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THE FAVORITE

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THE GITANA..

Expressly translated for the FAVORITE *from the French of Xavier de Montepin.*

LV.

MORALES' ESCAPE.

Moralès did as he was told. He disguised nothing. He attenuated nothing. He related everything without reticence or explanation.

His narrative was, of course, very lengthy.

More than once, while the Gitano spoke, indignation flashed from the eyes of his two hearers. It was nearly three o'clock in the morning when Moralès concluded.

"Now that we know all," said Tancred to Quirino, "our duty is to unmask the infamous Carmen and save the unfortunate Olivier."

"How save him!" inquired the Indian.

"I know not. But God will inspire us."

Moralès, a prey to the utmost anxiety, feebly demanded :

"Have I not purchased my liberty by the sincerity of my confession?"

"Your liberty, wretch?"

"But you promised me....."

"Life, if you told the truth; nothing more."

"And what do you mean to do with me?"

"Keep you prisoner until we have need of you to confound Carmen."

"I am lost," thought Moralès.

A whistle was heard and the quarter-master appeared.

"Tie up the man's hands," said Tancred, "take him to a cabin, double-lock it and station a guard at the door."

Roch obeyed. He took a small flat cord with which he confined the wrists of Moralès and dragged him into his prison.

At first the Gitano was overwhelmed with discouragement, but gradually his mind cleared up. He said to himself :

"More than once I have been in worse escapes than this, and I always managed to get out of them. We must never wholly despair. I must see whether there is not some chance of escape."

The eye of the Gitano had got used to the darkness. He spied on the background of the cabin a circular object. It was a bull's eye. By a swift convulsive movement, he slipped off his manacles, and, encouraged by this first success, crept up to the round window. He turned the little bolt and a gust of sharp, cold sea air struck his face.

"I am saved," he exclaimed.

Climbing up, he passed his head and shoulders through the little window.

About one foot above the window, there was an iron ring. This the Gitano seized, and collecting all his strength in a last desperate effort, succeeded in dragging his whole body through.

He then stretched himself upward. The feeble light of the lamp, suspended from the main mast, showed that the deck was quite clear.

He therefore crawled along the [illegible] reached the stern whence, to his immense joy, he descried a small boat in the water and attached to the vessel by a single rope.

Down this rope he rapidly slided and when he had safely taken his seat, he took a knife from his pocket and cut the boat loose.

To his surprise and chagrin, he just then observed that there were no oars in the boat. What was he to do? If daylight caught him in that situation, he would surely be recaptured by Tancred and Quirino.

He plunged his forehead into his open hands and reflected for a long time.

At the end of a quarter of an hour, when he raised his head, what was his bewilderment to find the form of the coaster, a receding speck in the horizon, and his own boat nearing the shore in the full propulsion of the tide.

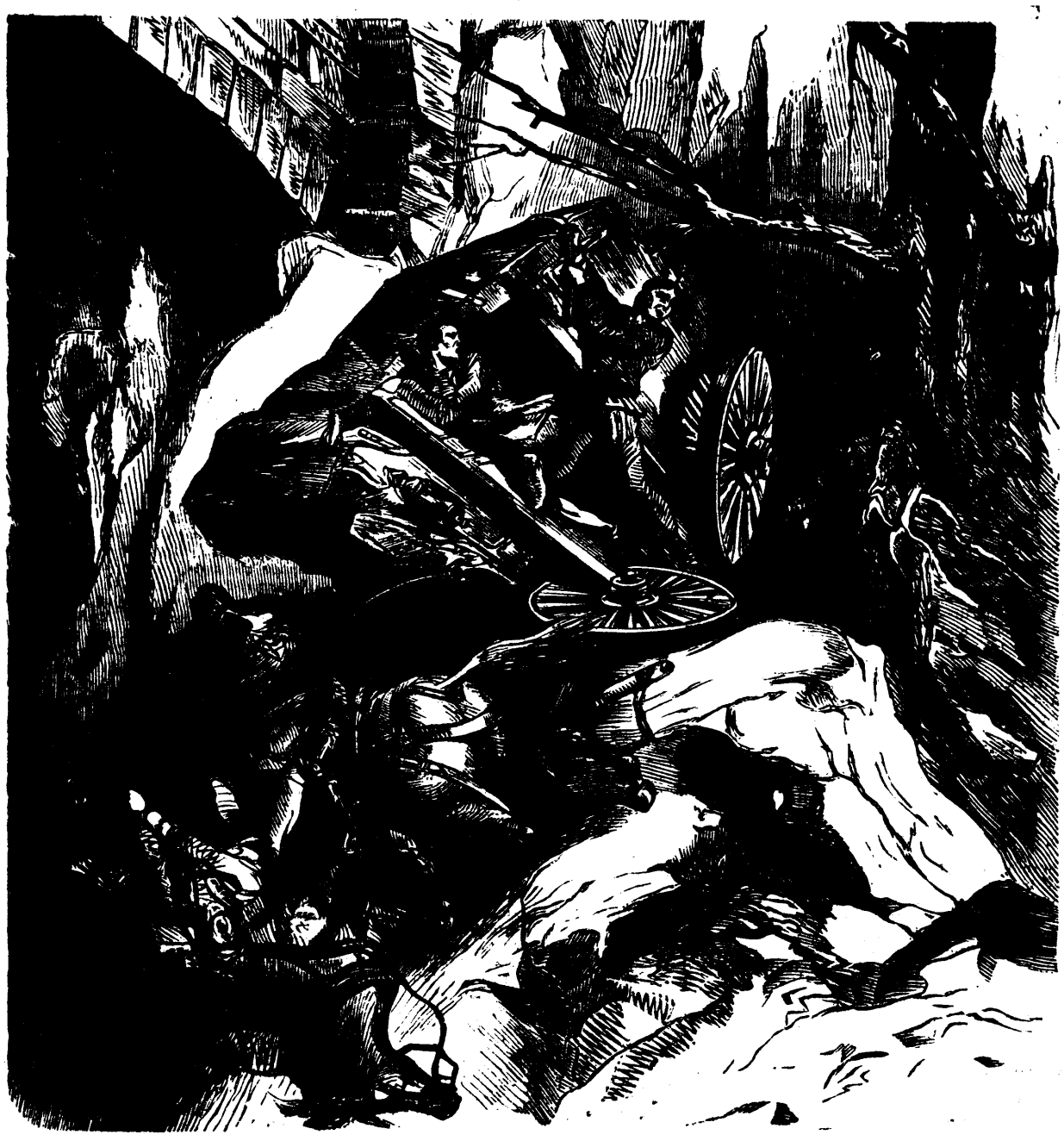
He felt that he was saved indeed.

A few minutes later he was met by some early fishermen's boats, and by them speedily transported to land.

He lost no time in repairing to Ingouville. On reaching his apartment, he changed his clothes, filled a valise with gold, armed himself with knives and pistols and rushed down to the stables.

There he saddled his fleetest horse, strapped on the valise behind him, and mounting, galloped away, without once looking behind.

"Let us go and join Carmen. She is even more threatened than I am. But her genius is invincible. She will save us both!"



"A TRIPLE CRY OF AGONY ROSE INTO THE CLEAR NIGHT."

LVI.

CARMEN AT SAINT-NAZAIRE.

A few days after the departure from Ingouville, Carmen's carriage pulled up at the principal inn of Savenay, a few leagues from St. Nazaire.

It was nine o'clock in the evening. The dancing girl ordered supper in her room and retired to bed, after having requested the inn-keeper to have three horses ready for her at break of day. At the same time, she ordered the two police officers to provide themselves with complete disguises of Breton peasants.

At peep of dawn, the young woman was up and dressing. She put on her maroon coat, with pearl-grey waistcoat and trouser, long riding boots and round hat whose ample sides were intended to conceal the upper part of her face.

Her little hand, well gloved, brandished a flexible whip; her silver spurs tinkled at every step she made.

Thus accoutred, she went into the court-yard.

The three horses were ready. She and the two officers, thoroughly disguised, mounted their saddles, and took the road.

When they had left the last house of Saven-

ay behind them, Carmen remained in her horse and said to her companions:

"We must separate here. I will take about an hour's lead of you and you must keep that distance between us."

"Very well, madame."

"You will stop at Saint-Nazaire."

"At what inn?"

"The *Breton Arms*."

"And what shall we do?"

"Maintain your disguises. Get your meals in the common hall. When you see me going in and out, pretend not to know me. You understand?"

"Perfectly, madame."

And Carmen galloped ahead.

At nine o'clock, she dismounted at the hotelry of master Le Huédé.

The worthy host received her with all the voluble hospitality for which he was famous. He served the stranger an elaborate breakfast in a private room, and was charmed with his handsome face and elegant manners.

Carmen questioned the inn-keeper on a number of insignificant points and his answers were both ready and diffuse.

She then prepared the way to sound him about his knowledge of Oliver. But the good man was proof against all her trickery. He feigned absolute ignorance in such an honest, simple manner, that Carmen felt altogether disconcerted and finally gave up any further attempt on her fidelity.

Abruptly finishing her breakfast, she took up hat and prepared to go out.

"You wish to see the curiosities of the country," said mine host.

"Precisely."

"Shall I detail some one to accompany you."

"Thank you. I will get along alone."

"When will you dine?"

"At five."

Carmen stepped downstairs, passed through the hall where she saw her disguised officers, and went forth.

"I mistrust the handsome youth," murmured the inn-keeper. "I fear he is intriguing against master Oliver. At any rate I will follow him."

But he had not the time to do this, for the post just then arrived, with great noise and in a cloud of dust, and stopped in front of his tavern. He had to go forward to meet the new arrival.

This consisted of a tall, lank, ugly personage who, slipping out of his seat, with awkward gesture and motion, exclaimed:

"Caramba! I am used up."

Carmen, on recognizing the individual from a little distance, became as pale as death. She rushed forward to meet her brother, before he had time to speak to the inn-keeper, and seizing Moralès by the hand, she said to Le Huédé:

"This gentleman is a relative. I expected him. I will go up with him to my room. Do you need anything, my dear cousin?"

"I am dying of hunger and thirst."

"A second breakfast then," said the Gitana to the host, "and another bottle of your Canary wine."

Moralès after taking his valise from the vehicle, followed Carmen upstairs.

When they were alone, the latter said.

"Moralès, your presence frightens me. Speak, speak quick. What is it?"

"What is it? Why, we are lost."

"Lost?"

"Yes, without resource or escape."

"Explain yourself. Where is the danger?"

"Tancred de Najac, your first husband, your only lawful husband....."

"Is not dead?"

"He is living. He is in France. He has discovered us. And what is worse, Tancred and Quirino, now reconciled, are working together for our destruction."

Carmen stood a moment as if overwhelmed. Recovering however, she exclaimed:

"It is terrible. But let the danger be ever so great, I will fight to the end."

She would have said more, but the door opened and the inn-keeper entered with Moralès' breakfast.

LVII.

THE FAIRIES' GLEN.

"Now, brother," said Carmen forcing herself to be calm, when the inn-keeper had left the room, "tell me your story as briefly as possible. You understand, of course, how necessary it is that I should know all that has happened. So you mean to say that Tancred has risen from the dead and is at Havre with Quirino?"

"He is."

"And you have seen them?"

"I more than saw them. Alas! I was their prisoner, and what is more, had it not been for the extra amount of daring and cleverness it has pleased Heaven to bestow upon me, I should be a prisoner yet."

"Bah!" cried Carmen, shrugging her shoulders, "it is no question of either your daring or cleverness, but of the danger that threatens us. Tancred and Quirino know that you escaped from the wreck of the "Marsouin," and that is even more than I care that they should know, but they do *not* know that I too escaped, and that the Gitana Carmen has assumed the name and the place of Annunziata Rovero. They are not aware of this, are they?"

"They know it all," groaned Moralès.

"It cannot be. They could be sure of it only after seeing me."

Moralès offered no reply, and Carmen continued in an impatient tone:

"Who can have told them the truth? Can it have been you, Moralès? Were you mad enough to do such a thing?"

The Gitano replied with a downward motion of the head. Carried off by an irresistible burst of rage Carmen brought her fist down upon the table.

"Coward! wretch! you have lost us!"

Then almost immediately resuming her self-command she proceeded in a calm voice to question her brother.

"But what made you betray us? You must have had a most powerful reason for speaking out?"

"I had a rope round my neck," said Moralès piteously. "I did my best to put them off the track, but Tancred scented the lie at once. I had to choose between freedom and the gallows, and I lost heart."

"So in order to save your life you confessed the whole story?"

"Yes."

"Do Tancred and Quirino know that I am in Brittany, and my object in coming here? Do they know where to find me?"

"Alas, yes!"

"In that case they will lose no time in following you."

"That is only too evident. Fortunately I had a few hours' start."

"Are you sure of that?"

"Certain. They would only discover my escape at daybreak. Then they must have lost time in procuring post-horses, while I did not lose a minute. So we have at least time to make our escape."

"Escape!" said Carmen proudly. "Escape! Give up like a coward both my fortune and my revenge. You little know me, Moralès, if you think that I intend retreating before the enemy. No, no! I will hold my position at any price, and fight to the last—either for victory or death, and I am sure that I shall succeed. But I do not want to hinder your escape, brother. If you want to be off, go."

"And leave you!" cried Moralès, fascinated by his sister's enthusiasm, "never! I remain with you, and trust to you to find a means for extricating me with yourself from this dangerous position."

"So be it. But I insist on one condition. You must pledge yourself to absolute obedience."

"I swear to obey you in every thing. Whatsoever you tell me to do I will do."

"Good. Finish your meal as quickly as possible, for we must start at once."

"Start again," cried the Gitano in a piteous tone, "whither?"

"For Savenay."

"How are we to travel?"

"In the carriage that brought me here."

"But, my dear sister, I am almost dead. I cannot survive travelling in that infernal machine."

"Moralès," said Carmen dryly, "obey me, or leave me."

"I will go," returned Moralès in a despairing voice. And to make up for his disappointment he attacked with new vigor the viands before him.

Meanwhile Carmen had given orders to put the horses to at once. The landlord returned almost immediately with the unwelcome news that the horses were completely broken and that it would be impossible for the gentlemen to resume their journey that day.

Carmen was for a moment dismayed at this information, but she soon made up her mind as to the course to be pursued.

"Did you not tell me a little while ago," she asked, "that two peasants had arrived at your inn with a pair of horses that closely resemble my own."

The landlord had certainly said so; and what was more the two men were still below. At Carmen's request one of them was shown up and after a little haggling an arrangement was made by which the gentlemen were to have the use of the horses for an indefinite time, the two peasants remaining at the inn till their return.

Half an hour later Moralès and Carmen were on the road to Savenay; the former dividing his attention between the precious valise strapped behind him and the relation of his encounter with Tancred and Quirino. On her side the Gitana was dividing her interest between her brother's story and the appearance of the road they were following. It was not however upon the picturesque Breton scenery that she was intent, but upon a bold scheme the detail of which she was industriously evolving in her mind.

Some three miles from Savenay the travelers reached a narrow deep ravine through which a noisy mountain torrent chafed its way over a rocky bed, This ravine was known as the Fairies' Glen. It was spanned by a massive stone bridge, the single arch of which rose to a height of forty feet above the stream, connecting the dangerous zig-zag road on either side. Nor was the passage of the bridge without its dangers, as was testified by the number of black wooden crosses, some old and worm-eaten, others new and freshly painted, erected to the memory of the unfortunate travelers who had found a tomb in the rocky bed below. The sides of the bridge were guarded by a very low parapet and the whole place was plunged, even by day, in a deep gloom produced by the thick foliage of a number of huge oaks that overshadowed it. Altogether it was one of the last spots that one would care to pass either with a restive horse or a careless driver.

On the middle of the bridge Carmen stopped and looked eagerly around her.

"What are you doing?" asked Moralès.

"Don't you see that I am looking."

"Queer taste! There is nothing uglier than this infernal scenery. The more thought that I passed this chasm this morning at a gallop gives me the shivers. Fortunately I had the curtains down, and I could not see the danger I was in. Had I known it I should have died of fright. It was a miracle that we did not roll over into that devil's hole there."

"You are right, brother," said Carmen meditatively, "it was almost a miracle. Don't you think," she continued in the same tone, "that a cool and courageous man who wished to get rid of an enemy and knew that his enemy would pass this spot, could bring about his wish with very little trouble, and that the voice of the people, which, we are told, is the voice of God, would ascribe to chance an *accident* that had been skilfully prepared?"

Moralès stared at his sister a moment, and then broke into a hideous laugh.

"Caramba!" he cried. "I understand! Right once more! I flatter myself that I sometimes have good ideas, but I never should have thought of this! What a head-piece you have got. By my soul, Carmen, you are a perfect genius!"

Without acknowledging her brother's praises, Carmen gave the rein to her horse, and galloped up the ascent that led past the old oaks.

Brother and sister arrived at Savenay without exchanging another word, and put up at the inn Carmen had left that morning, and where she had left her carriage and baggage.

As soon as she was shown to her room the Gitana sent for the host, and after assuring herself that travelers bound from Havre to St. Nazaire would be sure to pass that way she engaged all the post-horses belonging to the inn. Then enlisting the landlord's sympathies by confiding to him that she was a Government agent employed in watching the movements of two State criminals who would probably arrive at the inn that night, a piece of deception that was readily believed by the inn-keeper on production of the warrant issued against Oliver Le-Vaillant by the civil lieutenant of Havre—she gave orders that all travellers putting up at the inn must be detained under pretence of there being no horses, until such time as she might think fit to let them pursue their journey.

Having given the inn-keeper his instructions she completed her preparations by sending Moralès—notwithstanding his protestations of fatigue—to purchase a long, stout piece of rope. This done she allowed her brother to take the rest he so much needed, and retired to her own room, where she changed her clothes for a blue coat, red waistcoat and red pantaloons. Then after putting out the light she threw herself full dressed as she was, on the bed, to watch for the arrival of her victims.

About two in the morning she was startled by a noise in the street, and sitting up, listened eagerly.

LVIII.

DEVIL'S WORK.

The noise heard by the Gitana speedily resolved itself into a clattering of horses' hoofs and rolling of wheels, which appeared to stop in front of the inn.

In a moment Carmen was at the window, but it was so dark and the panes were so dirty that she was only able to make out a pair of smoking horses, and a heavy carriage, from which two men heavily muffled were alighting.

In a few moments a knock was heard at the door. Carmen opened and discovered the landlord who had come to announce the arrival of two guests. The two gentlemen, he said, had been very anxious to continue their journey, but according to his instructions he had informed them that no horses were to be had just then. The gentlemen were even then waiting downstairs while supper was being prepared.

Could the landlord describe the new arrivals, Carmen asked.

Yes; both were young. The one a handsome young gentleman of twenty-five or twenty-six, wearing the undress uniform of a naval officer. The other was evidently a foreigner; a dark bronzed man with long black hair and a decided foreign accent. For that matter, he added, the young gentleman (meaning Carmen) could easily have a look at them through the window which gave on the yard.

Carmen readily embraced this suggestion, without, however, betraying her eagerness. The landlord conducted her into the yard, and peeping through the dim window panes she recognized, with a beating heart, Tancred and Quirino, her own and Moralès' bitterest enemies.

Pressing ten gold peices into the innkeeper's hand she bid him observe the strictest silence and saddle her own and her friend's horses and lead them a hundred yards down the street in the direction of St. Nazaire, where he was to wait. An hour later he was to inform the new comers that horses had been procured, and that they could resume their journey.

Swiftly returning upstairs Carmen made her way to her brother's room. Moralès was plunged in a heavy lethargic sleep. Twice she called him, but he made no reply. And last she shook him by the shoulder. With a sudden start he awoke and looked around in bewilderment.

"What is the matter?" he cried excitedly. "What do you want with me? By all the saints of Estremadura what is going on in this devil's own house?"

"Get up, Moralès," Carmen whispered in his ear. "Get up! The hour is come. The enemy is here!"

The Gitano turned pale.

"What?" he murmured, half dead with fright, "Tancred and Quirino?"

"They are here."

The Spaniard's face became perfectly livid, heavy drops of perspiration formed on his forehead, and he could hardly muster strength enough to ejaculate:

"All is lost! Let us get away if there is still time."

"Are you mad, Moralès?" returned Carmen sternly. "Or do you forget that we came here on purpose to find those from whom you want to run away? Be a man and I promise you that an hour hence the danger you fear so much will no longer exist."

The Gitano, as we know, had a firm belief in his sister's genius. Her words reassured him. Passing over his shoulder the thong that held his valise he asked what he was to do.

"Take the rope and come downstairs," was Carmen's order.

Softly creeping down the stairs they made their way into the street without meeting anyone. The landlord was waiting at the appointed place; the brother and sister mounted their horses, and with a last recommendation from Carmen to the Boniface not to forget to let his two guests have horses an hour afterwards, the two galloped off. It was a bright starlit night and they made their way without any difficulty to their destination. Half an hour after leaving the inn they drew up at the bridge over the Fairies' Glen.

Dismounting they led their horses into the brushwood on one side of the road and securely fastened them to a tree.

"Now to work!" whispered Carmen, and the brother and sister set with a will about the preparations for the devil's work they meditated.

