell on our farewell
Of that despair which haunts me now.

A mother pressed him to her breast—
A mother's love is right divine;
My love I knew was great and true,
But yet her claim was more than mine.

He sailed away that Autumn day,
And we two women stopped our tears
To watch that face whose youthful grace
Shall shine no more through all the years.

As day declined, the treacherous wind
Rose fierce and high with tempest's breath;
In that dread hour Hope lost her power—
I knew and felt my sailor's death.

Since then, to me, O changeful sea,
Thy face hath worn a look of gloom;
Thy sparkling waves have told of graves—
Of useless prayers and timeless doom.

But when at last that gulf is passed
Which oft seems very near to me,
Just o'er the brink I love to think
In that sweet land "is no more sea"—

No more of tears or haunting fears,
Or sickening hope through long delay:
O faithless soul, so bright a goal
Should help thee forward on thy way!

THE DEMON SNUFFERS.

I'm not at all given to parading my troubles—nothing of the kind. I may be getting old, in fact I am; and I may have had disappointments such as have left me slightly irritable and peevish; but I ask, as a man, who wouldn't be troubled in his nerves if he had suffered from snuffers?

Snuffers? Yes, snuffers—a pair of cheap, black, iron snuffers, that screech when they are opened, and creak when they are shut; a pair that will not stay open nor yet keep shut; a pair that gape at you incessantly, and point at you a horrid, sharp, iron beak, as a couple of leering eyes turn the finger and thumb holes into a pair of spectacles, and squint and wink at you maliciously. A word in your ear—this in a whisper—those snuffers are haunted! their insignificant iron frame is the habitation of a demon—an imp of darkness; and I've been troubled till I've got snuffers on the brain, and I shall have till I'm snuffed out.

It has been going on now for a couple of years, ever since my landlady sent the snuffers up to me first in my shiny crockery-ware candlestick, where those snuffers glide about like a snake in a tin pail. I remember the first night as well as can be. It was in November—a weird, wet, foggy night, when the river-side streets were wrapped in a yellow blanket of fog—and I was going to bed, when at my first touch of the candlestick those snuffers glided off with an angry snap, and lay, open-mouthed, glaring at me from the floor.

I was somewhat startled, certainly, but far from alarmed; and I seized the fugitives, and replaced them in the candlestick, opened the door, and ascended the stairs.

Mind, I am only recording facts, untinged by the pen of romance! Before I had ascended four steps, those hideous snuffers darted off, and plunged point downwards on to my left slippered foot, causing me an agonizing pang, and the next moment a bead of starting blood stained my stocking.

I will not declare this, but I believe it to be a fact: as I said something oathish, I am nearly certain that I heard a low, fiendish chuckle; and when I stooped to lift the snuffers, there was a bright spark in the open mouth, and a pungent blue smoke being breathed out to annoy my nostrils.

I was too bold in those days to take much notice of the incident, and I hurried upstairs—not, however, without seeing that there was a foul black patch left upon the holland stair-cloth; and then I hurried into bed, and tried to sleep. But I could not, try as I would. In the darkness I could just make out the candlestick against the blind; and from that point incessantly the demon snuffers gradually approached me, till they sat spectacle-wise astride my nose, and a pair of burning eyes gazed through them right into mine.

Need I say that I awoke next morning feverish and unrefreshed to go about my daily duties?

"I'll have no more of it to-night," I said to myself, as I rose early to go to bed, and make up for the past bad night; and I smiled sardon-

cally as I took up the highly glazed candlestick, and tried to shake the black, straddling reptile out upon the sideboard. I say tried; for, to my horror, the great eyeholes leered at me as they hugged round the upright portion of the stick, and refused to be dislodged. I shook them again, and one part went round the extinguisher support, which the reptile dislodged, so that the extinguisher rattled upon the sideboard top. But the snuffers were there still. I tried again, and they, or it, dodged round and thrust a head through the handle, where they stuck fast, grinning at me till I set the candlestick down and stared.

"Pooh!—stuff!—ridiculous!" I exclaimed, quite angry at my weak, imaginative folly; and determined to act like a man, I seized the candlestick with one hand, the snuffers with the other, and after a hard fight, succeeded in wriggling them out of their stronghold, banged them down upon the table cloth, seized them again, snuffed my candle viciously before replacing them on the table, and then marched out of the room, proud of my moral triumph, and rejoicing in having freed myself of the demon. But as I stood upon the stairs, I could see that my hand was blackened; and the icy, galvanic feeling that assailed my nerves when I first touched the snuffers still tingled right to my elbow.

But I was free of my enemy; and marching with freely playing lungs into my bed-room, I closed and locked the door, set down my empty candlestick, changed my coat and vest for a dressing-gown, and began to brush my hair.

It is my custom to brush my hair with a pair of brushes for ten minutes every night before retiring to rest. I find it strengthening to the brain. On this occasion I had brushed hard for five minutes, when there was a loud knock at my bed-room door.

"Can I speak to you a moment, sir?" said the voice of my landlady.

I rose and opened the door, and then started back in disgust, as I was greeted with—

"Please, sir, you forgot your snuffers!"

My snuffers! It was too horrible; but there was more to bear.

"And please, sir, I do hope you'll be more careful. It's a mussy we warn't all burnt to death in our beds, for the snuffers have made a great hole as big as your hand in the table cloth, and scorched the mahogany table; and it was a mussy I went into your room before I went up to bed."

I couldn't speak, for I was drawn irresistibly on to obey, as my landlady held the snuffers' handle towards me, and pointed to the great fungus snuff upon my common candle. I thrust in a finger and thumb, closed the door in desperation—for I could not refuse the snuffers—once more locked myself in, and stalked to the dressing table, and, as I heard my landlady's retreating steps, I snuffed the candle, which started up instantly with a brighter flame as the snuffers' mouth closed upon the incandescent wick.

"I'm slightly nervous," I said to myself, as I essayed to put down my enemies. "I want tone—iron—iodine—tonic bitters—and—course the thing!" I ejaculated, shaking my hand, and trying to dislodge the snuffers. My efforts were but vain, for the rings clung tightly to my finger and thumb, cut into my flesh, and it was not until I had given them a frantic wrench, which broke the rivet and separated the halves, that I was able to tear out my bruised digits, and stand panting at the broken instrument.

There was relief though, here. I felt as if I had crushed out the reptile's life; and the two pieces—their living identity gone—lay nerveless and devoid of terrors in the candle-tray.

I slept excellently that night, and smiled as I dressed beside the broken fragments. I had achieved a victory over self, as well as over an enemy. I enjoyed my breakfast, after raising the white cloth to look at the damage, which I knew would appear as twenty shillings in the weekly bill; but I did not care, though I shuddered slightly as I thought of the snuffers' horrible designs. I dined that day with friends, played a few games afterwards at pool, and then we had oysters.

I was in the best of spirits as I opened the door with my latch-key, and I laughed heartily at what I called my folly of the previous nights; but, as I entered my room, there was the great black hole in the green cloth table cover, and the charred wood beneath, while up on the sideboard—

I groaned as I stood half transfixed. I could have imagined that I had on divers' leaden-soled boots; for there, maliciously grinning at me, with half-opened mouth, were the demon snuffers, joined together by a new, glistening rivet, which only added to their weird appearance, as the beak cocked itself at me, and the great eyes glared, as the black mouth seemed to say—

"You'll never get rid of me!"

Something seemed to draw me, and I went and took the candlestick, my eyes being fixed the while upon the snuffers; and I came in contact with several pieces of furniture as I went into the passage, where I held the candlestick very much on one side as I lit the candle at the little lamp. I hoped that the snuffers would fall out; but they grinned maliciously, and did not stir.

The next moment I was obliged to use them, for the candle began to gutter; when, as nothing followed, I grew bolder, and began to ascend the stairs. In a minute, though, before I was

half up the second flight, and though the candlestick was carried perfectly straight—crash! the demon snuffers darted out, and dashed themselves upon the floor.

I did not stay to look, but hurried to my bedroom, closing and locking the door.

"Safe this time!" I thought; for it was late, and I knew that my landlady must have been long in bed. Then I began to think of how they had hopped out of the candlestick, and I remembered what they had done upon the previous night—how they had tried to set fire to the house. Suppose they should do so now! The cold perspiration trickled down my nose at the very thought. I dared not leave the demon, or twin demons—the horrid Siamese pair.

I would, though—I was safe here. But, fire! Suppose they set the house on fire?

Irresistible fate, with an inconceivable attraction, led me back to the door, which I opened, and then I groaned, for there was no help for it. I could smell strongly that animal-burning odor given off by woollen fabrics, and I knew that the carpet must be on fire.

Down I went in the dark—very softly too, lest I should alarm the landlady and the other lodgers; but, though the odor was strong, I went right to the bottom and stood upon the doormat without finding my enemies.

I stood and thought for a few minutes, and then began slowly to ascend, feeling carefully all over every step as I went up to my bedroom, where I arrived without ever my hand coming in contact with that which I sought.

"I'll go to bed and leave them!" I ejaculated, and I turned upon my heel; but at that moment the pungent burning odor came up stronger than ever. I was compelled to descend, to find that the demon twins had been lying in ambush half-way down, so that I trod upon them, tripped, in my terror my foot glided over them, and I fell with a crash into the umbrella stand, which I upset with a hideous noise upon the oilcloth—not so loud, though, but that I could hear the little black imps take three or four grasshopper leaps along the passage, ending by attacking the pointed beak into the street door.

Before I could gather myself up, I heard doors opening upstairs, and screaming from the girls below, who slept in the kitchen; and the next minute old Major O'Brien's voice came roaring down—

"An' if ye shuir a shstep, I'll blow out yer brains!"

Of course I had to explain; and I had the horrible knowledge that they gave me the credit of being intoxicated—the Major saying he would not stop in a house where people went prowling about at all hours, ending by himself, at the landlady's request, examining the door to see if it was latched securely, and then seeing me safely to my room.

"An' if I did me duty, sor, I should lock you in," he said by way of good night. "And now get into the bed, sor, and at once; and—here are your snuffers!"

I could fill volumes with the tortures inflicted upon me by those haunted snuffers, for they clung to me, and, in spite of every effort, never left me free. It was in vain that I came home early and shifted them into the Major's candlestick: they only came back. I threw them out of the bed-room window once, and they were found by the maid in the area. I threw them out again, and they were picked up by the policeman, and they made him bring them back. Then I tried it at midday; but an old woman brought them in, and made a row because they went through her parasol, so that I had to pay ten shillings, besides being looked upon by my landlady as a lunatic.