At the exact spot where the zig-zag road made a last and sharp turn before touching on the bridge stood two immense oaks, one on each side of the road. To these Moralès tied the rope, at a height of about two feet above the ground, it thus formed a perfectly taut, but almost imperceptible barrier extending from one side of the highway to the other.

"Are you sure your knots are fast?" Carmen asked.

"I would answer for them with my life," her fellow-conspirator replied. "The suddenness and violence of the shock may break the rope, but the knots will never give."

"Still we must be ready for a mischance," continued Carmen. "We may possibly fail—"

"And then?"

"And then—how many pistols have you in your belt?"

"Four."

"Give me two. And remember, if it is necessary to use them, every shot must tell."

"Very good," returned the Spaniard, handing a pair of pistols to his companion. "If the rope does prove a failure, powder and shot will not."

The two then took up their position on the trunk of a fallen tree, at a point whence they could command the road and the bridge, but where they were hidden from any one who might be passing.

For some time they sat in silence occupied with their own thoughts.

"Listen!" whispered Carmen suddenly, laying her hand on her brother's arm, "I think I hear the noise of wheels."

Moralès listened a moment.

"You are right," he said. "They are coming sure enough. If the poor devils want to commend their souls to God they had better be quick about it."

Just then a carriage appeared at the top of the incline. It was drawn by two horses which a postilion was urging on at a tremendous pace. Down the hill it swept like a hurricane to the spot where the conspirators were concealed.

Moralès was unable to look upon what he knew must follow. He turned away his head. Carmen, panting with excitement, looked on as if fascinated.

Suddenly the two horses stumbled and fell together. The lantern that hung in front of the carriage disappeared. The carriage itself disappeared. The horses disappeared. A triple cry of agony rose into the clear night. Then followed a strange crashing noise. Then all was quiet except the rushing of the stream beneath.

(To be continued.)

THE BALL NIGH..

Quietly opened the library door—so quietly that I should scarcely have noticed it had not my keen ear detected at the same moment the soft rustle of a woman's garment as it swept over the threshold. I guessed at once who it was, and I knew, without a doubt, as soon as she crossed the floor. That step, so velvety, some would have said so "catty" (I did), could belong to no one but my stepmother. I was anxious to know what brought her there, for she was no lover of books, while she had a perfect horror of accounts. I was not kept long in ignorance of her intentions.

"Mr. Hastings," she said, addressing my father, who sat dozing in his old-fashioned arm-chair, "I want you to insist upon Ellen's going to the ball to-night. I have said and done all I could, but she is determined to stay at home. Won't you, for once, use your authority?"

"What do I care whether she goes or stays? What does it matter to anybody? Let the girl enjoy herself in her own way."

"But you ought to care if you don't, Mr. Hastings. I do wish you would take a little more interest in your family affairs, and not leave everything to me to see to."

She spoke in a grieved tone.

"I pay all the bills, and that, considering how many and large they are, is doing about as much as could be reasonably expected of an old man like me. And, as to Ellen, why let the child have her own way. As long as she's good and dutiful to me I'm not going to force or thwart her inclinations."

"But you ought to think of her health, Mr. Hastings. It is the worst thing in the world for young girls like her to seclude themselves so entirely from society, and sit moping all day long over books, or drawing, or sewing ——"

"Ellen takes a long walk every day," interrupted my father.

"Yes, but where does she go? Anywhere except to those places where young ladies ought to frequent. Moping through lanes, scrambling into dusty garrets, or creeping down into damp cellars. I expect she'll bring some horrid disease yet into the house. I believe in charity, but I believe also a young lady should have some regard for her health."

"I don't see but that Ellen is as healthy as the most of girls. I never hear her complain of her back, or side, or head; she has neither consumption, bronchitis nor neuralgia, and I never knew her to be nervous or to faint away. Beside, if she were out of health, she wouldn't be very likely to regain it in a ball-room. She should go into the country ——"

"Country this time of year, with the snow over the fences! I don't believe you know, Mr. Hastings, that it is midwinter."

"I should think I ought to, wife; I paid a heavy enough coal bill this morning."

"And never grumbled a word, the dear good-natured man you are. But to go back to Ellen. I do really wish you'd coax her to go in society a little more. A girl with her beauty and accomplishments and talents ought not to live so secluded. She owes it to herself and you and her friends—and," she hesitated and then said, softly, "to me."

Then there was a sob, seemingly strangled ere it had full utterance.

"You know I am her step-mother, only in name though, for I love her almost as I do my own May, and would do quite as much to insure her happiness; but the world, the cold, cruel, censorious world, is always ready to talk and make mischief whether there is a just cause or not. And I have lately learned something that has given me great pain. People say—oh, how can they be so unfeeling!—they say it is my fault that Ellen does not go out more, that I am jealous of her, and want to keep her out of the way less she shall eclipse poor little May; that I thrust her into the background to give my own daughter a better chance for an eligible marriage; that I spend all your money on us two, and that Ellen's allowance is such that she can't make a decent appearance in society; and they say a great deal more—oh, such cruel, cruel things! And you know it's not so. You know that I've never once asked you what you gave your own daughter for spending money, that ——"

"But why need you mind the senseless talk of folks who'd better a good deal be looking after their own affairs? As long as I don't find any fault with you or May why need you care for the speech of other people? When I married you I promised to be a father to your daughter, that she and Ellen should share the same while I lived, and be coheiresses when I was dead. And I've kept my word to the letter. I've never interfered with May's enjoyments. I know she likes gay society, and I'm willing she should. I shouldn't make a fuss if she went to a ball six nights out of a week; only I should, for decency's sake, wish she'd manage to get in from the last one before midnight. You and May are privileged to do just as you please, and you, I don't care what the world says, you must let Ellen and me do as we please. I won't have any interference with the child. If she's happier at home, at home she shall stay."

My father did not often rouse himself to so long a speech, but when he did his tone had an earnestness in it that made itself felt.

My stepmother knew it was time to stop, so she only said, wistfully:

"I can't help wishing though that Ellen would go just this one night, for it's to be such a grand affair and so select. I know she would enjoy herself, and be, withal, the belle of the crowd. I declare," and she threw a passionate fervor into her tone, "it does seem too bad that such a queenly figure as hers should never be seen anywhere except in the haunts of poverty. I wish you were as proud of her as I am."

And then she turned to go.

"I wish you knew how proud I am of you," my father said, at last. It was only a whisper, but such an earnest one that it penetrated even to my draperied alcove. "Proud of you, of May or Ellen! Is there another man in the wide world that has three such graces? Not one, not one. And all I want of you is that each be happy in her own way."

And then he kissed her, and the dear affectionate old man went back to his chair and then she passed out.

Don't think now that I approve of eavesdropping. I do not. I abhor it; and had not Mrs. Hastings's first sentence assured me that I was to be the topic of conversation I should have drawn the curtain and shown myself to her. But I was curious to know what had come over her of late, and why she, who during the first year of her marriage had so sedulously secluded me, should all at once have changed her tactics. I felt assured it was no love she bore me. What, then, was the reason? I learned it from that talk. The world, her world, the fashionable set with whom she mingled, was censuring her. It had seen through her flimsy veil, and it demanded that Mr. Hastings's daughter should have her rights. She was sensitive to the world's good opinion. She was determined it should recognize her as a model woman, a stepmother impartial in her affections. Therefore I must go to the ball that night.

I sat a while and thought. I could not. She was a selfish, unprincipled woman, who had wheedled my father into marrying her, and who accommodated herself to all his peculiarities, because she knew it was necessary she should keep on the right side of him; for my father, although naturally indolent and averse to argument, when his anger or prejudices were aroused drove everything before him.

I did not love her daughter either. May was as heartless as she was beautiful; not a spark of true girlish feeling in her. To be treated as a belle by the young men, to be acknowledged as a leader of fashion by the young ladies, to live a gay, thoughtless, butterfly life for a few years and then marry a millionaire, make the tour of Europe, and return to queen it over a palatial home—such was her ambition. How could I love her? I did not care that she had ingratiated herself into my father's affections, though I knew it was from policy, because I felt that she had never usurped my place there. I knew that, do or say what they would, he would never cease to love his only child, the child who, as he used so often and proudly to say, "was all mother."

Do not think now that I had any of those foolish, bitter prejudices against stepmothers which make such sad havoc in the domestic peace of hundreds of households. I had not. I had been too truly educated by my own mother to feel ought of them. She had taught me what indeed my own experience had since corroborated, that second marriages are not necessarily unhappy, that there are no limits to the affectionate capacities of the human heart, that while there is life there must be love there, that is, if it be a thorough heart, a heart worthy of the name. She had brought me up to feel great tenderness towards those who held the delicate relationship of step parents, saying that they had a rugged path to travel, and it should be the aim of all who cared for them to help them over the rough places and throw the stones out instead of in their way.

I had always expected my father would marry a second time. Indeed, to own the whole truth, I wanted him to. I had even selected a wife for him. Dear Mrs. Somers, if he had only married her what a happy family we should have been! I could have called her mother without feeling that I desecrated the holy name, such a true woman as she was. And her little Allie, what a pet she would have been. And Edward, the noble-hearted intellectual young man that he was, struggling so hard to win his way in the world, that his widowed mother and fatherless sister might never know care or want—how proud I should have been to have called him brother and known that my father loved him as a son.

Ah, it was a hard, hard blow to me when that castle tottered into ruins. And though I never disputed my father's right to his own choice I could not bring my heart to love the mother and sister he had given me. I treated the one with the respect due to my father's wife' called her mother when I spoke to her, but always Mrs. Hastings at other times; while to May I showed the politeness due to my father's stepdaughter.

I do not mean that I was frigidly ceremonious in my intercourse with her, for I was not. I was kindly polite, always ready to help her with my needle when her dressmaker or seamstress disappointed her, and assisting her from my own purse when, as was often the case—for she was woefully extravagant — her own allowance fell short. But love her I could not, nor her mother either. Still we did not often clash. My father was satisfied with them both, and I loved him too tenderly to wish to do aught that might disturb his domestic peace. There was a tacit understanding between us that we were to be friendly to each other's faces and that neither was to seek out the real state of feeling existing between us.

Sitting there on that particular morning, and thinking over all these things and many more, I suddenly determined that I would accede to my stepmother's wish, and attend Mrs. Morgan's ball. I have never been able to account for the mental process which I must have gone through with to arrive at that conclusion, and it matters little. I decided to go, and, having decided, of course I must bestir myself to select a dress, for it was now nearly twelve.

I peeped out of my little sanctum. My father was fast asleep. I stole up to him and kissed him on his cheeks, first one and then the other. He opened his eyes lazily and smiled. I kissed him again and whispered:

"I'm going to the ball to-night."

"Good girl, good girl," said he, and relapsed into his nap.

Dear old man! he would have said the same had I told him I was going to stay at home He did not think "Ellen" could do wrong. I am glad he did not know how I felt towards his wife and stepchild. But he did not, no, and never should. I would bear with them for his sake.

I went to my chamber, and, unlocking one of my bureau drawers, took out an old-fashioned jewel-case, the key of which I wore constantly about my person. One might have thought there was valuable gems treasured there, but instead it held only a heavy door key. Dropping that into my pocket, I hurried up to the attic, taking care though that my slippered feet made no patter either on the staircase or the bare floor above.

I stopped before one particular dormer bedroom and listened cautiously. Hearing only the throbbing of my own heart, I ventured to take out the key and unlock the door. Passing in, I locked it from the inside, and then hung my black silk apron over the knob. If they found out where I was they should not see what I was doing.

When I drew aside the heavy curtains and looked about me I was empirically "monarch of all I surveyed." This room belonged exclusively to me, and it was the only room that did; nor was this all — everything that it contained was mine, mine only. I had taken possession of it the very day my father had told me of his contemplated marriage, taken it wth his permission, and had a lock of peculiar make put on the door—a lock that none but an expert could pick. Here I had brought all my dead mother's wearing apparel, jewels, knick-knacks, papers and letters, and also all the clothing she had bought for me for the two years previous to her decease. It was litterally filled with cedar chests and trunks, and so thoughtful had I been that I had even persuaded my father to purchase for me a small fire-proof safe, into which I had deposited the jewels and papers.

Neither my stepmother nor her daughter had ever crossed the threshold of that little room, and, whatever they guessed, they were in reality ignorant of its contents. It was veritably a Bluebeard's den to them.

Opening one of the chests, I took from it a white silk dress. So carefully had it been folded and so well guarded from dust and air, that it looked as snowy and lustrous as if fresh bought, whereas it had lain there nearly four years. Tears came into my eyes as I shook it out. Can you wander? That dress my own mother had purchased for me to wear at my "coming-out party." Alas! she was taken suddenly ill just a week before, and when the eventful night came which was to have seen me arrayed in it I sat on my poor father's knee, clad in the black bombazine which had been hurriedly got up for the funeral.

Keep a thing seven years, and it will come in fashion again, they say. I looked at this white silk dress. It had only been kept four years, yet it was so nearly in the then style that none would have suspected its age.

"It will do," I said to myself, with quite satisfaction.

It had never been trimmed. The dressmaker had sent for the lace the very day my mother was taken ill. Of course no one thought of orders then, and so after the funeral it came home lacking those finishing touches which give style to a dress.

From another chest I took a box of rich laces flounces, edgings and a bertha. They had been sent to me by an aged relative of my mother as a present for my eighteenth birthday, and were to have been worn with this dress. Despite my blinding tears, I looked at them now with exquisite delight, for I dote on laces, and have often said if I were poor and could not get the real, before I would wear imitatation I would use the plain linen exclusively for both collars and cuffs. There was a little fortune in these that I now held in the slant of the sunbeams; like frostwork on mist they seemed there; something for fairies instead of humanity.

Wiping my eyes and girding on my resolution, I sat down and commenced trimming my dress. I had taste and skill, so much of both that May often said that if I should be left poor I could easily earn my living with my needle. Thus I made a short task of what was before me, and had soon the pleasure of seeing my dress completed, and, without any vanity, I knew I should be the best as well as the richest dressed of all the throng that should attend Mrs. Morgan's party.

Spreading out the robe carefully, I left it, and, locking the door securely, went down to my chamber. I was selecting my skirts when some one tapped. I knew the tap. It was catty, like her footstep.

"Why, where in the world have you been hiding, Ellen?" exclaimed my stepmother as she entered. "I've searched the house high and low for you,"

I was apparently absorbed at that moment in ascertaining whether or not there was a flaw in the fluting of one of my ruffled skirts. When I did look up it was with a blank face, as though I had not heard her question or remark.

She did not repeat either, but continued talking in the same tone:

"I've come, Ellen, to see if it isn't possible even yet to induce you to change your mind and attend the ball to-night."

"I have concluded to go," I answered, quietly, taking out another skirt and inspecting the trimming closely.

"Have you?" There was no mistaking that emphasis. It expressed profound astonishment. "Well, I am glad you have at last come to your senses. May will be delighted, and so will Stevee" (this pronunciation is her own), "and so will everybody. But what brought about this change? I cannot help feeling curious to know."

"Oh, I concluded I'd go once and see if there was as much enjoyment in gay society as you and May tell about. I am going to see if it pays as well as staying at home."

Apparently this satisfied her, for she immediately began about my dress.

"It's too late, of course, to do anything about a new one, though if you had decided yesterday we might possibly—possibly, I say—have got one, there was a splendid rose-colored satin at Stephens's that would have been exquisite—the same price and quality as the blue one I got for May. Let's see." And she opened the door of my wardrobe. "Oh, here's just the thing, this pearl-colored silk. No one has ever seen you wear it here." And she took it from the hook.

"I shall wear white," said I, laying out the skirts I had selected.

"White!—but what have you nice enough in white? Oh, I remember—that India mull you wore last summer. It will be beautiful!"

Here a malicious gleam quivered in her eye. I understood it. I should be eclipsed totally by the splendor of May's blue satin. Then her brow clouded. I understood that too. The cold, cruel, censorious world of which she had told my father might, probably would, make invidious remarks about the contrast between the two daughters, the real heiress in mull, the adopted one in satin.

"Hadn't you better wear this peal silk, Ellen?"

"No; I prefer white. It's the first ball I've attended here since—since I laid off black, and white is the most appropriate." Then, seeing that the shadow was still there, I added, playfully, "I see you are afraid to trust my taste, but I assure you I will do credit to your training and to my father's position"

She was flattered, for I did not often use that tone to her, and went away with a self-satisfied look that almost made me repent the part I was playing, for I was playing a part. I was going to the ball with the determination to be the cynosure of all eyes, to eclipse every one with my dress, jewels, style, talk, dancing, playing and singing. I was going to show my stepmother that I was a dangerous rival for little May, and then I trusted I would be left at home in peace, free to follow my own chosen pursuits, whether they took me into my father's library or into the dark and damp haunts of destitution.

"You'll want Susette to assist you," said she, as we left the dining-room. "I'll send her as soon as she has finished with May and myself, or you may have her first, just as you please."

"I shall not need her. Bessie is quite equal to my wants. Just let me know when you are ready, as I want to read till the last moment."

"Read!" exclaimed May, petulantly. "I verily believe, Ellen, if you were dying, you'd read till the last moment. You'd better keep your eyes bright for conquests."

I did not retort, but calmly summoned our little chambermaid to my room. My father only allowed one waiting-maid to all three of us, Indeed he often said, good-naturedly, that "it was all nonsense for women to think of such a thing; he'd no patience with it. Just as though we couldn't put up our own hair and tie our own shoestrings," and a great deal more; but he never refused to pay Susette her monthly wages.

I went out so seldom that I had very little need of her, and of late I had called on Bessie, finding that she had quite as good taste as the Parisienne, and was more to my mind in every way, never disturbing my reveries with ill-timed loquaciousness.

"I am going to the ball to-night, Bessie," I said, "and I want you to dress me. Look at this picture." And I showed her a mezzotint that I had kept in my portfolio for many months. "Do you think you can put my hair up in that way? It's a style that would suit my face, and it isn't common."

She studied the plate attentively for a few minutes, then, looking up confidently, answered:

"Yes, I can. Your hair is so long and heavy that I can do it easily; but what shall I put in that space where there are pearls in the picture?"

"I'll find something that'll answer."

And I submitted myself to her hands.

"Now, please don't look, Miss Ellen, will you, till I get it done?"

And she turned the dressing-mirror so that it was impossible for me to catch a reflection if I had cared to do so.

She worked patiently, and I waited quietly, without any anxiety; for I had perfect confidence in her skill, and I knew she would exert herself to the utmost, that her young lady, as she always called me, should not be outdone by Susette's.

"Oh, if I only had some pearls now!" she cried out, at last, standing a little way off to watch the effect.

"Hand me that jewel-case."

And I pointed to one on the bureau. I had taken it that day from the safe in the attic.

Her eyes grew big with curiosity as I opened it, but when she saw me lift from its white satin resting-place a bandeau of pearls that a queen might have coveted she fairly clapped her hands with joy, saying at the same moment:

"And Miss May has only a string of sequins for hers!"

She had been very still hitherto, but now, in spite of herself, little bursts of laughter would ripple from her lips, and snatches of ballads, and exclamations of delight; yet she kept busy all the while.

Two or three of her verses haunted me. I had heard her hum them before, and once when I asked her where she learned them she said she couldn't tell—she believed she had always known them. They were set to a wild chanting tune that I often even yet seem to hear when I sit alone at twilight.

"I combed my bonnie ladie's hair,
I fastened it with jewels rare,
I dressed her in a robe of white—
Her own true love she'll see to-night!

The storm is over, the wind is fair,
The pilot is watching the channel with care,
The waves are still and the water is white—
Oh, my ladie she'll meet her lover to-night!

I kissed my bonnie ladie's hand,
I clasped her wrist with a golden band,
I gathered rosebuds, fresh and white—
Her own true love she'll see to-night!"

I had smuggled my dress downstairs at a time when I knew the family were all in the parlor. My bed stood in an alcove, which was hidden from the room by curtains of silk and lace. There I had hidden the costly thing. I knew Bessie was wondering what I was going to wear, but I did not enlighten her till the last moment. I knew she was wishing I had something richer than the dress that was spread out on the lounge, and thinking how Suzette would contrast it with Mary's satin. "But the pearls make up," she'd mutter between the verses, and then she'd dart off away and look at me.

"Not that, Bessie," I said, as she took up the mull—"I'm not going to wear that. You'll find my dress on the bed."

What a scream she gave! I thought she would surely arouse the house.

"Oh, Miss Ellen, where do you get it—such a splendid silk and such laces?"

And all the while she was putting it on me she chanted the old ballad in a spirit that fairly thrilled me with a prophecy, a wild, wondrous one, which almost snatched the color from my cheeks and the pulses from my heart.

"There, now you make look, Miss Ellen."

And she turned on every burner and dropped the glass so that I could see myself from head to foot. I did look and—was satisfied.

I had brought down a very deep and broad circular cloak that had belonged to my grandmother, and this I made Bessie wrap about me so securely as to conceal my dress, and yet so loosely as not to tumble it, while upon my head I wore an old-fashioned calash.

"Your pardon, Miss Ellen, but I must say it—you look like an old witch. It'll be just like a fairy story when you drop off those things. How I wish I could go with you and see them stare!"

"The carriage is waiting, Ellen, and we are going down. Are you ready?" said Mrs. Hastings.

I answered by opening the door. She gave a scream of horror.

"You're not going in that garb?"

"I must guard against taking cold, ma'am. I'm not as used to the night air as you and May."

She muttered something which I could not hear, and we went down. "Steevee" met us in the hall. He was my stepmother's nephew, a young fellow whom I could have liked if I had not felt intuitively that she meant to make a match between him and me, and thus keep the money in the family.

"I'm glad to see grandmother able to be out again," he said, gayly, as he seated me in the carriage.

I retorted. I was good at repartee when I was in the vein, as I was then. He followed me up, and between us two we made the ride seem brief. My stepmother was in the best of spirits, and so was May, when we alighted. They fancied that I was at last succumbing to their manœuvres. How little they knew me!

The dressing-room was a perfect jam. I stood on the threshold and watched my companions elbow their way through, and made up my mind I would wait till it thinned out a little. It suited my plans too. After a while they reappeared, May radiant in her blue satin, Mrs. Hastings regal in purple velvet.

"Why! aren't you ready yet?" they both exclaimed. "We thought you must be somewhere waiting."

"I should have fainted in that crowd. Besides Steevee has only two arms. You go first; send him back for me when you can spare him."

They smiled at each other, and I heard the elder whisper:

"She means an engagement shall be understood."

I meant to have my own way, and I did. They went down, and by-and-by I followed, perfectly satisfied with my escort, for the nephew was really a fine specimen of manhood. It was only unfortunate for him that he was related to my stepmother.

As Bessie had predicted, they stared at me—stared at me when I entered the room—stared at me as I promenaded its entire length—stared at me as I paid my compliments to our hostess, and stared at me as I mingled with the crowd. I played my part well so well that Mrs. Morgan stole up to me and whispered:

"I'm so glad you came, Ellen; you're the belle of the rooms—everybody is dying to know you. Where did you get your laces? I'm afraid you will ruin your father."

Half an hour afterwards she stole up again.

"Do you remember Ed Somers?"

Remember him! Didn't my heart leap into my throat at the very mention of his name? Of course, though I did not say this to her. I answered, simply:

"Yes, perfectly well."

"You know he and his mother and Allie left London suddenly two years ago, it was said because he was sent for to unravel a snarly lawsuit for one of his friends? Well, it turns out it was for themselves he went. His father's old uncle had died, and they were his heirs. He gets the money, no telling how much, and houses and lands, and the title too. He is now Lord Somers—think of it—our once poor, penniless Ed. But I must hurry and tell you the best of my story. He arrived here yesterday; and I fastened upon him at once. He couldn't resist me. It was like the vulture and the dove. But I was always his friend, and it is no more than right that I should have the éclat of presenting him under his title to the fashionable world here. Watch the door closely. They'll come soon—he and Allie; Mrs. Somers is too worn."

Watch the door! I did, with eagle eyes, while my heart was all impatience. Yet none about me guessed the wild emotions that were surging in my veins. I never once ceased my chatting with the fops about me. Wit, humor, raillery, sarcasm, each as it was needed fell from my lips in a rapid, unbroken jet, sparkling too as a water-crest in sunshine. I played my part well, so well that my stepmother and her daughter looked on in mute amazement. I was certainly developing a new phase of character to them, and I knew by the sinister glances that shot from their eyes that it was the last time they would ever coax me to attend a ball.

They came soon, and I was thankful, for my impatience was fast unhinging me. I could not have kept up the play much longer. I did not see them when they were announced, but soon afterwards I saw him talking with two gentlemen and looking as I thought curiously in my direction. I involuntarily sprang forward and my eyes caught his. There was a look of recognition, instantaneous and earnest, and then his whole face lighted up with joy.

I forgave Mrs. Hastings and May many a grievance when I saw the blank wonder of their faces as Lord Somers drew my arm within his own and with Allie on the other wandered off quite at his ease! Ah, I had my triumph then.

But I was generous; I could afford to be. I took an early opportunity to introduce them both to the mother and daughter who had been watching me so closely, and I even had forbearance enough to say "mamma" and "Sister May," endearing epithets I had never used before. And I did more. After I had opened the ball with Lord Somers I persuaded him to dance the next set with May, and I paired off "Steevee" and Allie together.

"Shall you be visible to-morrow morning?" he asked as we were making our adieux.

I answered in the affirmative, though I believe it is not orthodox for belles to be out of bed before noon after such a night of dissipation.

"Then I will call and take you to see my mother."

The ride home was a tiresome one to me. I did not feel like talking, and my three companions were determined I should, and in spite of myself I was obliged to confess that I had known the strangers years before. I was glad when we reached our own house.

I had not expected any one to sit up for me, but as I opened my room door I heard the wild chanting tune of the old ballad stealing up from the depths of my easy-chair, and in another minute little Bessie was flying to the burners and turning on a full stream of gas.

How pleasant it seemed to come back and find everything so cheerful - a bright fire in the grate, my double gown spread out before it, and a little kettle humming on the hearth.

"I must have one good look at you, Miss Ellen, before I take off your things," she said, merrily, yet respectfully. "I must see whether you have enjoyed yourself. Yes, yes." And she clapped her hands. "The roses are redder and wider on your cheeks. Do please tell me, Miss Ellen, weren't you the belle of the ball?"

"Mrs. Morgan said I was," I answered, quietly, yet conscious that the roses deepened in hue. Then seeing her eager look added: "And will you believe, Bessie, there was Lord Somers there, and I opened the ball with him, and he took me in to supper, and is going to call to-morrow morning to take me to see his mother. What do you think of that?"

And I sat down and motioned her to undo my hair.

She did not answer, the little sprite, but sang, softly:

"I combed my bonnie ladie's hair,
I fastened it with jewels rare,
I dressed her in a robe of white—
Her own true love she'll see to-night."

It was understood in our household that after a ball Mrs. Hastings and May were not to be disturbed till noon. And it was equally well understood that Ellen would do the honors of the breakfast table. Unused to dissipation, I think I should have rebelled the next morning and yielded to my drowsy feelings had it not been for that whisper at parting. So eight o'clock found me pouring out coffee for my father, and discoursing to him of the incidents of the previous night, dwelling particularly on the advent of our friend Ed, and the change in his fortunes.

"Glad of it," said he. "right glad. He was a fine fellow. I've wished many a time I had been blessed with such a boy."

"Instead of me," said I, pouting.

"No, you elf; but along with you, or after you, or before you—any time, so that he'd only come."

Then, resuming his thread, he added:

"But I'm heartily glad of Ed's luck, both for his sake and his mother's and sister's. She was a fine woman, fine as ever lived. Do you know," and he lowered his voice, watching too to see that the servant was not at the door, "I came pretty near asking her to be your mother?"

"I wish you had," I came near saying, and perhaps should if John had not come in.

"But I did pretty well as it was," said he, nodding mysteriously. "Don't you think so?"

I bowed, but I would not let my lips speak the falsehood.

What a delicious morning I spent with Mrs. Somers and Allie—alone with them, for Edward had tiresome work that kept him till dinner was announced.

"Your mother tells me she has returned to remain permanently," I said, as we were going down.

"Yes, she would not be satisfied with a home elsewhere."

"And you?" And I lifted my eyes to his—lifted them, but dropped them as instantaneously, reading something in that glance that sent my blood on a mad gallop through my veins.

"It depends upon circumstances whether I stay or go."

That was all he said. What the circumstances were I was left to guess. I ascertained though before the day was gone.

"You will excuse me, I know, pet, if I lie down a little while," said Mrs. Somers to me, as we returned to the parlour. "My head aches. Allie and Ed will keep you company."

Of course I begged of her to retire at once, and then seated myself on a sofa between the two. We were deep in the intricacies of the old castle that had fallen to them when Allie's maid appeared with word that the trunks had come, and forthwith the impulsive girl darted out with her, exclaiming:

"I can't wait for ceremony, Ellen; I must see how my things have stood the journey."

The little fairy! She knew her brother was aching to be rid of her, and she gladly embraced the first opportunity to go.

Somehow I felt embarrassed after she left, and the longer I sat there trying to think of something to say the farther off seemed any conversational topic.

Suddenly I found my right hand clasped, then an arm glided around my waist, and a voice whispered:

"Shall it be Lord and Lady Somers, Ellen?"

What answer I gave may be inferred from the fact that when Edward's mother returned to the parlour he led me up to her and said:

"Mother, this lady has promised to be my wife. Will you receive her as a daughter?"

His voice quivered somewhat, in spite of its earnest, manly tone.

She folded me in her arms and kissed me tenderly, saying:

"It is my choice as well as his, darling. Two daughters! Surely I am blessed."

Bessie was unclasping the bracelets from my wrists that night when suddenly I saw the color deepen in her cheeks, and a moment later she looked up with an arch glance in her blue eyes. She had noticed the new ring, not new either, for many a finger had worn it in the "long ago," and the diamond flashing in that antique setting had been part of the court costume of many a fair lady.

"What do you think of it, Bessie?"

And I straightened the finger and laid it in her palm.

"It is splendid, Miss Ellen—fit for a queen."

And she looked up wistfully.

I was never in the habit of making a confidant of servants. I was naturally too reticent; and then it always seemed to be beneath a lady's dignity. But that night it seemed to me my heart would burst if it did not share its joy with somebody. I could not waken my old father, and I had no wish to call Mrs. Hastings and May up from the gay crowd about them in the parlour. So I told Bessie—no, not told her, but I said what I knew would be enough for her fine instincts to divine the whole story.

"That ring has been an heirloom in the Somers family for two centuries, Bessie—handed down from father to son, and when there was no son to the next nearest male heir. Lord Edward Somers, the gentleman who took me to see his mother to-day, received it as a part of his legacy. There, please now don't talk any more to me to-night."

The next morning as my father was dozing in the library, and I sitting curled up in my little nook behind the curtains, the servant announced Lord Somers. I did not still my beating heart when it gave a bound that drove the blood to my cheeks in torrents.

"I am glad to see you, Edward," said my father, frankly and cordially.

"I don't know whether you will be, sir, when you learn my errand. I have come to ask you for the most precious gift one man can bestow upon another. I want Ellen, sir."

How like Ed that declaration! He always came to the point at once. No equivocation with him.

"Ellen," said my father, with a tremor in his voice that he could not hide entirely. "Here, Ellen, come and tell me what answer to give this young man. He says he wants you. Will you have him?"

"Yes, father."

Just then the door opened and my stepmother crossed the threshold. How wide she opened her eyes as she caught sight of the tableau.

"Just in time to congratulate me," said my father. "I've been wishing these thirty years that I might have a son, and now, just when hope had died out, up comes Ellen this morning and makes me a present of one. What do you think of him, Mrs. Hastings?"

She was an adept at self-control, and so, mastering her emotions—and, oh, they were bitter as wormwood—she said, graciously:

"I think any father might be proud to own Lord Somers as a son. Ellen, I wish you joy." And she touched her lips to my cheeks. "Lord Somers, you will be a happy man."

And she shook his hand and left us. But she never forgave that scene, and I do not think she ever quite forgave either of the three the part they played.

Three months after this Lord and Lady Somers and servants (Bessie was my maid) spent six months on the Continent, and then went to their old ancestral castle, where they have lived three years.

"Three years, wife." And I feel a hand arresting my pen. "Are you not mistaken?"

"Why, no, Edward." And I turn and look my husband full in the face—a handsome face it is, too. I have never seen one I like so well. "You know we were home a year before Hastings was born, and he was two years old last week——"

"And a fine fellow he is too. I've just come from a frolic with him. Bessie had to coax hard to get him away. What a treasure of a nurse she is. Listen to her. She is singing that old ballad to him. What a quaint chant there is to the tune."

I leaned my head against him and listened, and as the words stole on my ear I remembered the night when she sang them as she was dressing me for the ball, and how they thrilled me, and I whispered, more to myself than to him:

"The prophecy has been fulfilled."

"Hush, darling!" and he put his finger on my lips. "She has picked up more of it. Listen!"

"I combed my bonnie babie's hair,
I clasped his neck with corals rare,
I dressed him in a robe of white—
His own true name he'll have to-night!"

There were tears in his eyes as well as mine as the refrain died away, for we could neither of us ever forget that in one week the same church was opened for us twice, first to christen our baby boy, and afterwards for the funeral of my father. Yet our sorrow was mingled with joy for he had prayed that he might be spared to see his grandchild christened and Heaven had granted his petition.

LOVE-LETTERS.

Is every year will be written and mailed just about so many letters of this kind, whether people continue to call them silly or sensible. It makes but little difference what outsiders believe, so the parties interested are suited with the contents. There may be times when we would ridicule these little missives; but, if we confess our true convictions, love-letters, even years after they are written reach the tenderest affections of our nature.

We have seen them in various forms, written with black ink and with blue, underscored, and dotted with many marks and unknown signals, of interest only to the owner; but we always felt that at best only half of their contents were known. The best part of a love-letter is unwritten; the purest thoughts of our nature are seldom uttered. Pride has prevented one from owning her true life-thoughts till it is too late. Modesty kept the burning words of another; while with another, love so overcame the emotions as to break forth in tears to choke the utterance.

Take the first letter in reply to a broken engagement; the heart is full to overflowing; a sting of pride rankles beneath the blighted hopes of a lifetime. Listen to the words:

"I did not think it would come to this; but you are so noble—so good—I cannot forget you. I know she will be happy in my place; but it breaks my heart to say that for your sake you are free."

Another, with only the hope of engagement, has judged too hastily him whom she found was promised ere they met.

"I will indeed be your friend," she writes; "but my life looks so dark and changed; would that I had never lived! No, I do not mean that, for all my life that I care to remember has been lived since I knew you. I would not blot it out for all the rest. How I envy her of whom you speak! But my loss is her gain. Tell her not of me—it is enough that one should bear it—the other should be happy."

And still another writes in derision:

"You were easily caught; I never loved you; but I thought the man who played the shallow part of a male flirt deserved a lesson. I shall be married in a week to a true man; will you come to the wedding?"

These letters are but samples of one style. There is another and a brighter side. Many and many a little letter is carried (like a jewel) next to the heart, and valued a thousand times more than a jewel to its owner.

Ah! if we could read the hidden history of all the unmarried women in the land, there would be sisters who had yielded their places to younger sisters; there would be one that sacrificed life and hope for the love of another dearer than both—a mother she could never leave. Can we say that to such lives love-letters have no meaning? No, never!

"Man's love is of his life a part,
'Tis woman's whole existence."

Cherish, then, the little missives of love and affection, for they keep the heart open and hopeful; and remember that in the little space of your acquaintance may be living those who have had purer thoughts, and more of them, in a few brief weeks and more real enjoyment from their worn-out love-letters, that give out sweet memories of the past than is enjoyed by many in a lifetime. So such,

"'Tis better to have loved and lost,
Than never to have loved at all."

BY MOONLIGHT.

O, melancholy woods! that lift
Your crownless foreheads to the Night,
Where, ghostly white, the moonbeams drift,
And fade beyond the windy height,
No more the joyous thrill and stir
Of green tumultuous leaves are heard,
Nor dimpling laugh, nor glance and whirr
Of sylvan brook or summer bird.

I weep, O crownless woods! but not
For your green glory passed away—
For bird and brooklet that forgot
Dull Autumn, in the arms of May;
For Nature's tender, wooing voice
Shall call her darlings back again,
And bid the wide green world rejoice
In glad sunshine and silver rain.

I mourn for the untimely blight
Of hopes that faded with the flower—
The stricken faith, the lost delight
That crowned the rosy summer hours;
For, sadder than the fallen leaf
And all the wintry winds that cry,
I mourn the friendship bright as brief,
Born, with the summer flowers, to die!

MY FREDERICA.

The eyes of my Frederica were as blue as the sky, or as the sash that bound her slim waist; her complexion was of lily purity; her lips were as rosebuds bursting into flower; her hair was the yellow gold of flax, intertwined with floss silk I call her my Frederica by a sort of poetical license and in right of my love for her. She was, in truth, at this time, the Frederica of the Herr Professor Vaudergucht, the sub-rector of the university, for she was his daughter; and afterwards she became the Frederica of another. Still I ventured to call her mine—absurd as it may seem. I even call her mine now.

I was christened Hans, which showed, perhaps, that my family did not expect great things of me; for Hans has, somehow, come to signify a foolish sort of fellow all the world over. "Hans is slow, but he is sure," my father was wont to say of me. Slow? very likely. But sure? How and of what?

I did not distinguish myself as a student. I drank much beer and smoked many pipes, and, as mementoes of my Burschen life, I still carry about with me a scar on my cranium, which will stand forth exposed unpleasantly when I have grown bald, and an ugly seam across my left cheek, the result of a badly-stitched sabre cut. I did not fight duels because I liked fighting, but because I could not well avoid it. Frederica had let fall, now her kerchief, now her bouquet. In my haste to gather up and restore these treasures I brushed abruptly against a fellow student. By mischance I even trod upon his toes. His feet were tender; his language was violent. Combat and bloodshed became unavoidable. He escaped without a hurt. I was less fortunate. It was owned, however, that I had comported myself becomingly.

I met my Frederica only now and then at the *soirees* and receptions of the Herr Professor, her father.

Did she know of my love? Yes; if she could read my glances, though, I admit, I have known eyes more expressive than my own, which are, indeed, of faint color and feeble power, needing help from concave glasses. Yes; if she could penetrate my thoughts or divine my dreams. Otherwise she would be less informed upon the subject.

For I could not precipitate my love into words. My Frederica did not invite speech or indulge therein herself. She was too beautiful to have need of language; she was a poem in herself. It was sufficient to look upon her. To address her, or to hope to hear her, would have been outrageous presumption. So I held. I have heard her silence imputed to her as a fault. But of what sinful folly will not some be guilty? There are men who would have the Venus of Medicis fitted with the apparatus of a German doll, and made, upon pressure in the ribs, to speak "Pa-pa," "Ma-ma."

When I came to England I promised, to myself, that I would never forget Frederica. I planned to return some day and make her mine; meanwhile, I would grow rich. At present I was very ill supplied with money. My father could spare me none—his own wants were more than he could comfortably meet. He bestowed upon me his blessing however — all he had to give. I received it gratefully, if not without a wish that it had been a more marketable commodity.

I had resolved to become a famous painter, or rather, I should say, a wealthy one. I knew that England, if she gives artists nothing else, gives them money, at any rate. Perhaps that is all they really require of her.

I found myself in London, the tenant of a garret, which served me for studio, sitting-room, bedchamber—all. I had made the acquaintance of a little group of fellow artists assembling at a cheap *cafe*—half Swiss, half German — in the Soho district. There were English, with a Frenchman among them, whose name was Alphonse, I think, or Adolphe; I am not sure which. But, when a Frenchman is not Alphonse, he is usually Adolphe.

They made me welcome, and were of service to me. One of them kindly introduced me to his pawnbroker, from whom I derived much useful assistance; though, the more I sought his aid, the more my wardrobe diminished. But, that could not be helped. I had to live.

We talked, and played dominoes, and smoked the Englishmen, cigars; the Frenchmen, cigarettes; I, my pipe with the china bowl, plated lid, and worsted tassels. They were kind to me, although they found me laughable, with my long hair, my spectacles, and my bad English. I did not mind. Indeed I did not understand them. Jokes as a rule are always thrown away upon me. As I have said, I am slow.

Of my art I soon discovered they did not think highly. I had brought with me from Germany a large unfinished picture. It was illustrative of a scene in the Minna Von Barnhelm of Lessing. I was informed to my chagrin that Lessing was almost unknown in England, and that my labor accordingly had been wasted.

I had been proud and hopeful of my picture, though I can admit now that it was a crude and clumsy performance. My friends criticised it very freely—they grew derisive over it. I thought this hard, because the work had really cost me much. I have not a ready hand. I could never design with adroitness. For one stroke that is correct I execute six that are all wrong; so my canvas comes to have a muddled blundering look. I am myself shocked at its ugliness. Yet I usually — with obstinate toil and severe persistency—get things right at last.

My friends had quick eyes and dexterous hands—they sketched with surprising facility and vivid effect. Alphonse, as I will call him, was in this way especially gifted. He could design as deftly as he could twist up a cigarette, or twist the end of his moustache into pin-points. A few movements of his pencil and the thing was done. Much more than this I think he could not accomplish. He was true to his origin; he was of a nation of sketchers—great at beginnings, leaving completeness and achievement to others—the Germans let us say.

He grinned wickedly, scoffingly at my picture.

"My poor Hans," said an Englishman, kindly—he has grown famous since, I am glad to say, for he was a true artist, "this will not do. Turn Minna Von Barheim to the wall. That's my advice. Paint something smaller, simpler, or you will stand no chance with the dealers."

When we were alone, he proffered me help from his purse--though it was but poorly furnished, and he was, I knew, in debt. I would not borrow of him; but I thanked him till my voice failed me, and I could not see for my tears.

I had by this time quite a pack of pawn tickets. I was subsisting like a moth, on my clothes. A coat lasted me a week, a waistcoat three days, and so on. But soon I should have nothing more to pledge, and then——?

I was very miserable. I could see suspicion and mistrust on the face of my landlady, printed in deeper and plainer lines every day. She was afraid of losing her rent. She told me I must give up my garret, and find another home. Where? In the street—or the Thames?