I thrust them into the fire one night, and held them there with the tongs, lest they should leap out; but they would not burn, and my landlady finding them in the ashes, had them jappaned, and they were in their old place next day. I had no better luck when I thrust them—buried them—deep in a scuttle of ashes; they only turned up out of the dusthole when Mary sifted the cinders.

They always came off black on to my hands, when they did not anoint my fingers with soft tallow. If they fell out of the candlestick, it was always on to oilcloth or paint, where they could make a noise jumping about like a grasshopper, till they ended by standing upon the sharp beak, with the spectacle-like holes in the air. If I went up to dress, they would shoot into my collar box, or amongst my clean shirts, smutting them all over. If I tried to kill a wasp with them upon an autumn evening, when the insect crept out of a plum at dessert, the wretches only snipped him in two, as if rejoicing at the inflicted torture. In short, they have worn me out—those snuffers; and if it was not from fear, I should take and drop them from the parapet of a bridge.

But, there! it would be in vain; they would be certain to turn up: and they are not mortal, so what can you expect? Let this communication be a secret, for it is written wholly by day, when the snuffers lie in the lower regions.

A bright thought has occurred to me—the Major leaves this morning for Berlin.

I have done it—his carpet bag stood in the hall, waiting for the cab. The Major was in the drawing-room paying his bill. The maids were upstairs making the beds. I stole down like a thief into the kitchen. The snuffers were in my dirty candlestick upon the dresser. I seized the grinning, tallow-anointed demons, flew up the stairs, and as I heard the drawing-room door open, tore the bag a little apart, and thrust them in.

The next minute they were on the roof of a

cab, and on their way to Berlin, where they will haunt the Major.

A month of uninterrupted joy has passed. On the day of the Major's departure, I seemed to wed pleasure; and this has been the honeymoon. This morning, when I paid my bill, the landlady announced the coming back of the Major to his old apartments. I have been in dread ever since. But this is folly. I will be hopeful: my worst fears may not be confirmed.

It's all over—he has brought them back!
They grin at me as I write.

THE SHAH OF PERSIA.

A few facts respecting the Shah and Persia may prove of interest to our readers. His name is Nasser-ed-Din; born in 1830, being the eldest son of Shah Mohammed, he succeeded to the throne on the death of his father, Sept. 1848. His Imperial Majesty is therefore only 43, but he is not in robust health. It has been remarked that he seldom wears the wonderful aigrette of diamonds on his kulah, or cap. The reason is that anything heavy on his head gives him the headache. The custom of his nation forbids him to have his head uncovered, but it is not often that his head-dress is heavier than a cloth kulah. In his own country he seldom wore gloves, but since he has come to Europe he has taken to white gloves. His Majesty has two sons, born in 1850 and 1853.

The Shah of Persia, by his official title "Shah-in-Shah," is absolute ruler within his dominions, and master of the lives and goods of all his subjects; he has the right of designating his successor to the throne. The whole revenue of the country being at their disposal, recent sovereigns of Persia have been able to amass a large private fortune. That of the present Shah is reported to amount to four millions sterling; one half represented by diamonds, the largest, the Derya-i-Non of 178 carats, and other precious stones, forming the Crown Jewels. The Shah's talismans are very numerous, exceeding 200, and they are the most curious part of his baggage. One is a gold star of five points, and is supposed to have been possessed by the legendary Rustom. It is called Merzoum, and has the reputation of making conspirators immediately confess. When the Shah's brother was accused of treason some time since, the star was shown him, and, terrified and overcome with remorse, he avowed his iniquities, and was banished. The next important talisman is a cube of amber, which fell from Heaven in Mahomet's time. It is supposed to render the Shah invulnerable, and he wears it suspended around his neck. Another is a little box of gold, set in emeralds, and blessed by the Prophet. It renders the Royal Family invisible as long as they are celibates. The Shah had, however, numerous wives before it came into his possession. Another is a diamond set in one of his scimetars, which renders its possessor invincible, and there is also a dagger with the same property, but it is ordained that those who use it should perish by it. It is, therefore, carefully kept shut up in a sandal-wood box, on which is engraved a verse of the Koran.

The Shah has both given and received several interesting souvenirs of his visit to this country. Amongst them may be especially mentioned the portraits of himself, set in diamonds, which he presented both to Her Majesty Queen Victoria and the Prince of Wales, the Jewelled sword bestowed upon the Duke of Cambridge at the termination of the review held at Windsor, on June 21, and the casket enclosing the address presented by the Lord Mayor and Corporation of the City of London. This gold casket is of oblong octagon form, with a raised dome, surmounted by the civic arms and supporters, enamelled in proper heraldic colours. At the four corners of the base are kneeling camels, on whose backs the casket rests. The sides, corners and lid are composed of elegantly pierced work in pure Persian character, with particular enamelled backgrounds, ornamented with flowers, composed of pearls and other precious stones. On the front shield, in raised gold and enamel, are the Persian lion and sun, surmounted by the imperial crown. At the ends are other shields, inscribed with copies of His Majesty's autograph, whilst the remaining one at the back is engraved with a suitable inscription. The whole rests on a slab of Portico marble, supported by a purple velvet base. The casket is without doubt the finest work of the kind that has ever been presented by the Corporation on any similar occasion. The badge worn by the Reception Committee upon the day on which the Shah was received by the Corporation of the City of London, one of which was also presented to His Majesty, are exceedingly beautiful, consisting of a centre of fine gold, representing the Persian arms surmounted by "Gulldhall, June 20, 1873." The outer border is particularly pretty, being formed of colored enamel and Persian ornaments, surmounted by the Shah's crown, with enamel jewels.

The Shah is the fourth sovereign of the dynasty of the Kasjars, which took possession of the crown after a civil war. It is within the power of the Persian monarch to alter or to overrule the existing law of succession. All the laws of Persia are based on the precepts of the Koran; and though the power of the Shah is absolute, it is only so far as it is not opposed to the accepted doctrines of the Mahometan religion. The Shah is regarded as the Vice-regent of the Prophet, and it is as such that he claims implicit obedience.

The majority of the inhabitants of Persia are Mahomedans, the total number of dissenters not amounting to more than 74,000. The latter consist of Armenians, Nestorians, Jews, and Guebren or Parsees. The Armenian population is estimated at 4,660 families, including Protestants and Roman Catholics; the Jews at 18,000; and the Guebren at 7,190. The Persian priesthood consists of many orders. The Armenians are under two bishops, one of them being Roman Catholic. There is a wide tolerance exercised towards Armenians and Nestorians, but not, it is said, towards Jews. Education is advancing in the upper classes, and colleges, supported by public funds, are established.

During the reign of the present Shah the revenue of Persia has increased. The receipts in 1868 were £1,744,664 in May, besides payment in kind, making the total revenue of £1,965,000. The income is in excess of the expenditure, and Persia has no national debt. The balance due to Russia on account of the expenses of the war, concluded in 1828, amounting to about £200,000, was cancelled by the present Czar in 1856. The population of Persia is about 9,000,000 or 10,000,000. The trade is very small, but the import trade is likely now to increase, after the visit of the Shah to this country.

MISCELLANEOUS ITEMS.

LOBSTERS have been hatched out in the Brighton Aquarium.

HAWKERS of mutton broth and iced water are familiar street characters of Persian towns.

AN Indian squaw has just died at Lancaster, Mich., aged 115. She has had thirty squawlers (infants).

A LAW has been passed in Massachusetts which enforces the sale of eggs by weight instead of by the dozen.

A TELEGRAM from Penang reports that the Dutch are willing to come to a peaceful settlement with the Acheenese.

MRS. THOMSON, daughter of the poet Burns, died on the morning of June 13, at Crossmyloof, near Glasgow, in her 84th year.

It is stated on high chemical authority that the last gill of milk drawn from a cow is sixteen times richer in cream than the first portion yielded.

It is an old tradition that, if the oak gets into leaf before the ash, a fine and fruitful season will follow. This year the two kinds of trees budded nearly simultaneously.

PERSIAN horses have been long celebrated for their excellence. It is to a cross of them with some of our English horses during the reign of Elizabeth that we owe several improvements in our breeds.

A WASHINGTON physician, asserted to be of large experience and close observation, has discovered and announced that bald-headed men die young. He says that a person who retains his hair past the age of sixty-five has a good prospect of living to be over eighty.

THE hideous custom among Japanese women of blackening their teeth and shaving their eyebrows, on their being married or reaching a marriageable age, is likely to die out, for it is said that the Empress has set the example of innovating upon this old fashion, dictated by Asiatic jealousy, and henceforth her teeth and eyebrows will be allowed to remain as nature formed them.

SCIENTIFIC AND USEFUL.

EARL ROSSE lectured before the Royal Society, not long since, on the radiation of heat from the moon. He is of the opinion that the difference between the radiation of the new moon and the full moon is about two hundred degrees. His experiments to ascertain whether any heat proceeds from the interior of the moon show no trace of warmth from that source, and he is inclined to believe that none emanates therefrom. The great interest felt in the subject by men of science was indicated by the presence at the lecture of Prof. Tyndall, Prof. Huxley, Prof. Stokes, one of the most eminent English physicists, and Sir George B. Airey, the astronomer-royal.

SUBSTITUTE FOR CHURCH BELLS.—Dr. Ferdinand Bahles suggests the use of steel bars as a substitute for cast bells. They are, he says, introduced in the United States and Germany with great success. The cost, compared with that of manufactured cast bells, is very trivial. They can be made of any dimensions, weight, and power of sound. Every note or harmony can be produced more easily, and the tuning is obtained more precisely than in cast bells. In addition to their being a cheap and effective substitute for church bells, they are also equally applicable to places where large bells are required, such as dockyards, on board of vessels, steam-boat piers, railways, and manufactories.

INSTANTANEOUS PHOTOGRAPHY.—News of a rather extraordinary feat in photography comes from San Francisco. It appears that a gentleman desired a photographic portrait of a celebrated trotting horse, taken while the animal was going at full speed. The photographer set to work by arranging all the sheets in the stable as a sort of reflecting background. In front of these the horse was trained to trot, moving at the rate of thirty-eight feet a second. After two unsuccessful attempts, the photographer hit upon a method which gave a result as excellent, we are told, as could be desired. The operator closed his camera by two boards, so arranged that, on touching a spring, they slipped

past each other, leaving an opening of one-eighth of an inch for the five-hundredth part of a second. Using double lenses, crossed, a perfect likeness of the horse was obtained, and so instantaneous was the impression on the sensitive film that the spokes of the wheels of the vehicle to which the animal was harnessed were shown as if at rest. This method may probably be turned to account in other directions.