I tried to live on as little as possible. I went out every day for an hour or so, that my landlady might think I was dining. I walked hither and thither, in retired streets, furtively devouring a penny loaf of bread—it was all I could afford. Then I returned, affecting a light step, singing or whistling, with the air of one refreshed and in good spirits. But I was an indifferent actor. Was she duped, that landlady, I wonder? Perhaps. My stomach was not, I know. There was no deceiving that.

What comfort was left me? Only my pipe and my love for the Frederica. And presently my pipe had to go — round the corne. My love, not being negotiable, alone remained.

I tried to paint — something, anything, a sketch, a study, that would bring money to buy food with. My English friend set up an easel for me in his studio. He had models coming to him; surely I could do something with them? Here was a Mulatto, of superb contour, muscular, sinewy, nobly proportioned, a Hercules in bronze. Here a lovely English girl, a bouquet of bright colors, roses and lillies, violets and gold. Here a Spanish gipsy, with blue-black hair, flashing eyes, ivory teeth and cheeks like russet apples, flushed with sunset.

It was in vain. My heavy heart weighed down my hand. It was duller, more awkward, and inert than ever. I could do nothing.

I retreated to my garret. I flung myself upon my truckle bed; not to sleep, but to torture myself with fears, memories, dreams, my head burning, my brain disordered.

Dusk came, and then night. The moonrays flooded the room, to fade gradually into the yellow twilight of morning. Another day was dawning to find me more wretched and forlorn and destitute than ever. I could not rise. I lay upon my bed, dressed as I was, thinking—thinking — in a confused, fevered way; not of the future; I did not dare to do that; but of the past and the miserable, most miserable present. And, now and then, the name of Frederica broke from my lips.

Suddenly there came the sound of some one moving in my studio. I started—I roused myself. It was a bright morning. A figure stood upon the little throne fronting my easel.

Frederica!

She was clothed in fluent draperies of white; her flaxen hair streamed, a very mantle, over her shoulders; her blue eyes were turned heavenward; her slender alabaster hands were crossed upon her bosom. She was a saint — an angel! The Frederica of my dreams, my hopes, my love was posing before me!

I flew to my palette and brushes and set to work. I sketched with a facility and rapidity I had never before and have never since accomplished. I toiled on like one inspired. I trembled with eagerness. I could hear my heart beat; fire seemed to be coursing through my veins. A picture was growing under my hands—a picture to be proud of. I dreaded each moment that the vision would vanish. But she remained—motionless as ever—with the same rapt air, divinely beautiful. She spoke no word; nor did I address her. I dreaded that speech might dissolve the spell. My blessed Frederica!

I had been thus engaged some hours; my task was nearly completed. For a moment I paused to breathe freely, and to close and rest my burning eyes. I was faint and sick with fatigue and excitement. Yes, and with hunger; I had not tasted food for twenty-four hours and more.

When I turned again to look at Frederica, she had departed? All was over. It was a dream, perhaps; but I had produced a picture. My strength failed me and I sank helplessly upon the floor of my studio.

Presently consciousness returned to me. I found my English friend and Alphonse beside me. They were inspecting my portrait of Frederica; for it was a portrait, although of that fact they had no suspicion.

"Come, cheer up Hans," said the Englishman. "This will do. This is by no means bad, don't you know?"

"C'est magnifique," said Alphonse. "Voilà un artiste qui peint de *chic*!"

He was pale with envy, it seemed to me. The picture was far beyond anything he could execute. Of that I felt assured. And he was jealous. I disliked him: that's the plain truth. And he did not like me. It may be that we did not understand each other.

I lost sight of him soon afterwards. Many years elapsed before I heard what had become of him. He was shot in the late war, it appeared. He had taken arms for his native land, and perished in an affair of outposts near Thionville—not a regular battle, but a mere sketch of one. So far, he had been faithful to himself to the last. He never had to do with anything beyond sketches. He could complete nothing—not even his life. That was but a fragment—an outline never filled in. But I digress.

The Englishman sent out for beer and bread and meat. He said cheering words, patting me on the back; he sat with me while I ate ravenously, like a wolf. I ceased to tremble; I grew warm and comfortable. Then he took away my painting. He returned later in the day, bringing me money for it. He had sold it advantageously to a dealer of his acquaintance. I was happy and hopeful once more. And, forthwith, I took my pipe out of pawn.

My luck had turned. Thenceforward I prospered—not too suddenly, or in an extraordinary measure, but after a gradual and modest fashion. I was content if I could but earn a subsistence; and this came to be more and more a matter of certainty with me. I was enabled to sell my pictures, upon terms that were moderate, but still sufficient. Only I could produce but few pictures; not that I lacked industry, for indeed I labored incessantly; but my constitutional slowness could not be wholly overcome. In time there arose a certain steady demand for my works. I was not famous, but I was succeeding. I had even sold at last my illustration of the scene in Lessing's Minnie Von Barnhelm: and for a considerable price.

All this had occupied some time, however. Years, indeed, had passed; for it is only very rarely that a name can be made in a day; and then, it is never such a name as Hans. I had, worked on steadily without quitting London; but I had removed from my garret-studio to more convenient and seemly premises. I was growing grey, and a look of age had come into my face. My figure was less erect than it had been, and was tending to ungracefulness of contour. All my waistcoats had been enlarged. I was, indeed, portly, from drinking much English beer, or from age and success, combined with constitutional inclinings.

I had not forgotten my Frederica. Certainly not. But no such vision of her as I have described had again visited me. It was in my dire need that she had come to me; but my time of need was over. Still, she was often in my thoughts. Often I resolved to return to Germany, seek her out, and entreat her to be mine. I will go, I said when I have saved so much money; when I have completed this picture or that. Still I did not move. My natural slowness hindered me; and I postponed my departure from time to time. Yet I had fairly attained the end of my coming to England. I was generally recognised to be a successful painter in my peculiar and, perhaps, narrow path of art.

I was rich enough now both to love and to marry. Formerly I could only afford to love—an inexpensive pursuit as I had conducted it.

At length I was constrained to go; for news reached me from Germany of the serious illness of my father. The poor old man was dying, I was told. Alas! I arrived at his bedside only in time to close his eyes. Then I commenced my quest of the Fraulein Frederica.

It was with difficulty I could obtain any tidings of her. There was a new sub-rector at the university. The Herr Professor Vaudergucht was no more. He was almost forgotten.

Presently came news; but what news! I was doomed to hear that my Frederica had become the wife of Herr Schnellen, of the firm of Eisendecken and Schnellen, merchants of Hamburg, trading largely in train oil, hides, and colonial produce.

I sought out Herr Schnellen, for I was determined that I would not quit Germany until I had seen once more my first and only love.

Herr Schnellen was an elderly gentleman, portly and bald, with very stiff whiskers; but his manners were gracious. I introduced myself to him, informing him that I had once enjoyed the acquaintance of his wife when she was the Fraulein Frederica, only daughter of the Herr Professor of my university.

"A long time ago, mein Herr," he said, with a laugh. "She was beautiful then."

"Wonderfully beautiful."

"One forgot her infirmity; at least, I did." And he sighed

What infirmity? I did not dare to ask. Had Frederica a temper? Well, it was to be excused; she was the wife of Herr Schnellen.

He invited me to his house. He led me into a spacious apartment handsomely furnished.

My Frederica! It was difficult to recognize her in the rotund lady, rubicund, white-haired, short-of-neck, and redundantly supplied with chins, who sat huddled in an easy chair by the stove, with a crowd of chubby children of both sexes and various ages gathered about her. She was regaling them with "thick milk"—a mess of sour cream, sugared, and mixed with bread crumbs. Yes, it must be she, and no other. I suppressed my amazement as best I could, and advanced towards her, bowing with my utmost politeness, when there suddenly occurred an alarming noise in the street without, a detonation—a violent explosion that shook the house to its very foundation.

"Ah! I had forgotten," said Herr Schnellen. "We must open the windows, or we shall have every pane of glass broken. You have not heard the news?"

"What news?"

"Paris has fallen. They are firing the salute in celebration of the great event."

Another roar from the guns.

"Come in," said Frederica, quietly, as though in answer to some one lightly tapping at the door.

"She hears!" cried Herr Schnellen, with a gratified air. "You perceive that Frederica is not so deaf as people have said."

"Deaf?"

"You have forgotten, mein Herr. Frederica was held to be almost deaf stone in her youth."

No wonder that in addition to her other charms she had possessed that of silence—that her repose of manner had been so supreme—that she had shrunk from being troubled with speeches, of which she could not hear one word!

"It makes her very quiet," said Herr Schnellen. "But that is not, in a wife, such a drawback as you may think."

There was a slate before her, which was employed, it appeared, as a means of conversation. She was informed, by its means, concerning me. But it was clear that she did not entertain the slightest recollection of me. There were so many students under the Herr Professor her father, she explained. And so many of them were named Hans. And they were all young; whereas I—but this she did not add—was middle-aged, to say the least of it.

Little more than this passed at our interview.

I took my leave, depressed and disturbed as to the present, but not as to the past; that could not be. I did not love the wife of Herr Schnellen. I am a moral character. But still I loved the Frederica who, though lost, was yet contained in the stout form of that matronly lady Frau Schnellen, like a sovereign secreted in a loaf of bread, or like the needle in the bottle of hay of your English proverb. It was true that my Frederica could not now be parted from the envelope which so substantialised and magnified her. That was a misfortune I had to endure as best I could. Altogether, I bore it pretty well.

Mine was still the ethereal Frederica. Herr Schnellen's the more material— I may even say the very material—Frederica from whom all ethereal properties had completely evaporated. Mine had been the spell; the disenchantment, possibly Herr Schnellen's.

She never knew of my love. I am not sure that she was ever thoroughly aware of my existence. But what did it matter? The genuineness of my passion was not thereby affected. The votary's offerings may not be received; his adoration may be unrequited. Still, his sincerity remains unquestionable—it may even be the more sublime.

My love was a dream, almost a folly, but not entirely so, for, remember, it sustained me in an hour of sore trouble, it was attended with solid advantages. To it I owed such success as I have obtained; and moreover it colored and influenced my life, weaving into its texture a thread of gold. It was romance—it was poetry, to my thinking; and have not these value, however seemingly fond and futile, vague of purpose, and vain of result?

I should have sought her sooner? It may be so. Perhaps things happened for the best. I still call her my Frederica, thinking of her ever as she was in my Burschen days—as she appeared in that vision in my studio, when she like an angel released me from despair and destitution, and led me back to life and well-being.

I returned to London to my art and to my pipe. Art, at any rate, is always faithful; and, perhaps to one of my years, a pipe is the best of wives. It is silent as Frederica; but what comfort it exhales! how it bears with one! how it even encourages one's dreamings, and hopes, and flights of fancy! How companionable! how enduring! how consoling! And it never disagree with one; unless, of course, it is very much abused.

UNWELCOME HOLIDAYS.

"The days flitting fast
Leave a summer-time passed
And the holidays beckon to-morrow,
Oh, circles unbroken!
Oh, partings unspoken!
Oh, homes all unscarred by a sorrow!
Your holidays keep,
For me—I must weep
In the gloom of the shadow abiding.
Is there no retreat
For way-weary feet?
No covert to keep me in hiding?

"Till Chimes cease to swing
And joy-bells to ring,
Till the love-prompted tokens are given?
For me—there's a knell
The sad story to tell
By the edge of a grassy mound riven.
The rack has no pain
Like the terrible strain
Of a mother's ear list'ning for ever,
No torture more keen
Than this waiting, between
The two sundered sides of the river."

Was it only a wail
That shivered her veil
Where the mourner sat, crushed by her sorrow?
Or faint rosy gleam
From winter sunbeam
That seemed a child's semblance to borrow?
Truly, whispering sweet,
Kneeling down by her feet,
Still, the fair guise of angelhood wearing,
Better teacher than priest
Even—"one of the least"
Whispered peace to the mourner despairing.

"Oh, mother-love, fair,
God gives to your care
His 'little ones,' poor and forsaken,
To gather and save;
The daisy-starred grave
Shields one, only borrowed, not taken.

For Him, let it be
For Him—and for me,
Mother darling." The sunbeam was shining,
The tear as it fell
Broke the mystical spell,
Broke the fanciful, childish outlining,
The rainbow it bore
Shone bright evermore
In the heart of the mourner abiding;
Never asking again
Out of weakness and pain
Deeper covert for holiday hiding.

LITTLE JACK.

[On the eighth day the child died, and the mother thought she was thankful when the cries of pain and fear were stilled, and her boy was at peace. Allan was slowly getting better. He was able to sit up for an hour or two, and had even, with his wife's help, contrived to get downstairs and sit by the fire. They talked more than they had done for some time, not about their child, but his funeral. The father had brought from his north-country home an intense feeling of reverence for the dead, and the still, white body of his child was an object for which he was prepared to sacrifice all that he possessed. At length the arrangements for the funeral were completed, but the little parlor was stripped of almost every article of any value to defray its expense. When the day came, Allan, by the help of two sticks, tottered down to the garden-gate, and lent there, sobbing, as he watched the undertaker carry away on his shoulder the little coffin covered with a pall edged with white. The mother, wearing a large cloak and hood, provided for the day, followed alone, tearless and white. Allan watched them as they passed along the street, white with fresh-fallen snow. He saw doors open and women come out for a moment to look after them, and then draw back hastily out of the cold. The tolling of the church bell fell upon him like a blow, and every stroke said, Alone, Alone, Alone! He saw the empty church that the mother entered, and the little empty grave awaiting his boy, out under the lime-trees at the end of a lonely path. He could endure no more, but tottered back to the house, and, throwing himself down upon the ground, exclaimed, "The hand of the Lord is against me."

How long he lay there he did not know. When he arose, cold and stiff, the short day was closing. He crawled to the door and looked out, but there was no sign of Mary. The long white street was silent and empty. He thought: "Some woman has been good to her and taken her in. She is sitting by the fire, Perhaps she will have a good cry and ease her poor heart." He was tender over her, thinking more of her sorrow than his own. "Poor thing, she's had a deal to bear," he would say to himself, when she was fierce and moody. "Here am I, no better than a log, and that poor thing's got it all upon her. But we shall manage somehow, and I'll see her righted yet, and her bits of things about her again." But the child's death had crushed him. That could never be set right. The child was taken from her, and how could she go on living without the child?

He went into the little kitchen, put a few sticks together, made up the fire, and put on water to boil for tea. He was so weak, and his movements so slow, that the church clock struck five before he had completed these preparations, and then he sat down and waited. Six o'clock struck, and seven, and Mary did not return. His anxiety grew too exacting to be controlled, and leaving the cottage, he dragged himself step by step along the street. The church was midway in the village, standing back within its iron-railed space, with the large old churchyard at the back, shaded by rows of lime trees and sloping down the hill toward the board valley of Holm.

Allan passed through the open gate and along the path which he knew that other feet had trodden, until he reached the far end of the churchyard. There he leaned against a tree, near which there was a fresh-made grave. The moonlight lay white on all else, but down over the grave a dark figure was crouching motionless and silent. He stood silent for a moment, and then in a soft, tremulous whisper, he said—

"Coom awa', my lass; coom!"

"Oh, father," she cried, shaken with a sudden passion of sorrow; "oh, father, I can't leave him. I can't leave him here by himself, all out in the cold and the dark. My boy, my boy; why have they taken my boy from me!"

And she stretched her arms out over the little mound, and passionately kissed the hard ground, and laid her cheek upon it.

Her husband stood silent for a time, and then he said, sadly—

"Ain't I nowt to tha, that thou waint coo n back wi' ma? Thou's got me left, thou knaws."

And she rose and went to him, put her arms round him, and they wept together.

"God forgive me," she said; "I a'most forgot you; and you oughtn't to be out. You dunno hardly how to stand. Lean on my shoulder, and we'll go home."

One windy morning in March, many weeks after the child's death, a farmer from Strood was driving slowly into Cheam. As he passed the Allans' garden he heard the tearing away of boards and sharp snap of broken wood, and, looking over the hedge, he saw Mary dragging at the planks of the pig-stye, and pulling them down one by one. Such wilful destruction of property arrested his attention. He pulled up his horse, and when his amazement had somewhat subsided, looked curiously at the woman. A fierce wind was blowing her ragged cotton gown and showing her bare feet and legs. She had neither shoes nor stockings, her long arms were quite brown, and her face was furrowed and old, her eyes sunken, and her hair streaked with gray.

Farmer Stokes, who knew her quite well, and had often spoken to her as he passed the cottage gate, lifted his hat and slowly scratched his head; then he said, "'Tain't the same woman," and drove on. But somehow or other, as he said afterward, he couldn't get her out of his mind. He began to recall the scattered information of the last few months, and to piece it together; the man was ill, and the child was dead, and she was in the County Court. He pulled up his horse again, and a feeling compounded of compassion and curiosity induced him to turn and drive back to the cottage.

He slipped the reins over the gate-post, and went to the front door and knocked.

After some delay he heard footsteps approaching. Mary had just one old apron left, and she had instinctively searched for it and put it on before opening the door. When she had done so, and stood before him, it occurred to her visitor for the first time that he ought to have made up his mind what to say.

They looked at each other, and then he began:

"I haven't seen you about for a good bit, Mrs. Allan, nor your husband neither, so as I was passing I thought I'd look in."

Mary did not speak. She expected nothing but evil, and thought as he was a churchwarden he possibly had power to torment her in some way.

"How is your husband?" said Stokes, who was really kind-hearted, and was actuated by a dim desire of affording help, though it had not yet worked to the surface.

"Very bad," replied Mary.

"He's had fever, hasn't he?"

"Yes."

"Is he getting better?"

"No."

A slight spasm contracted her mouth as she answered; but she showed no other sign of emotion.

"No—the doctor says 'e's a dyin'. He's in a decline."

"Dear me, dear me. Why you'll be pinched this long bout. It's months and months since I've seen him. Is there anything you want, now? because I'll ask my daughter just to step down and see what she can do for you."

Mary had listened unmoved whilst she expected reproof and possible menace, but the first words of kindness that had reached her ears were too much. She threw the apron over her head and began to cry.

"There now, don't cry; don't cry. I'll come in and sit down a minute. Why, God bless my soul, the room's empty. Why, what have you done with the furniture?"

"He's got it," she said, with a fierce gesture, pointing to the village. "There ain't a stick of it left—nothin' but a old mattrass as my poor man's a lyin' on. An' I paid 'im 'is bill; but there ain't no law agen his takin' the money, so me not so much as a chair to sit down on. Come and see."

And she led him up-stairs to the bare rooms, and then down again the little back kitchen, where, upon a mattrass stretched on the damp bricks, lay the wasted form of the sturdy north-country man.

"Dear, dear. Why you'd have been better somewhere else!"

"Mebbe!" replied Allan, speaking in gasps and intervals; "but we couldn't part at the last. 'Tis hard to go to die in t'work'us. Landlord said as we mud stay on."

"Oh! I didn't mean that. But you see this is a poor place to be in when you're bad. Those bricks are very damp. You should move him into the front room, missis; it's a boarded floor, and see how bright and warm it is. He'd be a deal better there."

"We never thought of that," said Mary. "He did not fancy bein' up stairs. There ain't any fireplace in them rooms, and he do like to see a bit o' fire."

"Well, light a fire in the parlor. You can do that? can't you?"

"Yes," said Allan, slowly; "and I'd like to be there. I'd like to see t' sun again, and trees i' t' wood. When door's open you can see reet away to Brenchley. Why, my lass, I could see tha all t' way.

Mary was leaning against the wall in a kind of stupor, but she roused herself to say:

"I can drag in the bed before I go, if you think you can manage to get in."

"Are you going to Brenchley to-day? asked Mr. Stokes.

"Yes, I've got to the last five shillings I shall have in this world. There ain't nothin' more now, unless they take me—and I wish they would, and make an end of it."

"Come, come, keep up your courage. Things are never so bad they can't mend. I'll send my daughter and a bit of something for you, and we must see what can be done. I'd no notion you were in this state. Come now, don't give way. Just light a bit of fire in that front parlor. That's what you've got to do. Light a bit of fire."

He hurried away with an uneasy conscience and a feeling that somebody was to blame, and people ought not to be left to starve, and left Mary looking after him with a dream-feeling strong upon her. She seemed not to hear what he said while he was speaking, and then all the words came back afterward when she had ceased to try and listen.

Now as she listened to the gig-wheels on the road, the words "Light a bit of fire" sounded in her ears, and she knelt mechanically before the parlor stove, and took away the faded fire-paper—too worthless even to burn. A the back of the old Downshire stoves there was in those days what used to be called an ash-hole, into which, during the Summer, little odds and ends of withered flowers and rubbish of all kinds would be thrown. She pulled them out, and was about to carry them away in her apron, when a bit of crumpled paper attracted her attention. As she touched it she felt the sickness of expectation and anticipation which she knew so well, and which had been followed by so many bitter disappointments. Still she unfolded the paper and smoothed it out, and then a deadly pallor spread over her face, great drops of sweat started from her brow, and slowly trickled down she could not speak nor move, but knelt before the fire-place holding by the bars of the grate. On a sudden the blood seemed to leap back to her heart. She started to her feet, and without uttering a word rushed out of the house.