FIRE DETECTORS.—An experimental display of some of Professor Grech's instruments for signalling the commencement of fires in any room, or in interspace difficult of access, was recently made in one of the corridors adjoining the Machinery court at the International Exhibition at South Kensington. This corridor was parted off into different chambers, and small straw fires, inflamed with petroleum, ignited in each, when the instrument caused the alarm bells to ring, and notified the particular chamber by the fall of a numbered disc. A lantern was also connected with one of the chambers, which was lit by the falling of a small weight upon glass globules of sulphuric acid. The principle of the apparatus is—a double spiral of zinc and platinum is soldered to a disc carrying an index and a small wire contact-maker. When the spiral expands by the heat the contact-maker is turned by the motion of the spiral, and makes contact, thus putting in action a current from an electrical battery, by which the alarm-bells and signal apparatus are put in action. The instruments are very roughly made, and cost about 2s. each. They can be applied to determine heating action in fermentation and other processes, the object of the index being that the apparatus shall be set to any required temperature, any excess beyond which will put the electrical current in action and give the alarm.

GOLDEN GRAINS.

THE future is purchased by the present. AN even mind is never a prejudiced one. LOVE is an extreme—to love less is to love no more.

SWEET BELLS.—The sound of sweet bells is the laughter of music.

KNOWLEDGE is the treasure, but judgment the treasurer of a wise man.

A MAN may learn in two minutes what may be valuable to him all his life.

WIVES are young men's mistresses, companions of middle age, and old men's nurses.

REPENTANCE without amendment is like continual pumping in a ship without stopping the leaks.

REMEMBER that the man who talks about your neighbor to you will talk about you to your neighbor.

WHEN the curious or impertinent would pick the lock of the heart, put the key of reserve in the inside.

THERE are lying looks as well as lying words, dissembling smiles, deceiving signs, and even a lying silence.

THERE is no necessity to make the tour of the world in order to convince oneself that the sky is everywhere blue.

Be punctual to meet all engagements at the time appointed, and never make a contract unless you intend to fulfil it.

OUR minds are as different as our faces; we are all travelling to one destination—happiness; but none are going by the same road.

REMEMBRANCE is the only paradise out of which we cannot be driven away. Indeed, our first parents were not to be deprived of it.

As we know not the time of our death, and no man can reveal it to us, duty and interest require that we should so live as to be always ready.

HAPPY are the families whose members are walking hand-in-hand together toward the heavenly country. May the number of such be daily increased.

A TRUE man has as much strength in adversity as in prosperity, as in the dark of the moon she sways the tide as powerfully as in her full-orbed brightness.

LOOK not mournfully into the past—it cannot return; wisely improve the present—it is thine; go forth to meet the shadowy future without fear and with a manly heart.

NEVER chide your husband before company, nor prattle abroad of affairs at home. What passes between two persons is much easier made up before than after it has taken air.

REMEMBER that every person, however low, has rights and feelings. In all contentions let peace be your object, rather than triumph; value triumph only as the means of peace.

CULTIVATE a spirit of forgiveness. Check the impatient rejoinder when provoked. Avoid strife and contentions. Walk humbly and meekly, and your sphere of usefulness will be largely increased.

JOY is heightened by exultant strains of music, but grief is eased only by low tones. A sweet, sad measure is the balm of a wounded spirit. Music lightens toll. The sailor pulls more cheerily for his song.

SMITH, the American poet laureate, thus breaks forth:—

“Oh, the snore, the beautiful snore,
Filling the chamber from ceiling to floor!
Over the coverlet, under the sheet,
From her wee dimpled chin to her pretty feet;
Now rising aloft like a bee in June,
Now sunk to the wall of a cracked bassoon;
Now, flute-like, subsiding, then rising again,
Is the beautiful snore of Elizabeth Jane.”

HUMOROUS SCRAPS.

A YOUNG man's friends object to his being loose, but somehow they have an equal objection to his being tight.

A KENTUCKY man has named his sixteenth child, recently born to him, Omega, hoping the Fates will let it be the last.

SEVERE.—A man has christened his daughter Glycerine. He says it will be easy to prefix Nitro, if her temper resembles her mother's.

HOW TO WOO AND WIN.—To make a girl love you, coax her to love somebody else. If there is anything that a woman relishes, it is to be contrary.

ON the eve of a battle, an officer not noted for bravery requested the privilege of going home, to see his parents. “Go,” said the general; “you honor your father and mother that your days may be long in the land!”

A BOY who was called up by his teacher for giving a schoolmate a black eye, pleaded that he only threw a bit of water at him, but on being pressed in the cross-examination, he at last admitted that the water was frozen.

ONE FOR WIDOWS.—A man who married a widow has invented a device to cure her of “eternally” praising her former husband. Whenever she begins to descant on his noble qualities, this ingenious No. 2 merely says, “poor dear man! how I wish he hadn't died!” and the lady immediately thinks of something else to talk about.

COURTEOUS VERDICTS.—A coroner's jury, empanelled to ascertain the cause of the death of a notorious drunkard, brought in a verdict of “Death by hanging—around a shop.” In California, a coroner's jury, under similar circumstances, rendered a more courteous verdict: “Accidental death while unpacking a glass.”

AN EPITAPH.