The Holmsdale woods were gay with primroses and wood anemones. The sweet-scented early violet were all hidden among leaves, but the light winds that swept over them carried their odor afar. Long katkins hung from the hazels, and under the limes there was a brilliant carpet of small crimson petals, for the buds had burst through their Winter covering, which lay thickly strewn on the ground. The yew trees were in blossom, and the slightest touch sent forth a cloud of golden dust; the great buds of the horse-chestnuts had burst through their resinous sheath, and were rapidly unfolding delicate fan-like leaves. Mary, as she hurried onward, turned her head rapidly from side to side, attracted by the color and odor and movement around her. The outward senses were vigilant, and seemed to be observant; but she could not even have told you that she was in a wood, for the connecting links between observation and intelligence seemed to have been snapped asunder. She stumbled and fell more than once over projecting logs and stones upon which her eyes were fixed, and rose and went on unobservant of scratches and bruises. Thus she passed along the high road, looking among the trees as the song of the nightingale fell upon her ears, and yet unconscious of the sound. She entered the town of Brenchley, and made her way mechanically through the crowd that filled the streets on market-day. Reaching the County Court, where she was now well known, she walked, not to the seat which she usually occupied, but to the desk of the clerk who sat at a table beneath the judge. She stretched her hand out over this man's head, and holding the paper toward the judge, strove in vain to speak. Her tongue, dry and parched, seemed fixed in her mouth, and she was unable to articulate. But the agony of appeal in her eyes could not be mistaken, and the judge, who had at first motioned to an official to remove her, stretched out it her tongue was unloosed, and in a low, husky voice, she said:

"What's this?"

The judge, who had smoothed the paper out on his desk and put on his glasses to inspect it carefully, removed the hand which, according to his wont, he had been passing over his mouth and chin, and said, with unaccustomed keenness:

"Where did you get this?"

"What's that to you? Never you mind where I got it. You tell me what it is."

The poor creature was desperate, and the question seemed to imply distrust of the document. The usher laid his hand upon her arm, but the judge signed to him to leave her, and answered, as he leant forward and looked narrowly at her:

"It is a receipt. But I want you to tell me—"

"What receipt?" she gasped, rather than spoke.

"A receipt for eight pounds three shillings and fourpence, given on the sixteenth of September last. It is a baker's bill, and is signed Walter Neville."

"Is that the money I've been paying 'im?"

"Yes; but if this receipt has been in your possession, why did you not produce it?" said the judge, not unkindly.

"I'd lost it, and now I've found it. I told you I'd lost it, and I told you I'd paid it. And that's 'is writin'. You can see that, and 'e can't swear agenst that. And there's the hole where he shoved the pencil through the paper. Didn't I tell you he shoved the pencil through, and then begun to write again? And didn't I tell you I'd paid 'im, and wasn't my word as good as 'is? An' you let 'im take all that money with nobody standin' by to say as 'e did or 'e didn't. And now look 'ere what you've done to me and mine." She paused for an instant in this passionate outburst, and continued more slowly:

"I'm starved, that's what I am. I'm starved to skin and bone; the child's dead, and my husband he's a dyin': starved he is, like me. We ain't got bite nor sup in the house—not a mouthful of victual—nor a rag of clothes, nor a morsel of all the bits of things as my poor father and mother worked all their lives to scrape together, and as we've worked for too the last six years. And look 'ere now, there 'e is," and she pointed to Neville, who was in the Court; "there 'e is as brought us to this, and I pray God A'mighty to cuss 'im as I cuss 'im, day and night risin' up and layin' down!

A man came forward and took her by the arm, and spoke kindly to her and led her to a seat. Every one in the building was standing up and leaning forward, and trying to look at her. For months she had been coming amongst them—proud and insolent at first, and received with jeers and taunting speeches, gradually growing quiet and even humble, imploring grace with tears, urging as a reason for it her child's death and the funeral expenses, her husband's illness, begging her creditor to have patience and she would pay. And they had grown accustomed to the worn face and the ragged clothes, but on this day there came back to the judge, and to many others also, a vision of her as she stood there seven months previously, bright and comely and well clad, with the pretty child in her arms.

And men and women at the far end of the court, who would not have turned their heads even when she passed, were now standing on tiptoe, and crowding forward, and leaning on each other's shoulders to get a glimpse at her.

Neville was directed to go forward, and the judge handed the receipt to him.

"Is this your signature?" he said.

The man took it and stood for a moment silent, looking at it on all sides, and turning the paper backwards and forwards. Then he began to call God to witness that it had clean gone out of his head.

But he was sternly interrupted:

"Answer my question. Is that signature yours?"

"Well, sir, I must explain. I have such a number of these bills, and you see I must have forgotten to enter it in my book when I got home——"

"I don't want your explanation. In this your signature?"

"Yes, sir, but——"

"That will do."

There was a moment's silence, and then, with more than his usual quietness, the judge spoke. Mary stood up to listen, but the words fell coldly on her ears. "Criminal negligence," the "probable necessity for ulterior proceedings" conveyed nothing to her mind. A few words at last told her that the money she had paid would be returned to her, that for every day she had attended the court she should receive compensation both for time and journey—probably at the rate of four or five shillings a day—that her case must have excited the compassion of all who had heard it, and he had no hesitation in saying that he considered her a very ill-used woman.

"It's all over now," said the voice of some one near her. "Sit down, missus, or lay hold o' me, and I'll take you out o' this place. You've had enough of this, I think."

She looked round her for a moment, and then, stooping, she felt on the bench at her side, pressed her hands over it and round it, and lifted up her empty arms. Then with a great cry she felt senseless to the ground.

"It's the little kid as she was a feeling for," said one of those present, drawing his coat sleeve across his eyes; "he used to stand up there on the seat by her side. I've seen him many a time. He wur as pretty a little chap as you'd see in a day's walk."

They carried her out into the fresh air, and once again a crowd gathered round her. A woman knelt down by her side, untied her bonnet strings, took the pin from her shawl, and chafed her hands, and men stood round with their hands in their pockets, looking down at the wasted form. "Just look 'ere!" said one, "she's

bin on the square all the time, and 'taint bin no use."

"Drink!" said another, contemptuously; "she ain't drunk much, whatever they may say, nor eat neither. Why she ain't nothing but a bundle o' bones."

A man had left the court who tried to pass unobserved by the group that surrounded Mary, but, without a word spoken, every one seemed to make way for him, till he was hustled and pushed to the front. He looked uneasily round him and in a whining tone began, "I give you my word of honor, gentlemen——"

"Oh, d—n you," said a big fellow, turning savagely upon him; "shut up, and get out o' this. We'll make it hot for you before we've done with you. You may take your oath of that."

Neville turned and made his way to a small cart standing by the roadside. He heard angry growls on all sides of him, and thought he would not go back to Cheam just at once, but would wait till nightfall and enter the village unobserved.

Meanwhile with many moans and long-drawn sighs, Mary was regaining consciousness. She sat up and opened her eyes, and with strangely dilated pupils began to look around her.

"I'm to have my money back," she said, "and my time, and my journeys. Lor, what a lot o' times I've bin here. That'll make a deal of money, that will; and compensation, he said. And what did he say I was?" and she looked round with wide, pathetic eyes.

"Well 'e said you was a ill-used 'ooman, missis, and that's just about what yoo are. I'm blowed if ever I sin a wuss."

"Yes, he said I was a ill-used woman," she repeated, rising slowly, and saying the words over and over again.

"You come along of me, dear, and have a cup of tea," said the woman who had been kneeling by her side, "and then I'll go a bit o' the way home with you."

"Why, I'm going to Cheam myself," said a burly farmer, in a tone that implied some astonishment at the discovery of his own intentions, "and if you jump up in the cart I'll put you down at your own door."

But Mary walked on, unobservant of these offers.

"She's a bit crazy-live, poor soul," said another woman. "Better let her be—she'll go straight home,'

"Well, she shan't go empty-handed," exclaimed the farmer, and diving down into his breeches pocket for a shilling, he laid it upon his open palm, and said, "Who'll marrow me that?"

Two or three shillings, a few smaller coins, and some halfpence were speedily laid upon his hand, and with them he hurried after Mary.

"Here, missis, we've put a trifle together for you, and we'll see what we can do for you before long. Tell your husband I hope I shall see him about again soon, and if he wants a job let him come to me; or you either, for the matter of that."

Mary stood for a moment with the same unobservant face, but as the kind tones fell upon her ear and the money was put into her palm, and her fingers pressed down upon it by a large friendly hand, a smile lighted up her face. Looking up with something of her own old frank expression, she courtisied and said,

"And I thank you kindly, sir."

Some hours later a laborer, who was passing through the woods, saw a motionless figure in the boat by the side of the little jetty that stretched out into the pond. He watched it for a few minutes, and then turning aside he went down the narrow path leading to the water's edge. There in the prow of the boat, leaning over and looking fixedly into the water, sat Mary Allan. He spoke to her, but she did not answer; and as he had just come from Brenchley, which was resounding with the story of her wrongs, he did not pass on as he would probably have done otherwise, but stepped into the boat, and, touching her on the shoulder, asked if it was not time for her to be going home?

She looked up at him, and then, pointing to a white glimmer in the water beneath her, said:

"What's that?"

"That!" he replied, looking over the edge of the boat. "Why that's your own image in the water."

"No it ain't," she said; "'tis the child."

"Not it!" he exclaimed.

"But I tell you 'tis the child. My lady she was up there on the bank, and she pointed to the water an' I come and looked, and there was the child."

"I tell you 'tain't no such thing. Come away home. 'Tain't no good thinkin' about things like them. Why my Lady's bin dead and buried this two months. So just see what nonsense you're talking. Come home, do!"

He took her by the arm and she followed him. "Glad enough I was," he said afterward, "to get her away, for she looked as mad as a crazy dame."

It was dusk before she reached home, and firelight was gleaming through the window of the long unused parlor. She opened the door, and her husband's voice fell upon her ears.

"Why, my lass, I've bin fairly moped about tha. I thowt thou was to settle ma toysel'. And thou ga's aff and says nowt at a'."

He was too weak to speak without frequent pauses; and the feeble voice, the catch in his breath, and the painful effort which it cost him to say even a few words, attracted his wife's attention and excited her fears.

"Ain't you so well, father?" she asked anxiously, drawning near the mattrass, which was placed on a low wooden bedstead.

"Better lass, much better. Miss Stokes brought somebody wi' her, and they fastened up t' bed and gat ma in and med ma a drop o' broth. I'm as reet as reet now. An' there's teapot ready for thee, and a bit o' summit on t' hob."

Mary was watching him keenly. "If I tell him all at once," she thought, "it will kill him. Why, it very near killed me." So she sat down by his side and took his hand and stroked it.

"Thare ain't much of it left, is there?" said he.

"But I think your gettin' better, father," said she, in a tone that sounded almost like entreaty.

"Na, na, nor niver shall I' this warld. Things is a' wrong togithe r, and aw don't see what's to be done. But we mum ha' patience, we mum ha' patience."

"Look 'ere now. I couldn't never bring myself to ask you afore, but you'll tell me true, John, won't you? Did you ever think as I'd done anything with that money, or made away with it?"

He started and turned upon her with such sudden angry eyes that she knelt by his side, and began to say:

"I didn't mean to put you out. You know I didn't, but everybody's bin against me, and you've never said as you was sure I'd paid it. You've only kep' on sayin' if I'd paid it I'd got the receipt. And then sometimes I've a thought you was like all the others, and didn't believe as I'd paid it at all." Allan's anger faded out as he saw her trembling by his side.

"You've na reet to say sfc a thing," he continued gravely; "but there, thou's had a hard time on't, poor lass. But I niver thowt thou'd turned on ma. What I allus said I say noo. Thou'lt find the bill some day."

She laid her head beside him on the pillow, and said: "You always was such a clever old chap. Your words 'll come true, you see if they don't. And look 'ere what I've got;" and she untied a corner of her shawl and took out the coins in it one by one. "Master Barnett give 'em me; an' 'e says when you're ready for a job you've only got to go to 'im."

Allan raised himself with difficulty, and sat looking at her, his breath coming thick and fast.

"Thou's found it; I knaw thou has. That's whar thou's bin all day, Whar is it, lass, whar is it? Show it ma. Show it ma."

She put it into his trembling hands, and he smoothed it out upon the bedclothes, and spelt out the words and went over the figures. And Mary began the story of how she found it, and all that had happened since. As she talked on every other feeling sank before her desire of vengeance upon Neville. She attributed to him not only their poverty and suffering, but her husband's illness and the child's death.

"I'll see him hung for it," she exclaimed, "and I'll walk fifty miles to see him swing!"

"Na, na, lass, they'll never hang him. 'Tisn't so bad as all that. I've thowt about it agen and agen. I knaw he's a rogue, and he's been divilish hard. But somehow it don't seem all wrang as it did to begin with. Thou sees there's Yan that knaws reet from wrang, an' if we're reet we're aside o' Him. I seem to see it as clear as clear, and thou'll see it, too, some day; but I'm fairly towed wi' talking."

He leaned back exhausted, and Mary sat silent by his side. Before long shouts from men and boy in the village street fell upon their ears, a rattling and beating and shaking of tin pots and pans; songs and whistling, and an indescribable babel of sound.

"What's that?" said Allan.

"Why that must be rough music," said Mary. "I ain't heard it since I were a child. They give old Tommy Gils rough music for turning his wife out o' doors one night, and then they broke the ice on the horse-pond here at the end of the road, and give him a good duckin', He died the next day, so it's been put down ever since."

"That'll be what we ca' ridin' stang in our own country. "I'se tell tha' about it, some day."

Suddenly there was a great shout of "There he is: that's him!" and all other noises were replaced by the heavy tramp of hob-nailed boots and cries of "Hold un, stop un! Dang it, don't let un go! That ain't 'im! This way; this way. That's 'im behind the haystack!"

The footsteps and voices had been drawing nearer, but now they seemed to take another direction, and the cottage was silent again.

Presently they heard the click of the garden-gate and stealthy steps on the garden-path. The cottage door was cautiously opened and carefully shut again, and locked and bolted by some who had entered.

"Who's there?" exclaimed Mary.

"Git a leet," said Allan.

"No, no!" was uttered in a tremulous whisper. "For God's sake be quiet. Don't stir: it's as much as my life is worth if they get hold of me."

A thrill of recoguition shot through Allan and his wife.

"Git a leet," said Allan, sternly, let him see whar he is."

It was Neville. He was wild with terror, and as Mary held a candle to the fire he sprang to the window-shutters and closed and barred them. Then, by the dim light of the tallow candle, as he looked round he saw the white faces that were turned towards him. He fell upon his knees, and implored them to have mercy upon him.

"I didn't know where I was coming to, nor where I was. I was creeping along under the hedge when I got away from them, and I saw a bit of firelight through the window. But I didn't know where it was. Don't give me up, for God's sake. It's as much as my life is worth. There ain't nothing as you can name that I won't give for my life. And I've a wife and seven children at home."

Mary listened intently. There came into her face a savage, eager look whilst he pleaded for his life, as of a wild animal waiting for his prey, and her hands worked convulsively.

At length she said, in a hoarse whisper—

"You can't stir, father, but I can drag 'im along. I'll stick to 'im and keep on hollerin', and they'll soon come." And she went towards the door.

Neville threw himself on his knees before her, and implored her to spare him. But it was in vain. She spurned him with her foot, and tried to pass. He was desperate, his life was at stake, and he seized and tried to hold her back. Then, filled with sudden strength and fury, she dashed him from her, and he fell, stunned and bruised, against the wall, and lay there insensible.

"I'll get a stick," she said, turning to her husband with glaring eyes, "and quiet him till they comes up."

"Thou'll stop whar thou is," said he, sternly. "Does ta' mean to murder 'im, and me here a deeing'? Thou'll stop wi' me."

"Look here, father—you ain't a goin' to let 'im off, not if you've the 'eart of a man. I needn't hit 'im again, I'll just open the door and holler out as 'e's here."

"Mary," said Allan, raising himself slowly in the bed and sitting up as he looked at her with great appealing eyes, "come here my lass and sit down wi' me. I'se not lang for this warld, lass, and thou'll see it plain enough if thou looks at ma. Somehow I can't bide to see tha botherin' and fechten', not though its for me and child. Seems as if it had nowt to do wi' t' churchyard I'm gawin' to, nor wi' t' time as we've bin together and bin so happy, and had lile lad wi' us an' aw. And now I'se gawin' down to him, and I shall be a thinkin' and thinkin' o' tha, like I is now. And eh, lass, but I'd like tha to do sommut real grand, like as if thou was to forgie the man and let him ga. Why it'ud be like partin' wi' your life to do it, and seems to me as if I could lie there and think of it o'er and o'er again, and niver git tired of it till thou comes to ma. And I couldn't bide to think o' that fella's death lyin' at my dooer like as it wad. Mind tha, it wad part us, it wad part us t' t' grave; and we niver hev been parted sen we come togither. Let him ga, lass—let him ga. Poor meeserable beggar! and ex the Lord to forgie him, as I do."

Long before this speech, interrupted by many pauses and broken by his incessant cough, was finished, Allan had sunk on his bed. As he pleaded, his voice grew more and more feeble, and the words came in gasps. Mary stood in silence by his side; the candle was burning low in the socket, it spluttered and went out. Neville, who had recovered, was afraid to move or speak. The feeble spark of red in the fire gave no light in the room, and the voice of the dying man came like a sob to startle the listeners at long intervals. Then there was a silence, broken by hasty steps upon the gravel, the sound of many voices, and a loud knocking at the door.

Mary turned slowly and opened it, and a voice out of the darkness said—

"Missis, that old raskil's got away from us somehow; but we'll tar and feather 'im afore the night's over, and duck 'im in the horse-pond and all. Jemmey Higgs has just bin to tell us that as 'e was a comin' from Brenchley an hour ago, he see the old bloke sneakin' up this path. Just give us a light, and we'll 'ave a look round and see if he's a hidin' anywheres about the place."

Mary heard a breath drawn fast and sharp in the darkness behind her, like some hunted creature in the woods panting with fear, and werheart gave one wild leap for joy. Then she clenched her hands and pressed them together, as if to keep back something with which she was struggling, as she said, slowly—

"My husband's very bad, as bad as 'e can be; an I'd thank you kindly if you'd not make a noise and come about the place just now."

"Beg your pardon, missis, and very sorry fur to hear it; but we thought as how he shouldn't sneak away and get off."

"Thank you kindly," she said; "but please don't make no noise." And she shut the door and turned the key.

There was a whispered consultation outside, and then a sound of retreating footsteps along the pebbly path. Mary went back to the bed and laid her head down on the pillow. The tears which had so long forsaken her eyes began to flow, and her frame was shaken by sobs. Her husband turned, and put one hand upon her head, and said—

"'Tis a fine lass, and a bonny lass, God bless thee, Mary!"

An hour later, all the sounds in the village were hushed. Neville's friends had spread a report that he had got home and was in his own house. The one policeman from Strood had arrived, and peace was restored.

Mary left the bedside, and feeling her way to the back door, called out in a cold and constrained tone—

"Come along!"

And Neville groped his way to the gleam of moonlight which the open door admitted.

"Go down the garden and over the style into the forty-acre. You can get to your house then by the back way."

The man had crouched so long in that room in deadly terror that he was completely unnerved. Holding by the door, trembling and crying he tried to utter some words of thanks, and some promises for the future. But at the sound of his voice Mary, with an expression of disgust, turned away. She could not trust herself to listen to him, for she felt as if she must seize some weapon and strike him to the earth. She went back to her husband's side, and in the night he died.

She seemed to have known it all before. She sat by his side, when all was over and her last offices fulfilled, not thinking, but waiting. There was something else to come; she did not know what it was, but something that she waited for. Perhaps it was the day, for when long rays of light stole through chinks in the shutter and cracks in the door she watched them. Then the voices of the birds fell upon her ear; the blackbird's whistle was like a call, and the thrush sang his loud clear notes over and over again, as if to make her understand. She rose from the bedside, opened the door, and stood in the cottage porch. How pitiless the day was; bright sun and clear sky, soft woods and springing flowers; nothing felt for her in heaven or earth; nothing was left to her. The day and the sunshine and the fullness of life fell like a veil between her and the dead, and spoke of eternal separation. In the desolate room with her dying husband little Jack had seemed very near to them. Now, father and child were together, and she was alone. Everything was changed. It was not death, but life, that she dreaded; life which was to part her from all she loved; life which would surround her and shut her in, and keep voices and hands from reaching her.

She looked toward the village. Here and there a thin thread of smoke told of cottage fires already kindled. The neighbors would have heard the truth about her the previous evening, and would be coming before long. Where should she hide herself? How could she escape? Her eyes wandered over the trees toward Brenchley, and there came back to her the sweet scent of violets, which she had passed unnoticed at the time—violets covered with green leaves and wet with dew. How fond he was of them! He used to gather them on his way home from work, and bring them to her for a posy, as he called it. She would fetch some now, and place a bunch between he hands that she had folded on his breast. And with this thought she left the house, and passed unnoticed to the woods.

Early that day, women from the village, and a messenger from the Hall, visited the cottage. After some delay they entered. The dead man had been tenderly and carefully stretched out on his wretched bed, but there was no sign of Mary. She had gone to Strood, they thought, to buy food, as she had long been in the habit of doing, so as to escape unfriendly remarks. Then, as the day wore on, they imagined that she had walked to Brenchley to see the undertaker who had buried her child. But in the afternoon it was known that she had not been seen in either place, and then a vision of the poor creature, wild with despair, made frantic by the injustice of her suffering and her solitude, began to appal them. Where was she? what had she done to herself?

"You had better go down to the ponds," said the man who told the story of how he had brought her home the previous evening. And they went. Looking over the side of the boat, they saw a glimmer as of light clothing, and drew up a heavy form, still and white, which they carried back and laid on the bed beside her husband. In her hand she still clasped a bunch of violets, and the expression of her face was tranquil.

Beneath the lime trees in the old churchyard there are three grassy graves, and that in the middle is a child's. "Little Jack, he du lie there," say the village children; but the elders whom they address pass on in silence, not insensible to the mute reproach of those green mounds.

A WIFE'S HAPPINESS.

No married woman can be happy if her husband does not appear to regard and honor her as well as actually to do so. The order of flirts have a certain article of faith which comforts them mightily—this is, that a man's wife is always the least interesting woman in the room to him. If he does not know this, she does; and some act of graceful courtesy, some little word or motion, nothing in itself, perhaps, but indicative of the tenderness he feels for her, gives the good wife a moment of triumph so innocent and sweet that no one should begrudge it to her.

A careless word, a little forgetfulness, quite pardonable or even unnoticed when they are alone, gives pain when watchful eyes, anxious to find a flaw in their wedded happiness, are upon the two who are bound for life to each other.

But men are singular creatures. Generally, it is at exactly such a moment that a husband chooses to give her the only sharp word he utters on the occasion; or to say something, quite unconsciously, which would lead any one to accredit them with a multitude of quarrels and bickerings. He does not know what he has done, and it does not improve her temper. Yet men generally love their wives better than all the other women they know put together. Those who have the grace to show this delicacy to others, are loved the best by women.

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MONTREAL, SATURDAY, FEB. 21, 1874.

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ROMANCE AND REALITY.

It is the prevailing opinion that women are more romantic than men, especially in all that concerns the affairs of love; and we are quite sure the opinion is most erroneous. A little attention to the details of every-day life will explain this. Women expect to be married just as men expect to make or have made for them a career in life. In the one case, being called to the bar, getting a picture into the Royal Academy, preaching the first sermon, being admitted as a partner in a flourishing concern, or finding the particular borough or county that will provide admittance into Parliament, are the definite objects on which a young man's thoughts are and ought to be fixed. In the other, having the offer of a home, of an establishment to manage, of a household to control, perhaps of a family to supervise, this is the one event which a girl, after arriving at years of discretion, has to contemplate. It is far too serious a matter for her, unless she is an absolute goose, to think about romantically; and she no more does so than men think romantically about the investment of their money, the mixing of their colors, their approaching legal examination, or the chances of coming in at the head of the poll. When the latter have settled these matters to their satisfaction, or otherwise, the law of reaction urges them to considerations of a totally different character. They want to fall in love, and marry. If they are men at all—men who rely upon their wit, their energy, and their opportunities, to provide them with a competence equal to all emergencies—they have no need to introduce business calculations into their designs of love and marriage. They can afford to let the design be exclusively a romantic one; and though we are perfectly well aware that there are some gross and some grotesque exceptions to this rule, the person who doubts that most men marry for love can have had but little close experience of the male sex, in this country, at least. The man falls in love then, and is prepared for a romance; a something very different from his briefs, his electioneering, his painting, his leading articles, or his double entry. Nine times out of ten, we will undertake to say, he is disappointed to find that the young lady of his choice, even if she favors his suit from the very outset, is far from being as romantic as himself. In the first place, he knows his own mind, and she does not. Did he quite know his own mind, we should like to hear, when he first betook himself to a serious examination of his future prospects in life? Had he no doubts as to what line of business he should go into, what firm he should seek to join with his capital; whether he should choose animal or landscape painting for his speciality; whether he should study law or medicine; whether he should throw in his lot with the Conservatives or with the Radicals? He must have had a decided liking for the particular course which he eventually adopted; but was it so overpowering as to prevent him from considering an alternative one? The fascinating young person, whom he is now endeavoring to entice into a very decided course indeed, and who is not altogether disinclined to take it; may she not legitimately entertain similar hesitation? He is asking her to choose her irrevocable career in life, and she naturally manifests a little caution and vacillation. Did not he himself do precisely the same only a short time ago? But her doubts and scruples vex and irritate him. They detract from the perfect romance for which he was prepared, the unallowed enjoyment of which he had previously pictured to himself. Instead of this he finds himself entangled in a transaction fully as uncertain and wavering as the patronage of attorneys, the decision of the hanging committee, the judgment of editors, or the rate of exchange. He is dying for a row on the river with the object of his affections, as the sunset faints into twilight, or for a solitary stroll with her in moonlit avenues of beech and chestnut; whilst she is hesitating whether she ought to do anything of the kind, and reflecting that if she does, she will probably be compelled to come to a decision on a question of life or living death before the close of the tender adventure. Moreover, other people—her own sex, more especially; and think of the horror of that!—are watching to see whether she will take to the water or the wood, and what comes of her daring. Her lover, on the contrary, has nothing to lose, and everything to win; and he is in far too ecstatic a condition to be alive to the looks or attitude of anybody save those of the objects of his passion. All he wants is his chance. He could well afford to face the vigilance and comments of the crowd, if she would. Only she is not romantic enough to do so. She spoils his anticipated delights by being so abominably practical.

A JEALOUS MAN'S MISTAKE.

It was New Year's Eve, and a goodly number of young people were gathered in Farmer Anderson's large, old-fashioned parlor.

A troupe of bright-eyed girls, Ketty's schoolmates, had come down from the city to spend a few weeks with her, and a number of them had brothers that remembered Kitty, and so came along with the girls.

"You girls could not get along without us," one of the fellows said, jestingly, "and so we have taken pity on you, and come for valiant escorts."

Over on the other side of the room sat Lawrence Appleton, Kitty's accepted lover, and he scowled at the fellow's impertinence.

"City airs!" he sneered to himself. "Those fellows think that to live in the country means that one must necessarily be a boor."

But Kitty, totally unconscious of his silent comment, smiled archly into Tom Jessup's face, and told him they certainly could not exist without him; and he bowed gallantly.

Lawrence flushed. He was a thriving young lawyer, and a good, honorable man. He had loved Kitty Anderson for years, but it was only of late that he had summoned up courage enough to tell her so, and place a ring on her finger.

A ring! As he thought of it, he glanced almost involuntarily toward her hand. The ring was gone! He started as if a thunderbolt had struck him. She had taken it off, so that they need not know of her engagement, he said to himself, especially Tom Jessup.

"I would not have believed it," he muttered, and even then he caught Kitty's eye, and she looked uneasy.

For the greater part of the evening he sat silent and moody, and bore their rallying with a very stern face. He arose to leave at an early hour, and Kitty slipped off to the door with him.

"Where is your ring?" he demanded sternly.

A little rebellious flush arose into Kitty's cheeks at his tone, but she answered in a confused manner:

"I—I left it in my room. I—I—"

"You need prevaricate no more!" he exclaimed. "You were afraid to wear it, for fear that city fop would know what it meant."

"Lawrence!"

But Lawrence Appleton was fast hastening out of sight, and Kitty returned to her guests with a throbbing heart.

"If I had only told him the truth," she thought to herself; "but perhaps even then he would not have believed me. How could I ever have been so careless?"

Yes, that was it. Kitty's fingers were slender, and her ring did not fit very snug. She had been busy helping her mother to preapre for their expected company, and when she hurried up to dress, she found her ring missing. She looked everywhere for it, but in vain. She partly guessed at Lawrence Appleton's hasty temper, and so concluded not to tell him until she searched again, for she was sure it would be found.

"He would think I did not care for him, if I could be so careless," she whispered to herself, and from that source sprang her prevarication.

On the morrow the search was renewed. The whole bevy of girls and gentlemen went to the village church, and then returned to dinner. Farmer Anderson went with them, and coming out of the church, he button-holed Lawrence Appleton, and led him home with him, quite unconscious that anything was wrong with the fellow.

At the dinner-table he was set beside Tom Jessup, the very man he hated for being an imaginary rival.

The dinner was passing by gaily, when Tom saw something glittering in the pie on his plate.

He made no remark, but dexterously removed it with his napkin and thrust it on his little finger, without being noticed.

A few moments later, Lawrence Appleton condescended to glance that way, and as he caught the sparkle of that ring on Tom's finger, he clenched his teeth. He thought he was going to choke with the smothered storm within him; and as soon as he arose from the table, he made an apology to Mr. Anderson about having an "important engagement," and left the house without another word.

Poor Kitty tried to hide her feelings—for Lawrence had not spoken to her during the dinner—but in such a poor manner that they all mistrusted that something was wrong, and pitied her accordingly.

That evening she happened to notice Tom Jessup's hand, and cried out:

"Why, where did you get that ring? I have looked and looked for it!"

"You make nice mince pies, Miss Kitty," he said, laughingly. "I found this in my piece at dinner time!"

"Oh, I am glad!" she ejaculated. "I was helping mother bake yesterday, and it must have fallen in."

The ring found, and Kitty's spirits rose. Lawrence would come back, by-and-bye, and then she would tell him the whole truth, and everything would be straight again.

The evening wore away, but the young farmer did not return; and on the next morning, Farmer Anderson came into the house with a grave look on his weather-beaten countenance. He called Kitty aside.

"What has happened between you and Lawrence, child?" he asked. "I believed you to be too true a woman to jilt an honest man."

"What do you mean, father?" she asked, her face whitening with a sudden terror. "I have done nothing wrong."

"May be not. Then he's a villain! He left town, this morning, for abroad, without so much as saying 'good-bye' to his friends; and the impression is that you jilted him."

Poor Kitty covered her face with her hands and sank back, weak and trembling.

"Really gone!" she cried. "It seems impossible!"

And then she related to her father the little affair of the ring.

"Poor boy! he was too hasty and too quickly made jealous," the old man sighed. "When will youth learn wisdom? Never mind, daughter," he added; "he will soon come back, I have no doubt, and your conscience is clear—you intended Lawrence no harm."

But that was very poor consolation to Kitty. Her lover was gone, probably for ever, and she would long remember her New Year's Eve party."

* * * * * *

Five, ten years passed away. A gentleman jostled against another in the crowded station. He turned quickly, stared a moment, and then stretched out his hand.

"Lawrence Appleton!" he exclaimed. "Just returning? Welcome home, old-fellow—a thousand welcomes! It does one's eyes good to rest on an old friend!"

It was Tom Jessup's voice and Tom Jessup's cordial clasp of the hand that first welcomed Lawrence Appleton from his sojourn abroad.

"You must go home with me," he continued. "No apologies or excuses, for I will not listen to any. You have not got any friends that will be more pleased to see you than wife and I. You know I am married?"

Lawrence almost groaned aloud as he was dragged along by his enthusiastic friend. How could he meet Kitty, Tom's wife, he asked himself. He believed he would have to break away from his friend and take to his heels for safety. But before he made his meditated flight, Tom announced, "Here we are!" and led him into a handsome house.

"Alice! Alice!" he called to his wife. "Come here and see who this is!"

Alice Jessup rushed up the steps, followed by a little four-year-old boy.

"Why, Mr. Appleton!" she exclaimed, "how glad I am to see you!"

"My wife and son," Tom said, gleefully. "You remember Alice Denham, Lawrence?"

"I—I beg your pardon, Tom," he stammered. "I thought you married Kitty Anderson."

"Kitty Anderson!" he exclaimed. "Why, you have gone crazy!"

"I think I have," was the subdued answer. "Tell me, then, how you came to have her engagement ring on your finger that New Year's Eve?"

Tom laughed aloud.

"By Jove! I had almost forgotten that incident. I found it in my mince-pie, and slipped it on to see if anyone would claim it!"

Lawrence wiped the perspiration from his face.

"And I made such a confounded fool of myself!" he exclaimed.

And then he related all his doubts.

Tom and his wife did not laugh at him. They remembered how Kitty Anderson had looked.

"And where is Kitty now?" he asked.

"At her same old home," was the response; "but—"

"But what?"

"She is not the same blithe Kitty as when you knew her. I think you broke her heart, Appleton. Since then her father and mother have died. She does not complain, but never visits, lives alone, and looks like a ghost."

"I am going up to see her," he returned. "To-morrow is New Year's Eve again."

"That is true," ejaculated Tom Jessup.

"I say, Alice, why can't we all go up, same as we did ten years ago?"

"So we can," she returned, "I will go around and gather up the girls"—they were most all wives and mothers now.

About six o'clock on New Year's Eve a party of ten drove up to Kitty Anderson's door.

Tom Jessup ran up the steps ahead.

"We've come to surprise you, Kitty," he cried, gleefully.

And Lawrence Appleton came up behind him. He caught sight of his ring on Kitty's finger yet, and without stopping to ask permission, he clasped her in his arms and kissed her.

"Am I forgiven, Kitty?" he whispered. "I believed you to be Tom Jessup's wife, until last night."

There is no need to record Kitty's answer.

She welcomed her guests warmly and on the morrow there was a quiet little wedding, and Tom Jessup and his wife insisted on doing the honors of the house.

"Look your pie well over, gentlemen," Tom said, "to see if you can find any rings."

It was a happy New Year's eve for all concerned, especially for Tom, who said "He was happy to see a jealous man's mistake rectified."

NEWS NOTES.

NINE hundred Communists are still awaiting trial.

PROF. Anderson, the well-known conjurer, is dead.

M. BUFFET has been re-elected President of the French Assembly.

THIRTY thousand unemployed workmen in Vienna have petitioned the Government for relief.

A DESPATCH from Berlin says alarming reports are current there concerning the relations between Germany and France.

GENERAL Sickles took his final leave of the Spanish Government on the 6th inst., and placed Secretary Adee in charge of the Legation.

THE principal through lines to the west have adopted the uniform scale of classification for freights. The classification has reference to bulk and cost of goods.

A RUMOR is afloat that the Baltimore and Ohio R. R. are negotiating for the purchase of the New Jersey Southern Road, Jay Gould's unsuccessful enterprise.

INTELLIGENCE has been received of a desperate engagement near Loyda, between the Republicans and Carlists. The latter were defeated with heavy loss in both killed and wounded.

DESPATCHES from Penang report that the cholera is decreasing in Acheen. A reconnoitering party of the expedition had been attacked by the enemy, and 20 were killed and wounded.

JAS. GORDON Bennett was elected Commodore of the New York Yacht Club at the annual meeting. It was resolved that the Regatta next June should be sailed without time or allowance.

A WASHINGTON despatch says the Russian Minister denies the London *News'* statement that Russia has refused to send goods to the Philadelphia exhibition, alleging that it is a private undertaking.

GENERAL De La Marmora has requested permission to resign his seat in the Chamber of Deputies, but the Chamber refused to accept his resignation, and decided to grant him two months leave of absence.

IN Ireland the feeling runs high between the clerical and nationalist parties, especially in Limerick County. A fight occurred between the supporters of the rival candidates in Askeaton, in which firearms were used and three men were shot dead.

ALL the rolling stock and other moveable property of the New Jersey Southern Railroad Company lying around Camden County was seized by the Sheriff. The seizure was made in the interest of the Lackawana Iron and Coal Company, by an order from the New Jersey Supreme Court.

ARCHBISHOP Ledochowski was to be tried on the 11th instant, on no other charge except his refusal to pay fines. He may yet be released if the fines are paid. The Emperor has declined to intervene in the case, notwithstanding the great influence brought to bear in the Archbishop's favor.

A DESPATCH from Richmond, Va., says the scientific medical commission from Philadelphia arrived at Mount Airy on Saturday, the 31st ult. On Sunday a consultation was had with the widows of the Siamese Twins, which resulted in obtaining their consent to the proposition of the commission, on condition and with the direct understanding that the bodies should not be mutilated. The commission repaired to the cellar, where the remains of the twins were interred, and opened the outer coffin, then removed the inner coffin to the room above. The bodies were found in a good state of preservation. Chang's features were partially discolored, those of Eng being natural. The widows then entered the room and took a final farewell of the remains and left them to the doctors. A partial examination was then had which was followed by consultation. The partial embalment of the bodies was then performed, and the bodies once more covered in the coffin securely soldered in a tin box, again boxed and after obtaining the consent of the widow removed to Mount Airy and thence to the railroad station for transportation to Philadelphia.

A LOST LOVE.

Withered the lily fair,
Faded the roses,
Brown leaves are falling where
My love reposes.

Not as in days gone by,
In these arms nested—
When love and life and joy
Nature invested.

But, alas! still and cold,
Lying all lowly,
Covered by earth's green mould—
Making it holy.

With the flowers gone to rest,
Peacefully sleeping;
Love o'er her slumber blest,
Fond watch is keeping,

Sleeps she till winter's night
Breaks into dawning,
Then to rise in the bright
Glow of the morning.

THE STORY-TELLER.

The Squire of Waldenshoe.

CHAPTER I.

"A fine place! Upon my word, a very fine place!"

The speaker, Robert Hilton, was a man whose first youth had passed, leaving traces of struggle and toil upon the dark-browed forehead, and lines of indulged passion and uncurbed pride about the eyes and mouth. He was leaning forward in a handsomely-appointed carriage; but the hand which lay upon the door was coarse, and appeared to have been hardened by menial work; it was not by any means a gentleman's hand, although the little finger was adorned by a gem of considerable value.

"Yes, the place is quite equal to the description we had of it," replied his companion. "There's timber for you! Why, each of those oaks is worth seventy or eighty guineas."

"Do you think that I intend to run through my twenty thousand of loose cash in such a hurry as to let you get your greedy claws on them, Mr. Brett? No, thank you. I've a taste for the picturesque, though you mayn't think it."

The carriage was passing through a really beautiful park, of sufficient extent to be worthy of the name. The ground was hilly, and broken here and there into deep rocky valleys, where ivy and great glistening masses of fern clustered round the boles of the lofty beeches. A shallow stream ran brawling over its rough channel close by the side of the drive; and in the foreground, and over the more distant slopes, were grouped, in all the careless magnificence of the superb landscape-gardening, the mighty forest trees of the midland counties. The scene was one of which an owner might well be proud; and Robert Hilton gazed at it with appreciating eyes—for this was Waldenshoe, and he its fortunate possessor.

A long train of circumstances had led to the grand old mansion's passing to this scion of a branch of the family long ignored and forgotten. Hugh Walden, the late master of the place, had quarrelled with his brother and his brother's children, who were his heirs, and had directed search to be made for the descendants of an aunt of his who had run away with a penniless officer—Hilton by name—and had been disinherited by her irate father. None knew what her fate had been; and it was not until after the old man's death that traces of her whereabouts were discovered, and her grandson, the first mate on board the good ship "Three Sisters," was informed that his distant relative, Hugh Walden, of Waldenshoe, had died, making him heir to the whole of his property, without condition or reservation.

Robert Wilton at once resigned his seamanship, and proceeded to London, to see with his own eyes the wonderful document which was to transform him from a hard-working, hard-handed sailor into the country gentleman, the associate of the magnates of the land. And there sure enough, the will was—not to be disputed or misunderstood—in the hands of the grave-looking family lawyer, whose ancestors had had charge of the legal business of the Waldens for generations. The eminently respectable man of law was scandalised by Robert Hilton's loud words and overbearing manner; and when hinted doubts of his honesty, and accusations of self-interest which were more than hinted, came coarsely from the sailor's lips, he intimated to his new client that the row of tin boxes with "Waldenshoe" painted upon their sides must henceforth repose on shelves in some other office than his.

Mr. Hilton was in nowise disconcerted. There were as good fish still in the sea as ever came out of it, he thought; and the dignified lawyer was not at all to his taste. He "had no mind to be dictated to by a man whom he paid with pounds, shillings, and pence for the work he did, or professed to do;" so he received the resignation very placidly, and put his business into the hands of a Mr. Brett, a person whom he knew well, and who suited him much better than did the Waldens' old solicitor. Accompanied by this same Mr. Brett, he was now, for the first time, driving up the avenue, and trying to realise that he was indeed the Squire of Waldenshoe.

A group of servants awaited his arrival within the porch, eager to welcome the "rising sun," and to proffer their requests to be retained in his service. But his arrogant demeanor had somewhat the same effect on them as it had had on the lawyer.

"I'll tell you what it is, Mrs. Norris," said the butler to the gold-spectacled housekeeper, "if that's to be the new way of ordering, and them's to be the civilest words one is to hear, I'm not going to stay more than my month, that's very certain."

"Hush, hush!" was the response. "If you speak so loud, you'll be heard."

"Well, and suppose I am? We are servants, to be sure, but we are neither his slave nor his debtors."

Very much disgusted was this same independent-minded butler when, after he had placed the wine on the table, and arranged the dessert, and was about to retire from the dining-room, his master, wheeling his chair round, desired him to remain.

"Now tell me about everything," said Mr. Hilton, staring him straight in the face. "Who lives about here? Have I many neighbors who are good sort of folk?"

"There is the Castle, sir, Lord Towerham's place; but his lordship is abroad on a diplomatic mission," answered the butler, loftily, resolved to show Mr. Hilton that he at least knew how to speak with propriety. "And there are Sir John Cordeaux and his family, who reside about two miles from here; and there is Mr. Philip Walden."

"Mr. Philip Walden!"