Here lies
Tom KLAES,
The Greatest Smoker in Europe.
He broke his pipe
July 4, 1872,

Mourned by his family and
All tobacco merchants.
Stranger! smoke for him!

IN a town in Connecticut a man died, who had a large wen on the top of his head, and his tombstone bore the following tribute to his memory, and also to the wen:

“Our father lies beneath the sod,
His spirit's gone unto his God,
We never more shall hear his tread,
Nor see the wen upon his head.”

Robert Kemp ordered the following lines to be placed on the tombstone of his beloved partner:

“She once was mine,
But now, oh, Lord
I her to Thee resign,

and remain your obedient, humble servant,
Robert Kemp.”

“TAKE AWAY THE APPARITION.”—A New Orleans man reported dead appeared in court the other day, and said:—“If your honor please, I want my effects returned to me, as you see I am not dead.” Court: “I know—that is, as a man—that you are alive and in court, but as a court I know you are dead, for the records of the court say so, and against their verity there can be no averment—so says Lord Coke and a good many other books I have never read.” Dead man: “But I want my property, and it's no matter to me whether your records lie or not. I am alive, and have not transferred my property, and to deprive me of it without my consent is against the law.” Court: “If you intimate that the records of this court lie this court will send you to gaol! Court: “Mr. Sheriff, take this apparition out,” and out he went with a rush.

OUR PUZZLER.

17. ENIGMA.

I'm cradled in the bosom of a pure and blushing rose;
Indeed, each flow'r that ever blooms my presence doth disclose.
The murmur of the summer breeze floats all unheeded by,
But in sweet echo's ling'ring tones I slowly faint and die.
I come in early morning—on every fleecy cloud,
And also help the gloom of night your pathway to enshroud.
I ne'er was known to cross your palm, as do the gipsies all.
But if you took me from your foot, you very soon would fall.
Without me you could never go abroad or seek to roam,
And yet, the strangest thing of all—I'm always found at home.
To matrimony I'm inclined, and never from the side
Of any bridegroom do I stir, but cannot touch the bride.
I fall in love, am constant too, and conversant with joy;
In all your hopes I take a part, though coupled with alloy.
I am too prim to join in the dance, though one in every throng,
And while I music fain would shun, I revel in the song.
You gladly welcome me each morn whene'er the postman knocks,
And wanting me would have to go without your Christmas-box.

DAISY H.

18. CHARADES.

- A fish and an insect,
With a vowel unite,
You then will behold
Something sparkling and bright.
- My first reversed a liquor will name;
My third transposed will do the same;
My second reversed a color you'll trace;
My whole is an act both foul and base.
- My first is an English grain;
With my second a noise may be heard;
My first is found in my second;
And my whole is a delicate bird.
- A color and a snare,
Will name a little fish,
Which, when served up to table
Is a palatable dish.

19. ANAGRAMS.

- Rye gone, Rover. 2. Got in all sin, say at I. O. U. 3. So mar this Rome. 4. Jem, real penman is bid. 5. Ha, weep ill, Sir Mask. 6. Coin fair, bare lass.

J. X.

20. PALINDROMIC RIDDLE.

Five letters will my whole proclaim,
Read backwards or forwards 'tis the same;
My head cut off, a man I name,
Who is of very ancient fame;
Now curtail, and you will see
Who is, or will a woman be.

J. S. GORTON.

21. LOGOGRIPH.

Birds, beasts and fishes own my whole,
And reptiles do the same;
But insects and the lower tribes
Can to it make no claim.
Take off my head,—I'm much obliged,—
Now see what's left behind:
It's cat's alarm, and duck's delight,
Whereon frogs set their mind.

22. HISTORICAL MENTAL PICTURE.

A battle is fiercely raging. The troops on one side are inferior to the other in numbers, but it is to be presumed superior in valor, as they are evidently gaining the victory, and driving their opponents from the field. One officer particularly distinguishes himself. He is to be seen at the head of his men, charging the enemy with irresistible force; again and again he renews the attack; the contest will soon be at an end, and the battle won. But must the soldiers lose so gallant a leader? See, he is down! No, his horse only is shot; its rider, unharmed, quickly mounts another, and rides again to the charge. We lose sight of him, and watch for his reappearance. When the smoke clears away, he is slowly returning, pale with pain, and faint from loss of blood. A musket-ball has given him a deadly wound. He is quickly surrounded by officers and men—the grief and dismay depicted on each countenance plainly showing the high estimation in which he is held. And as we look upon the features of this gallant knight, we might fancy that he would shine in more peaceful scenes—that he has other talents than those necessary to make a good commander. He begs for water; some is brought to him as quickly as possible, and is just approaching his parched and feverish lips, when he sees a wistful, longing look in the dying eyes of a private soldier, who is stretched on the ground beside him. He instantly refuses the water for which he had craved, and motions them to give it to the poor soldier, who seems in still greater want of it than himself. Thoughtful, generous, unselfish, self-denying—was he not all this? Many a tear is dropped as he is carefully carried from the field, followed, we may be sure, by the blessings of the dying man, whose last moments he has thus relieved.

A. DE YOUNGE.

23. CHARADE.

My first is drawn on paper, to convey
Distinct ideas of what it does portray;
My next's a word that to the French belongs,
It's also found in Roman poets' songs;
My whole, a wanderer, as its name implies,
On its appointed path untiring flies.

24. AUTHORS AND THEIR WORKS.

- Old silver him got—What I deceive folk for.
- Writer last cost.—Oh, hem, I find rate that lot.
- A. I. snow storm whirl, hail, rain.—Wet one, flood, north.
4. Lea may I mark a wicket-command, eh.—Come when set.
5. A. our tall commanding Bath Boys.—Foreign and shy lot.
6. Master C. L. kiss and sing.—Often, she's fond village queen.
7. D. Mason's bride.—See Lady act sly rude.
8. Drest boy winter raw, dull.—Who will die with that.
9. Nelly Hog, Wandsworth flower.—Top is lace work.
10. Never blend joke here.—Ah, earth sincerity.
11. Nat wishing roving.—L. chargeable bird.
12. Children's Cakes.—C. L. Boys like an Inch.

WILLIAM JOHNSON.

25. CONS.

- What trade are parsons?
- Which is the most evil article in a grocer's shop?
- Which are the most bread and meat Islands?

PHIZ.

26. ACROSTICAL REBUS.

A Greek island; a town in Longford; a river in France; an Asiatic isle; a river of Prussia; a town in England. The initials will give the name of a celebrated Admiral, and the final a loss he sustained.

PHIZ.

AKIN TO LOVE.

BY ALFRED PERCIVAL GRAVES.

"Have you met a maiden fair
Roaming through the forest shady?"
"Many a maid I've met with there."
"Nay, but none to match my lady."

"If you be the lady's love,
Show—for who could show me better—
By what signs I most may prove
If mine eyes have missed or met her."

"Nay, I said not she loved me,
Howsoever much I love her,
Though none else may unto thee
Her by surer signs discover."

"'Neath a golden wealth of hair
Laugh the blue eyes of my Phyllis;
Her red lips like roses rare,
Wreathed around a row of lilies."

"Clad is she in virgin white,
And she tripped across the valley,
Singing light, until my sight
Lost her in yon leafy alley."

"Such a maid methinks I met
Underneath the forest shady—
Such a maid methinks—and yet
Scarcely all in all thy lady."

"Now, what mean you, I implore?"
"Said you not your Phyllis pretty
Fled along the flowery floor,
Trolling out some mirthful ditty?"

"But the maid I met but now
Leant, with lips for grief a-quiver,
On a fallen beechen bough
O'er the margin of the river;"

"Her soft arms most sadly laid
O'er that branch that bridged the
river;
Graven on whose rind I read,
'If lovers never, friends for ever!'"

"Nay, then, so your tale be truth,
With the dearest joy you move
me;
If her scorn be turned to ruth,
Phyllis at the last may love me."

LAME HETTY.

I am the foreman in a large hostler's establishment in New York. I am forty years old, and I never was particularly handsome to look at. I don't suppose my manners are especially fascinating either, for the girls mostly call me, as I am given to understand, "Old Crusty" and "Bear." Not that I mean to be cross, but some people haven't the agreeable ways of others.

I have sat behind the tall desk in Tape and Buttonbell's nineteen years. I've seen a good many curious phases of life within that time; but the most curious of all happened to myself personally—and that is precisely what I am going to tell you about.

"I wouldn't have had it happen for five dollars," said Dennison.

Dennison had charge of the out-of-doors department; and he came in, on that wet, drizzly February evening, to stand by the cheerful fire in my room. We had not lighted the gas yet; the press and hurry of work were over for the day, and it was very quiet and pleasant in the red shine of the fire. I was sitting on my tall stool, biting the feather end of a quill pen, and thinking—thinking of I scarce know what.

"What has happened now?" said I.
"It's Lame Hetty," replied Dennison. "Two rolls of work missing, and Hetty declares she brought 'em here."

I laid down the goose-quill Lame Hetty had been in my thoughts, somehow, all that rainy twilight, just as people and things will take possession of your brain at times, and you can't help yourself. A soft-eyed, low-voiced girl, who walked with a crutch, and always wore delicate grays and dove colors. I knew her from the throng because of the "tap tap" of her crutch, and used always to speak to her when I saw her standing in the long line of girls who waited, on Saturday night, to deliver their work and receive their pay.

"That's bad," said I.
"Ten dollars' worth of shirts," said Dennison—"order shirts, too, and that makes it worse. I'm sorry for the girl; she had a pretty face of her own, and I always liked her; but of course it's necessary to stand by rules. Loses her deposit, and no more work."

"But suppose she pays for the missing work?"
"It isn't likely she'll do that," said Dennison. "This sort of girl seldom has ten dollars saved up."

"I don't believe it's her fault, Dennison," insisted I.

"She is responsible, isn't she?"

"Yes, but—"
Just then Mr. Buttonbell came in, with a great order in his hand from a New Orleans house. I looked at it.

"We shall have a tight pull of it, sir, to execute this," said I, dubiously.

"But it must be executed," said he. "Put on all your hands. Turn on a full head of steam. It won't do to let Peck and Pattison go to any other place."

And he bustled away.
"Very unfortunate," said Dennison. "Lame Hetty was one of our best hands."

Hetty Dorrance came the next morning, as usual, to receive work; and she had a ten dollar bank-note in her hand.

"Some kind friend has sent me this to pay for the lost rolls of work, sir," said she to me.

"You're in luck, Hetty," said I, frowning over a long volume of figures, and trying not to blush under the earnest look of her soft brown eyes.