"Yes, sir; the nephew of my late master. He lives in the White House at the upper end of the village, with his mother and the young ladies."

"He does! And pray what does he live on, now that his uncle's banknotes have come to line my pockets instead of his, eh?"

"I have never had the inquisitiveness or the insolence to inquire into his private affairs, sir."

Mr. Hilton sprang from his chair with a few strong expressions, more fit for the deck of the "Three Sisters," than for the dining-room of Waldenshoe.

"Insolence, indeed!" he thundered. "Be off with you for an impudent rascal! No, not another word I'll hear! You wish to give me warning, do you? All the better. Be off, and shut the door after you."

"Now, did ever you hear the like of that?" said he, addressing Mr. Brett, when the butler had withdrawn. Servants indeed setting up to teach their very masters! I'll teach them, I'll engage, and that before they're many days older!"

Mr. Brett filled his glass again and passed the decanter of port before he answered.

"Teach them as much as you like, my dear fellow, but pray be a little more cautious—a little more suave. If you behave like this (you must forgive my plain speaking) the county will vote you a bear, and perhaps cut you altogether; but, if you can only hit their fancy, there is nothing you may not aspire to — M. P., or even——"

"M. P. be hanged!" broke in Robert Hilton, angrily. "I sha'n't aspire to anything more than I've got already; and we shall see if the county will cut me when I've all these broad acres to keep me in countenance."

Mr. Brett looked through the open window at the terrrace walk, with its handsome balustrade and marble statues gleaming through the dusk of the warm September twilight. He looked at the groups of noble trees which sheltered the lawns and shrubberies; and then he looked at the dark portraits of bewigged and bepowdered knights and dames who had in turn lounged on the terraces and sauntered on the lawns, and, as he looked, he thought it highly probable that his friend was right, and that the world would be inclined to forgive a great deal in the Squire of Waldenshoe.

CHAPTER II.

Dessert was on the table at Wynstone Hall, the seat of Sir John Cordeaux; but, though the silver epergne and the antique glass were as rich and as rare as those upon Robert Hilton's board, yet the same lavish profusion of costly viands and old wines was absent from the Baronet's table. A better light than the shadowy evening one would have shown that the Turkey carpet was wearing threadbare, and that the crimson draperies of the mullioned windows were faded and frayed. Some malicious tongues had even whispered that the diamond aigrette which flashed in Lady Cordeaux's raven hair was only paste, and that the real jewels—heirloom from the time of Queen Bess — had gone to help to pay off some of the heavy debts which were hanging like a millstone round her husband's neck.

The property had been heavily encumbered before his time, and a large family of sons, requiring expensive education and suitable allowances, had not contributed to lessen difficulties or to pay off mortgages. Many of his boys were off his hands, now, but the state of his finances continued to give Sir John cause for unceasing worry and anxiety, and he had more than once talked of going abroad for a time to try to straighten matters. But he was getting elderly, and full-grown trees do not bear transplanting; he shrank from the effort, necessary though he felt it to be; and year by year things looked blacker and blacker at Wynstone Hall.

"Papa," said Miss Cordeaux, the youngest and the best beloved of all his children, "do you know that Mr. Hilton was expected to-day?"

"Yes, Harry, I know it, and, what is more, I have seen him."

"Oh, papa, what is he like?" and Lady Cordeaux roused herself from the surreptitious little nap in which she had been indulging under cover of the twilight, to echo her daughter's query.

"Really, my dears, I can't tell you, for I don't know."

"But you say you have seen him?"

"I saw two gentlemen driving in a Waldenshoe carriage; one was dark and middle-aged, and wore a 'wide-awake,' while the other was thin and fair and smiling, with a very new shiny hat—what you would call a dapper little man. Now, Harry, you determine what he is like."

"The new shiny hat tells tales, papa. I rather fancy that Mr. Hilton is a dapper little man."

"You will call on him at once, I suppose?" said Lady Cordeaux.

"Yes—some time next week; and, my dear, we must have a dinner-party for him. As we are his principal neighbors, it falls to our lot to introduce him to our world here; so you and Harry had better review your forces, and see what we can do for him in that line."

Sir John Cordeaux had an idea in his head which caused him to suggest the dinner-party—an idea vague and undefined as yet, but which had nevertheless occupied a good share of his thoughts for many days past. Mr. Hilton had been suddenly raised from humble life to unexpected affluence and position. He must necessarily be ignorant of the ways of society, and he must also as evidently need a wife. Now why should not he, Sir John Cordeaux, establish a claim on his gratitude by becoming his god-father, as it were, in the county? And why should not Harry have the first and best chance of becoming mistress of Waldenshoe?

Sir John loved his pretty daughter more, perhaps, than he had loved anything else on earth, excepting himself. He would not force her inclinations for the world—so he said—but he could see no reason why she should not be Robert Hilton's wife as well as any other girl in England, and no reason why she should not respect him, and love him, and all the rest of it, as a wife should. He had always suspected that there was "a something" between her and Philip Walden; and long ago, when Harriet and Philip were hardly more than children, the suspicion and anticipation had given him and Lady Cordeaux infinite pleasure. But affairs were changed now. Old Hugh Walden had disinherited his brother and his brother's children in summary fashion; and Sir John was now in terror lest there really might be some attachment in that quarter. The Squire's brother had died before himself, and many thought that the event might have softened the old man's rancor, and that Philip might yet have his rights; but the opinion proved to be a mistaken one, and the will in favor of the Hiltons remained unaltered. Now Philip was avowedly looking out for something to do, whereby he might aid his widowed mother, and help to maintain his two sisters. Sir John hated to see Harriet still so intimate with the Waldens at the White House; he felt sure that Philip was honorable enough not to attempt to woo Miss Cordeaux as long as he had nothing to offer her; but yet it was not well that the young people should be so much together. Mr. Hilton would prove a valuable diversion, and, if things were properly managed, a few months might set at rest all anxiety on that score. "It is absolutely necessary that Harry should marry a rich man, bless her," said Sir John to himself; "for I don't see how I am to give her more than enough to buy gowns and pocket-handkerchiefs."

CHAPTER III.

Early on the morrow Mr. Hilton and his friend ordered saddle-horses from the well-stocked stables, and proceeded to "go over" the estate. If they had been pleased and astonished the evening before, they were doubly so now. Such snug farmsteads, such excellent cottages, such valuable woods! Truly the late mate of the "Three Sisters" had good reason to congratulate himself on his new berth.

"Come round by the station, Brett," he said, as they neared home on their return—"it is but a mile or so farther. I want to make inquiry about that gun that I ordered to be sent after me from London. I suppose this is the right road," and he reined his horse into a green lane which turned off at right angles to the one which they had been pursuing.

"I shall not go with you, I think," replied Mr. Brett. "I'm not much accustomed to horse exercise, and I'm about done up already."

So the friends parted, and, with a little rather disdainful raillery, Robert Hilton took his way to the railway-station. Sailor as he was, he could ride well enough, and he touched with the whip the spirited creature he bestrode, and dashed along the winding lane at a rattling pace. A few minutes brought him in sight of the station—a pretty little building, with deep wooden eaves and rose-covered walls, and a small white gate leading on to the platform. No porters happened to be about; and so, lifting the latch with his hunting-whip, he rode forward in search of one.

A fair, delicate-looking lady in mourning stood on the platform with two children beside her, apparently waiting for the train, and talking with her Mr. Hilton noticed a tall girl possessing one of the most beautiful faces he had ever seen in his life. Dark brown, hair, yet darker brown eyes, a rich clear skin—all these she had; but it was the broad brow, the quiet, firm look upon the curving lips, which made the face unlike all other faces in its powerful yet sweet originality.

The clatter of a horse's hoofs made her turn, and she raised her eyes with a quick look of surprise and curiosity to his. Robert Hilton had been "a gentleman" for only the short space of a fortnight, and he had scarcely had time to re-model his manners yet. He was guilty of the rudeness of staring in a manner so pointed that the lady turned away and walked to a little distance, covering her confusion by playing with the children as she went.

"I beg your pardon, sir," said a voice behind him, "but you had better not bring your horse here; the——"

"Oh, the horse will do no harm. I came to inquire if there is a package here for me from London—I am Mr. Hilton, of Waldenshoe."

The station-master touched his hat.

"No, sir; nothing has come yet. But indeed, sir, I must ask you to ride outside the gate; this is quite against the rules—and there's the down express now in sight, sir! It will be here in another minute!"

But Robert Hilton had grown wonderfully impatient of control since he had heard of old Mr. Walden's eccentric will. The very spirit of contradiction seemed to possess him now. Instead of doing as he was requested, he merely turned his head to look where the long thread of snow-white steam showed the advancing train. It came on in the full swing of its speed, for it, but stopped rarely between London and York, and the little station of Waldenshoe was one of the insignificant places through which it daily rushed on its panting whirling journey.

If Mr. Hilton turned to glance at it unconcernedly, his horse was not so cool. The dilated eye, and the quivering nostril, drawn back so as to display the blood-red flesh, were evidences of terror which were not lost upon the station-master.

"For Heaven's sake sir," he implored, "go away!"

The alarm of his voice and manner affected Mr. Hilton at last, and he tried to do as he was bidden; but it was too late now. The horse reared and plunged, but would not face towards the little gate, frightened by the roar of the express, and its cloud of dust and smoke, as the train rushed onward with terrific speed. The terrified porters shrank away. The lady in mourning drove her children before her through the gate, with quick motherly instinct, to shield them from danger. The maddened horse plunged nearer and nearer the edge of the platform. In an instant more they would be over — horse and rider beneath the wheels of the train!

Robert Hilton never knew exactly what happened during that awful instant. He saw a small white hand stretched forward and upward to seize the bridle, and he saw the white flutter of a handkerchief. Then came a blast of wind, and with a thundering sound the train flashed by. He slowly dismounted from his horse, which stood still, trembling in every limb, and with the white foam covering its glossy skin. He quite forgot that he was the Squire of Waldenshoe; he quite forgot all about his wide lands, and his many possessions; and in his forgetfulness he became more manly and gentle than he had been since he was a lad in his father's home, before his wild rough life had made him what he was.

He lifted his hat and stood barehead before the girl who had so readily and nobly sprung forward to save him from a frightful death.

"Madam, how can I thank you?"

"Very easily," was the light answer. "You ought rather to thank your own sharp bit and strong curb chain, for my strength could not have availed much without them."

"And they wouldn't have done much towards holding the brute had you not blinded his eyes with your handkerchief," he rejoined. "I owe you my life?"

"I am glad if I have been of any use;" and with a little bow the lady turned away to rejoin her companion.

"Oh, Harriet, how brave of you!" were the first words of greeting, while the children sprang forward with noisy acclamations.

"There, there, do be quiet, and let us get away from here," said Miss Cordeaux—for she it was. "Just see how the people are beginning to talk and stare. Do let us make haste home."

The lady in mourning was Mrs. Archer, Philip Walden's widowed sister, who was on a visit at the White House. She knew Harriet Cordeaux too well to speak to her any more just then. She saw, by the compressed lips and the glitter in the brown eyes, that the present moment was not one to be intruded on. So they walked silently along the road until Harriet herself broke the silence by a heavy sigh.

"What geese we women are, Amy!" she said, with a little laugh. "We are always frightened when the danger is past."

"It was very terrible," returned Mrs. Archer, turning her pale face towards Miss Cordeaux; "I can't think how you could have had the bravery to throw yourself under those terrible hoofs. It was the greatest miracle that you were not drawn over with the horse beneath the train yourself!"

"I should have let go my hold before that happened, I suppose; but there wasn't much time to calculate chances. I'm very glad I was able to save that beautiful creature from being smashed to pieces."

"And the beautiful creature's master."

"Yes, of course. I wonder who he is, Amy."

"I hardly saw him, dear. I was talking to you when he first rode in, and, when his horse began to plunge about in that fashion, I was too much alarmed to think of anything but how to drag the children out of the way. But, from the glance I had of him, I fancy he is a stranger. Could it be Mr. Hilton?" added Mrs. Archer, suddenly, as the idea occurred to her.

"No; I think papa said something about his being a little man," returned Harriet, "and this person was tall—remarkably so."

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"You've had a narrow escape, sir," said the station-master, as he and his porters came up to congratulate the Squire. "I trust, sir, there is no harm?"

"Don't be a fool!" responded that gentleman, laconically. "Can't you see that I'm not cut into inch pieces by that express? What other harm could there have been done?"

The abashed official retreated without another word.

"Who was the lady who saved my life when not one of you fellows had nerve or pluck enough to stir anything but your own heels?" demanded Mr. Hilton of the porters. "Who was she, eh?"

"Miss Cordeaux, sir."

"Miss Cordeaux!"

"Yes, sir; the daughter of Sir John. She lives at Wynstone Hall—that place in the trees yonder."

"Oh, indeed!" and, giving the man half-a-sovereign for his information, Robert Hilton left the station, the porters agreeing unanimously that he was a "queer one," the new Squire, and no mistake.

"I must call and thank her," he soliloquised, as he rode off at a slow pace. "I don't know if it's the correct thing to do—but hang the correct thing in this case! I'll call this very afternoon. She shall not think me an ungrateful dog, who won't trouble himself to say 'Thank you' to the girl who pulled him from under the very wheels of a train—and such a girl! By Jove, how beautiful she looked!"

* * * * * *

Sir John heard the account of his daughter's exploit with great satisfaction. He had learnt that morning from the steward of Waldenshoe that his master was the taller of the two gentlemen who had yesterday arrived from town; and, when Harriet spoke of the stranger she had met at the station, he felt persuaded it could be none other than Mr. Hilton. He was delighted that their acquaintance should have begun in such a highly sensational and telling manner.

"Saved his life already!" said the Baronet. "I really don't see how the fellow can help proposing to her, if matters go smoothly."

Luncheon was late that day at Wynstone Hall, and the family had not yet left the table, when a footman entered with the announcement that a gentleman was in the drawing-room, and had sent his card to Miss Cordeaux.

"Mr. Hilton!" read Harriet, in accents of astonishment. "Why, mamma, what on earth possesses Mr. Hilton to call on me—to call here at all, yet?"

"He must be the hero of your railway adventure, my dear," said Sir John, "and no doubt he——"

"But, papa, you said Mr. Hilton was a little man, and dapper, and fair, while——"

"I beg your pardon," said her father, interrupting in his turn, "I said no such thing, my dear. I described the two men I saw, and you yourself ascribed to each their special distinctions. I never said which was which. Now run away, and hear what he has to say."

"You will come, mamma?"

"Certainly;" and the two ladies proceeded to the drawing-room, while Sir John remained for a minute or two to finish his claret, and to congratulate himself once more on the turn that affairs were taking.

CHAPTER IV.

"I have been searching for you everywhere, Harriet," said Philip Walden one day late in September, as he hastily entered a summer-house at the very end of the garden at Wynstone. Miss Cordeaux was sitting there in the shade, a book upon her lap, and her big dog Hector at her side.

"What is the matter, Philip?" she exclaimed, rising. "How strange you look! What has happened?"

"Nothing very singular as yet. But sit down again, and I will tell you what is going to happen, which will change my life very seriously, though it won't affect you or yours, Harriet; so you need not be alarmed."

"Philip—as if what affects you does not equally concern me! I mean," said she, stammering and correcting herself—"I mean that we all at Wynstone——"

He smiled sadly.

"Don't trouble yourself to put it clearly, Harry. I perfectly understand." He paused for a minute, and her eyes fell beneath his gaze. He resumed somewhat bitterly: "I came to say good-bye, Harry. This morning I received the offer of an appointment as a kind of *attaché* to my mother's brother, who has a diplomatic post in the Brazils. The salary is a good one, for they have to hang out a tolerably well-gilded bait to coax people into their climate. Considering all things, I have decided to accept it. I cannot see a chance of anything better, and I must do something. I am as strong as a horse, you know; mosquitoes won't kill me, and I must take my chance of fever."

He spoke with a forced lightness and calmness more indicative of emotion than tears or sobs; but she did not raise her head—she could not command herself just then; and he, all unwitting of the tumult within her breast, ascribed her silence to cold indifference.

"It is necessary for me to go up to London by the mid-day train to-morrow," he went on, "and perhaps it is best so; there will be the less time to think about it, and it is better for my mother and the girls." His voice was very husky now. He held out his hand. "My time being so short, I have only a few hours to spare for my friends. Good-bye, Harriet."

"Good-bye," she gasped. Her face was white and fixed, as of one stunned.

He took her hands in his, and crushed them in a grasp which was actual pain.

"I heard last week that you were engaged to Mr. Hilton; you will let your old playmate wish you as much happiness as is possible in the choice you have made?" And then he drew her towards him, pressed one passionate kiss upon her lips, and a moment afterwards he was gone.

Harriet stood where he had left her, gazing after him with the same stunned look on her face; but, when the sound of his footsteps had quite died away, she sank on the ground in a paroxysm of grief.

"He is gone—Philip, my Philip, he is gone," she repeated—"and he does not know that I love him!"

She knew her own heart at last—knew that the love she bore to Philip Walden was not the friend-love, the sister-love that he doubtless had deemed it. He was the "one other" in the world to her; and how was she to live without him?

The remembrance of his last words came back to her, inflicting keen pain on her proud, sensitive heart. Engaged to Mr. Hilton! How could he have believed that wild report? She saw now how the constant visits of the new Squire, and her father's unaccountable fancy for his society, had compromised her; and she groaned aloud—

"Oh, my love, my love, it is not true! Shall I never see you again to tell you so? Oh, Philip, Philip!"

The sunlight came flooding through the beeches, and crept across the threshold of the arbour, and lovingly touched the girl's hair; the soft wind stole caressingly over her cheek, touching the tear-stains with its cool breath: the song-birds poured out their melody, as if sorrow and care were all unknown in the bright and beautiful earth; but still Harriet Cordeaux lay there in all the abandonment of her first great grief.

She and Philip Walden had been children together, and on their sunny horizon no clouds had arisen to mar the brightness of their life until the change in his circumstances had come. Philip's eyes were quick to remark the change in Sir John's manner to him. He felt that he had now no right to address Miss Cordeaux, and he imagined that it would be an easy thing to crush the germs of affection in his heart. A happy life lay before Harriet, and for himself—he would make work his mistress, and duty his idol. His mother and his sister claimed all his energy and all his thoughts—love and marriage were not for him.

Poor Philip! he soon found out his mistake. Instead of being able to crush out his love, it waxed hotter and deeper each time that he saw her bright face, each time that he heard the clear tones of her voice. Soon he ceased to struggle against it. The old heathenish motto, "What must be, must be," took hold of him. He could not help loving her; and, if the dream in which he had sometimes indulged were true—if she returned his love—why then should not Fate hold happiness for them even yet? Why should he not fight his way to the good fortune of which injustice and anger had deprived him?

This was the state of his feelings when he noticed Robert Hilton's intimacy at Wynstone Hall. He noticed, too, how Sir John encouraged him—encouraged him only because he stood in the position which was rightfully Philip's own. The wounded spirit was ready enough to credit the report he heard that his supplanter at Waldenshoe had also supplanted him in the affection of the girl he worshipped.

With a weary pain at his heart the young man left his native land to try and win for himself the gold that he cared so little for. Of what use were fame and wealth and honored name to him now, except for his mother's and sister's sakes. For them he would work and win yet!

And Harriet? Her step was as light as before about the corridors of the gloomy old Hall. Her songs were as sweet and musical as ever when she sang to her mother's guests; although Mr. Hilton stood behind her chair and turned the leaves of her music. Her smile and her warm words of playful affection were always ready for Sir John, and he saw no change in his favorite child. It was only her mother who noticed how her color came and went like the fitful sunshine of an April day—only her mother who remarked how thin she was growing, and how at times she would shrink apart to brood and muse as the merry, high-spirited Harriet had never been wont to do.

On the easel in the old school-room stood a large picture which she had not touched for months—a picture of the Waldenshoe woods, with the White House chimneys and the spire of the village church showing above the trees. Philip had carried the painting apparatus, the stool, the color-box, and the large shawl, so often to the slope above the angle of the park, where Harriet had been used to draw. It was Philip's hand which had cut and twisted the beechen boughs so as to form a shelter for her from the scorching sun, Philip who had run down to the brook to fill her phial with water, Philip who had with true artist's eye praised every successful effect of light and shade, and had pointed out every false or weak point in the coloring. Harriet could laugh and talk still, and ride at her father's side as gaily as ever; but she could not paint Philip's trees and Philip's home when all the sweet dreams she had woven around them had crumbled away, and left her but ghastly mocking memories to good her to the very verge of despair.

All the world said that Miss Cordeaux was engaged to Mr. Hilton; but for once the world was wrong. It was true that the Squire was for ever at Wynstone, true that he had "spoken" to Sir John, and true that he had received assurance of the Baronet's warm approval; but for the life of him he could not speak to Harriet herself. With a man, Robert Hilton was never at a loss. His rough life, "knocking about" with those as rough as himself, had given him a ready tongue, and a self-reliance which rarely failed him. But with a lady the case was different. He felt instinctively that his blustering dictatorial manner must be left outside the drawing-room door. Yet even then he had support in the thought of his position, his wealth, and other advantages. He knew that the county dames smiled on him, that their daughters dressed for him and talked to him, because of what old Hugh Walden's will had made him, and the knowledge gave him plenty of confidence in a generally way. But at the drawing-room door at Wynstone even this source of courage was denied him. From the moment that he had stood bareheaded before Harriet on the platform of the railway-station, on the day that she had saved him from destruction—from that moment he could not recollect anything of his own consequence and his own grandeur in her presence. The purity and the dignity of her womanhood made deep impression even on his coarse nature. How different she was from the other girls whom he met in the new, strange life they called society! Faintly as Mr. Hilton could appreciate the difference, even he could perceive it was there.