"And I'm much—oh, so much obliged to him, whoever he is," she added, in a low tone. "But I can't use it unless—unless you think I am innocent."

"Of course I do," said I, looking up at the

"I would stake my honor that she is no thief, Mr. Jones," said I, hotly.

"Well," retorted the old man, cautiously, "it's necessary to curtail the list a little, and it may as well be Hetty as any one."

But Hetty Dorrance never came to learn her doom. Day after day went by, and the familiar tap of her crutch sounded no more on the floor. I grew uneasy.

"Perhaps she is ill—alone—in want!" I thought.

And the more I pondered on the matter, the more uneasy I felt.

"Perhaps she is dead!"

And with that last, overwhelming thought came the full revelation of my own heart.

I had grown to love Hetty Dorrance.

Well, why not? I could afford a wife as well as most men. Hetty was only a work-girl, and lame also; but she had a face like one of heaven's angels, and a heart as white as a lily. Of that I felt certain. I loved her; why should I not marry her?

So I sat down and wrote her a little note, saying simply that I loved her, and asking her if she could consent to become my wife; and I concluded by saying that I would call on the morrow to receive her answer.



"ON A FALLEN BEECHEN BOUGH."

quiver of her voice. "I don't believe you would take a pin, Hetty. I've known you for four years, and I believe you are a good girl. It's an awkward mistake somewhere; but there's not many mistakes, my girl, but what Heaven clears up in its own good time. Now take your place in line; there's no time to be lost this morning."

So the matter was settled; but somehow a cloud rested on Lame Hetty. Those who had been fast friends before avoided her now; the coarser-minded whispered and giggled when the "tap tap" of her crutch sounded on the floor.

"Oh, Mr. Harvey," said poor Hetty one day, when Jenny Warren, the proudest and prettiest of our work girls, had declined to respond to her modest bow, "it's very, very hard to bear."

"Wait, Hetty; only wait," said I, cheerily.
"But it is breaking my heart," said she.
"They all think I am a thief."

"I don't, Hetty."
"I know that, sir. I should drown myself, if at least one person in the world didn't believe that I was innocent."

The winter wore itself away. The busy season was succeeded by one of comparative dullness; and among the hands struck off the list was Hetty Dorrance.

"Once a thief, always a thief," said old Jones, the cutter. "I'd just as soon that girl shouldn't work for us."

Just as I had sent my letter off, there came a knock at the door.

"Mr. Harvey, are you alone? Can I speak to you for one moment?"

"Is that you, Helena Arden? Why, I thought you were married and gone to California!" I cried.

"I am married—to a spendthrift and a villain!" said she, with a little, hoarse laugh; "and I am going to California to-morrow; but I wanted to say a word to you first. I wanted to pay you for something."

"For what?"

"That roll of work which people accused Hetty Dorrance, the lame girl, of taking."

"Helena! Did you take it?"

"Yes," she cried, recklessly, "I took it! I wanted money sorely then; the landlady wouldn't let me have my trunks to be married until I paid her what I owed her. I was standing by Lame Hetty that evening. I saw her lay the piles of work on the desk; I saw them slip and fall off the heap. I was just going away, and it was an easy thing for me to stoop, as if for my own pocket-handkerchief, and pick them up. I pawned them, thinking I could easily redeem them; but I never did. Here is money to pay for them. I hope Hetty was not blamed."

"She was, though," said I, slowly.

"I can't help it," said Helena, flightily. "I've done my best. Will you see that she is righted?"

"As far as I can."

And Helena went away, muttering to herself something about all her accounts being closed at last. I paid but little attention to it at the time, but I remembered it afterwards.

I went the next evening to Hetty's simple lodgings, over a baker's shop.

"Miss Dorrance!" said the baker's wife, coming out of a back room, with a baby in her arms. "Why, didn't you know? She moved away."

"Moved! And my letter?"

"We got a letter here yesterday, sir, and we forwarded it to her. No. 36, Avenue Square, sir."

So I went to No. 36, Avenue Square—a little gem of a brown stone house, all bay-windows and balconies, standing in its own grounds; and there was Hetty at the casement, watching for me.

"Hetty," said I, "did you get my letter?"

"Yes, Mr. Harvey."

"And what is your answer?"

"That I will be your wife, Mr. Harvey, and that I am—oh, so thankful to have gained a good man's love!"

I stooped and kissed her daisy face.

"I suppose you are working here, Hetty?" said I. "It is a handsome house."

"No," said Hetty, half laughing and half crying. "I live here."

"Hetty! You!"

"My great-uncle died," said Hetty. "He was an old bachelor, and hated us all; but he couldn't take his money with him. I have inherited his fortune."

"It cannot be possible," said I, rubbing my forehead.

"But it is possible," said Hetty. "And it is true. I was just going to send to you to pay that ten-dollar bank-note back, when I got your letter."

"I have been paid, my girl," said I; and I told her about Helena Arden.

The next day we saw a little paragraph in the papers, how an unknown woman, with the words "Helena Arden," written on her pocket-handkerchief, had drowned herself at the foot of one of the crowded East River piers.

That is my story. It is simple enough; and yet, I think, it has the elements of romance in it.

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THE FAVORITE is printed and published by George E. DUBREUIL, Place d'Armes Hill, and 529 Antoine St., Montreal, Dominion of Canada.