His vanity told him—and it did not lead him very far astray—that there was not one of the young ladies with whom he talked and rode and flirted but would have said "Yes" to him at once, had he offered his old mansion and broad estates for acceptance—not one, saving only Miss Cordeaux. Would she accept him? he wondered. Each day he resolved to try to solve the question by asking her point-blank; but each day the calm, broad brow and the serious look in the deep eyes routed his forces completely, and weeks passed by and the momentous words remained unspoken. In his cowardice he appealed once more to Sir John.

CHAPTER V.

"Harry, my love," said the Baronet one morning to his daughter, "I am going on a long expedition to Barne's Farm; will you care to come with me? If so, we will ride."

"Oh, thank you, papa! Do we start early?"

"Yes, at ten, so as to be home by luncheon-time."

Harriet Cordeaux was an excellent horsewoman. She had been accustomed from her childhood to ride with her father and brothers—not on a tame old pony, warranted to do nothing but jog, but perched on the back of a spirited yet gentle thoroughbred, which was her own property, having been presented to her by her godfather. The thorough-bred was getting old now, yet the horse and his mistress loved and understood one another; and, even had Sir John's spare money been more plentiful than it was, it was questionable whether Harriet would have wished him to purchase her a new "mount."

She descended the steps that morning as soon as she saw the horses coming round from the stable, with an apple in her hand for her favorite; but, when the groom paused at the door, she exclaimed in amazement at perceiving that her saddle had been placed upon a horse which she had never seen before—a tall chestnut, with a plendid form and glossy skin, the very picture of a lady's steed.

"Is he not a beauty?" said her father's voice behind her.

"Indeed he is," she responded, warmly. "Why, papa, when and where did you buy him? Why didn't you tell me about it before."

"I did not buy him at all, Harry. But, come, let me mount you. We are very late. I will explain all to you as we go along."

They started at a canter over the park, to a little hand-gate opening on to the road, and the rapid pace prevented conversation; but at the first long stretch of stony road Sir John looked at his daughter.

"Well, Harry, and how do you like the chestnut?"

"Papa, his paces are perfect. Do tell me how you got him?"

"He is not mine, child. A groom brought him yesterdy, with a note saying that he was for Miss Cordeaux.

"For me! Who on earth would give me a horse now that dear old Mr. Steward is dead?"

"Do you think that nobody cares to give you pleasure but your godfather, Harry? No; you must guess a younger man."

"What do you mean, papa?"

"I mean, Harry, that Mr. Hilton sent you that horse, and desired me to tell you that he begs you will accept it, and thereby give him a slight encouragement in the suit which he cannot screw up courage enough to pay you by word of mouth. My dear Harry, what now?"

She had brought the chestnut to a standstill, and her face was ablaze with anger which Sir John had never seen there before.

"And you allowed me to mount his horse, to give the semblance of acceptance to a man I detest! Oh, papa!"

"My dear," he said, soothingly, "pray don't be so vexed. Why should you not ride Robert Hilton's horse, when everybody knows that he would give his right hand to make you the mistress of Waldenshoe? You cannot be ignorant that he admires, you Harriet."

"But, papa, I cannot marry him."

"Don't say so. I startled and annoyed you by my blunder about that wretched beast. Do not let us say anything more about it now. Take time for consideration."

"No consideration is required. I repeat, I cannot marry him."

"Consideration is required, Harriet. It is a woman's habit always to act from impulse. Oblige me by thinking this over, and give me your answer to-morrow." His tone was grave, and even peremptory; but he added, in a voice the affectionate pleading of which went straight to his daughter's heart—"And remember, my child, that my hair is gray, and that I cannot bear the thought of leaving my only daughter dependent on others for her bread. This marriage would remove some of my most pressing anxieties, and once more make me almost young again."

Poor Harriet had a terrible battle to fight with herself. She had fancied that she had drained her cup of bitterness to the very dregs when Philip had left her for ever—left her without one word beyond that of friendship which was worse than indifference. But now she perceived that life had deeper sorrow, harder sacrifices, and darker paths than even those which she was treading with weary feet. How was she to endure being Mr. Hilton's wife?

To this termination all her thinking tended. She paced her room that night long after the household had gone to rest; she threw herself upon her bed, and then again started up to gaze at the stars in the frosty sky. Robert Hilton's wife, chained for ever to that soulless man, condemned to bear his hateful love, to smile at his broad jokes, to hear his dictatorial orders! How could she—she who had never been thwarted in all her sunny life of one-and-twenty summers—how could she suffer this?

Then her father's words came back to her. She loved him so fondly; if it would indeed please him and brighten his old age, surely she might bear it for his sake. After all, what did it matter what became of her? The whole neighborhood believed her engaged to Mr. Hilton—Philip had believed it—why should she not be so in reality? What did it matter to her whether she lived at Waldenshoe or at Wynstone? She ought to please her father.

But, if she did, Mr. Hilton should know the whole, plain, unvarnished truth, and he might then decide as he chose. The gray dawn was creeping up over the sky when at last, worn out by her mental struggle, the poor girl threw herself on her bed and slept.

* * * * * *

Harriet kept her word. She told Mr. Hilton exactly what she felt towards him—that she thought it was impossible for her ever to love him, but that she did not much care what happened to her; and if it pleased her father and mother that she should marry him, and if he, having heard her confession, really desired it, then she would be his wife.

He listened to her in blank amazement. They were in the library at Wynstone Hall, she standing by the mantelpiece, speaking as if she were repeating a lesson by rote, and he sitting in an easy-chair, glancing up at her now and then, but his eyes falling beneath the steady look in hers.

"You offer me a great temptation, Miss Cordeaux," he said at length. "I am not cool-blooded enough, or—as you would perhaps term it—generous enough, to resist it. I love you and respect you the more for what you have said. It is true I am a rough sailor, hardly fit to touch your little hand with mine, but—if you will have me, I will try to be all you wish."

He rose and stood beside her on the rug. She did not shrink away from him, though she trembled visibly. He felt the prize was his at last. His impulse was to take her in his arms and press burning kisses upon her red, ripe lips, but the same look on her face which had overawed him so often quelled him now even in the moment of his triumph. He took her hand and lifted it to his lips, and then he did the very wisest thing he could have done—left the room.

Harriet did not act now as she had done on that summer morning in the arbor. She would not allow herself to think, or grieve, or feel. She waited until she heard the hall-door close, and knew that he had left the house, and then she walked into her mother's room and told her that she was engaged to marry Robert Hilton.

CHAPTER VI., AND LAST.

"My dear fellow, how are you? What has brought you to town?,'

"I came to see you, Brett. The fact is, I am going to be married."

The brisk little lawyer gave Mr. Hilton's hand a hearty shake.

"I wish you all manner of joy," he said. "Who is the lady?"

"Miss Cordeaux."

"Whew! the girl who saved you from being made into mincemeat that day at the station! Very right and proper and romantic. And you want me to draw up settlements, and pilot you through Doctor's Commons, eh? Quite delighted I'm sure."

"Stow all that—for a while at least," returned the bridegroom elect. "I'm awfully hungry—let us go to Pim's and have a chop."

The two men passed out into the busy streets—Brett inquisitive, Hilton full of importance. He was making a good match he said. The girl was acknowledged to be the belle of Blankshire; and her family dated back to the reign of Henry the Third. If there was a little scarcity of "tin," why, he had enough for both, and he was rather glad of the opportunity to do things handsomely.

"Take care!" shouted Mr. Brett as they reached the corner of King William Street. "This asphalte stuff has so deadened the traffic hereabouts that one never knows what's coming. Why, man, didn't you see that cab? You are not parading about your own park, you must please to recollect."

But Mr. Hilton hardly heeded him. He was talking so volubly about his future plans for the comfort and dignity of the lady of Waldenshoe that he had but little attention to spare for such a common-place subject as London street traffic. Besides, he had a vague idea that people ought to make way for him, and not he for them; and truly his broad shoulders went on their way in a wonderfully direct manner.

* * * * *

There was a crowd gathered at the end of Cheapside that afternoon.

"What is it?" asked somebody of a policeman.

"A gentleman knocked down by an omnibus, sir," was the reply. "I fear it will go badly with him—his skull appears to be fractured."

"Poor fellow! I wonder who he is."

The senseless form was conveyed to the nearest hospital, Mr. Brett accompanying it, to procure all that would be procured in the way of human care and skill for the Squire of Waldenshoe.

But care and skill were useless in this case. The policeman was right—the extent of the injury to the head made it impossible that there could be a single chance for his life; and long ere the night had fallen on the noisy streets of the huge town, Robert Hilton's spirit had passed away—away from the wealth he had so exulted in, away from dependents who had fawned upon him, away from friends and enemies, away from his plighted bride, out into the unknown future.

His remains were brought to Waldenshoe, and interred in the family vault. And in the church was placed a marble monument to the memory of the man whose alien name had broken in upon the long line of the Waldens whose ashes slumbered there.

Her lover's sudden death greatly appalled Harriet. It seemed so awful that the stalwart man who had left her side full of strength and life should be born back to his home a lifeless creature, shrouded with all the gloomy paraphernalia of the grave. But she was too honest to feign grief. The three weeks of their engagement had been a time of unutterable horror to her. Since their interview in the library she had never lost the feeling that she belonged to Robert Hilton—that she was his, as his dogs and his horses were his—that she must consult his wishes, and in some measure conform to his opinions.

When the shock of his sudden death had passed away, a strong sense of relief came over her. It seemed Heaven's will that she should be saved from the dreary fate to which she had sold herself, and she was thankful. People called to condole with her; and they were greatly scandalized at finding that she had not even gone into complimentary mourning for the man whom she was so soon to have married.

"Harriet Cordeaux has always been a queer girl," they agreed amongst temselves, "but this conduct really exceeds the bounds of propriety. She has no heart."

Harriet thought so too. Her heart had died months ago, she told herself. Her life-belonged to her father and her mother, to her friends, and to the poor village folk who adored her. She would live henceforth for them, and be as bright and as cheerful as she could force herself to be. She would wear her smiling mask as successfully as the numb, aching pain which made earth so gray to her would allow her to do. She was called upon to proclaim to curious ears that she had been so foolish as to love Philip Walden when Philip Walden had never asked her for her love. But, if she could conceal what she did feel she could not pretend what she did not feel. She could mention Philip's name without a sigh; but she would not give one to the memory of Robert Hilton.

* * * * * * * *

Great preparations were being made in the village, nine months after the accident in the London streets, to welcome home the new master of Waldenshoe.

He had remained at his post in the Brazils until some one had been found to take his place there; for he had seemed in no hurry to assume possession of the heritage of his fathers.

The bell-ringers had done their part nobly, the bonfires had blazed, and the one triumphal arch which did not get out of shape looked sufficiently graceful, and the two which did at least looked green and gay, and gave indisputable evidence of the goodwill of their makers. The tenantry assembled to escort the new Squire from the railway-station, and the bay horses pranced as they drew the carriage up the long avenue—the carriage containing a true Walden coming to enjoy his rights at last.

The Brazils had changed Philip Walden wonderfully, people said; but his gravity became him well. It was right that the Squire should be different from the enthusiastic boy whom they had known and loved in times gone by. But it had not been the Brazils which had wrought the change in him. It was the bitter memory of the sweet dream which he had dreamed in these very woods and lanes, and which he had tried in vain to forget.

* * * * *

They met often, those two who loved each other so truly, and misunderstood each other so miserably. Philip could never forget for an instant that Harriet had been Robert Hilton's promised wife—and he did not wish to forget it. She could never have cared for him, except in the old sisterly, friendly way, he thought, and he tried to cheat himself into believing that they had got back again to the familiar footing. But they were both concious of the delusion. Poor Harriet tried bravely to treat him as she treated her own brothers, but it was weary work, and when done was an utter failure.

The Waldens still lived at the White House. Mr. Bently, a neighbouring clergyman asked Philip one day why he did not reside at Waldenshoe, as its master should do.

"Would you wish me to live in solitary state up there, like the weather-cock on the church spire?" he laughed. "My mother will never consent to leave the White House, and I choose to remain with her."

"You should marry," responded Mr. Bently, who had four blooming daughters at home.

Philip smiled slightly. "I must have time,' he said.

* * * * * * * * *

One day Amy Archer and Harriet were returning from their morning walk across the park, when Philip, who had been talking to his gamekeeper at the edge of the wood, moved forward to join them.

"How beautiful those autumn tints are now!" he remarked, as they reached the crest of the hill. "Did you ever finish the picture you were painting of this very view when I went away?" he added suddenly, turning to Harriet.

"No," she replied, a little confusedly.

"Why, you were extremely interested in it then! I remember how eagerly you worked at it, and how I——"

The crimson flooded over her cheeks and brow, and, although she turned her face from him, his quick eye noticed the blush and the confusion.

"Can it be that she loved me then?" he pondered.

A new light broke in on him from that moment. Even if she was lost to him, it was sweet to think that once he had been near and dear to her, that her heart had once been his, even if her ambition and her worldly wisdom had made her listen to Mr. Hilton's addresses. She was unworthy a true man's love, he repeated over and over; but how madly he loved her in spite of all his philosophy!

Some poachers had been caught in the Wynstone Woods, and great was the excitement felt among the gentlemen of the neighbourhood. The nightly depredations had been carried on systematically for some time, and the gang had defied the watchers and game keepers of the whole district; but the arm of the law had seized them at length, if not exactly in the very act, at least preparing for its commission.

Some additional evidence had reached Philip's ears and rendered it necessary that he should consult with Sir John, as chairman of the petty sessions, immediately. He hurried through the village, and entered the grounds of Wynstone by the private gate at the end of the garden. He ran lightly over the grass, and, turning the angle of the shrubbery, came in sight of the summer-house where he had parted from Harriet more than three years ago. Did his eyes deceive him, or was she indeed there, sitting as she had then sat, an open book upon her knee, her dog lying in the sunlight at her feet? He stopped for a moment irresolute; she did not see or hear him. As he stood there, Harriet, his old child-love, seemed to return to him, and the image of Miss Cordeaux, Mr. Hilton's promised bride, faded away like a hideous dream.

He came nearer to her, over the grassy sward. "Harry!"

She started up, her eyes wet with tears.

"What is it?" she asked, hurriedly, almost in the exact words she had used on the last occasion that they had stood face to face alone. "What has happened?"

"Nothing, Harriet, except that I have lost my calm senses just for this moment. My darling—my darling!" and the next instant his arms were round her, and she was sobbing on his shoulder.

Long they stood there, beneath the shadow of the may-trees and laburnums, without another word. At length her tears had spent themselves, and she raised her face to his.

"Oh, Philip, I have always loved you!"

"Can you ever forgive my blindness, my idiotic folly, Harriet? Can you ever forgive what I have made you suffer?" he said, as he pressed his lips to her hair.

"You have suffered too."

"Oh, my love, indeed I have! Let that suffering plead for me now, and do not let it be very long before I take my wife to Waldenshoe. Speak to me, Harriet!"

And she spoke, and the words she said quite completed the scattering of Philip Walden's "calm senses," to the very great advantage of the poachers on the Wynstone grounds; for Sir John had started off for the petty session before Philip remembered his existence, and for lack of the important evidence the case fell through, to the great chagrin of the magistrates, and to the poachers' exceeding joy.

"THE CHILD OF MIRACLE."—THE ASSASSINATION OF THE DUKE OF BERRY.

"The Child of Miracle"—the dark and tragic story of whose posthumous birth is told in *Fraser's Magazine* for this month—is the present Count de Chambord—the man who might have been King of France the other day if he would abate one or two royal crotchets, and who it is just probable will ere long ascend the throne of the Bourbons, whether he abate his crotchets or not. The Count was born fifty-three years ago, a few months after the tragic death of his father, the Duke of Berry. The Duke was the second son of Monsieur afterwards Charles X. His uncle, Louis XVII., had no son, neither had the Duke's brother, the Duke of Angoulême; it was, therefore, necessary (if the Crown were to be kept in the elder branch of the family) that the Duke of Berry should marry and have a son. A wife was accordingly found for him in the person of his cousin, the Princess Maria Caroline, of Naples, who was quite a girl, almost a child, while he was over thirty-six. They had two daughters at the time of the Duke's assassination, and a son was looked for eagerly; but that son (the present Count de Chambord) did not come until after his father had fallen by the dagger of the assassin. The story of that terrible incident in thus powerfully related:—

A few weeks before his death, the Duke told of a remarkable dream which he had, which was repeated in society—a fact which was confirmed to Mr. Raikes by the Duke of Guiche. He dreamed that one night he was standing at the window of his apartment at the Tuileries, which overlooked the gardens, accompanied by two individuals, and while he was admiring the beauties of the prospect, his attention was suddenly attracted to the iron railing, by what seemed to be passing in the Rue de Rivoli. A dense mass of people was assembled in the street, and presently there appeared a grand funeral procession, followed by a train of carriages, evidently indicating the last tribute paid to some deceased man of fortune and consequence. He turned round to one of the bystanders, and inquired whose funeral was passing; the answer was made that it was that of M. Greffulhe. In a short time, after this procession had filed off down the street, another and more splendid calvacade made its appearance as coming from the château. This far surpassed in magnificence its predecessor; it had every attribute of royalty—the carriages, the guards, the servants, were such as could only be marshalled in honor of one of his own family. On putting the same question, he was told that it was his own funeral! In a few nights after this vision the Duke of Berry went to a grand ball given by M. Greffulhe, at his hotel in the Rue d'Artois; it was a very cold night, and M. Greffulhe, who was not in a good state of health, attended his royal highness to the carriage bareheaded, and was struck with a sudden chill, which brought on a violent fever, and terminated his life in a few days. Before a week had elapsed the remaining incident in the dream was consummated.

This was on a Sunday night. The Carnival had been gay; the Duke and Duchess had dined with the King, and amused him with an account of a brilliant ball which they had attended the night before. They themselves had given two magnificent entertainments, which had made a sort of sensation, and the courtesy of the host and hostess had been specially remarkable. For this evening there was no particular attraction, so they determined to fill it up with a visit to the Opera. The King retired to his apartments, and the royal party broke up.

The theatre was specially brilliant, being crowded from floor to ceiling. The pieces—long after recollected—were the "Carnival de Venise," "Le Rossignol," and "Les Noces de Ganache." Lady Clementina Drummond, (late Davies) was present, and recalled the show of diamonds and gala dresses. Brightest of all was the Duchess. When it came to eleven o'clock the Duchess complained of fatigue and rose to go, while the Duke attended her downstairs to the carriage, intending to return and see the ballet.

At this time the Opera House was in the Rue Richelieu, and occupied a large block of building that stood isolated, the entrance for the royal family being in a side street called the Rue de Rameau. Visitors to Paris will recollect that this portion of the city still preserves its old character, having escaped the rage of the levellers and beautifiers. The streets are narrow, the houses high, while there is a certain air of squalor which is yet not unpleturesque. There the carriage was waiting, and a group of equerries standing at the door to attend the Duchess. There was only a solitary sentry for the Duke disliking the ceremonial attending royal departures, had only a short time before desired that the turning out of the guard should be omitted. All were bowing, and had their backs turned to the street; the footman was putting up the steps, and the Duke, stepping back, was waving his hand and calling out joyously, "Adieu, Caroline! we shall soon see each other again!" Suddenly a figure glided from the Rue Richelieu, passed between the sentry and the other persons, laid one hand on the shoulder of the Duke, and with the other stabbed him to the heart. Leaving the weapon in the wound, he fled round the corner of the Rue Richelieu, and darted down the Colbert Passage. So sudden, and at the same time so effectually accomplished, was the deed that the aid-de-camp, De Choiseul, fancied it was some awkward passer-by who had jostled the Prince, and thrust him back with a "Take care where you are going." Even the Prince had felt nothing but a push. But the next moment he tottered, and gasped out that he was assassinated. Instantly the aid-de-camp, the sentry, and some others darted off in pursuit. The assassin had all but escaped, but mistook his road and was captured.

The Duchess meanwhile had heard her husband's cry, and would have flung herself over the side of the carriage, but was stopped by her attendants. He had just drawn the fatal weapon from his breast, into which it had been plunged nearly up to the hilt—a sharp two-edged blade—was staggering, and would have fallen had she not caught him. They hurriedly placed him on a bench in the passage, and opened his shirt to examine the wound. She sank on her knees before him, and was trying to staunch the blood, when he exclaimed, "I am dying—a priest! Come, my wife, that I may die in your arms!" She threw herself on him, and clasped him to her heart. She was deluged in his blood. The assassin had been brought into the guard-house, where the soldiers could scarcely be restrained from despatching him on the spot. An ardent royalist addressed him, "Monster! by whom hast thou been urged to commit such a crime?" (this objurgation of prisoners being tolerably common in France), and was "shut up," as the expression is, by the reply, "By the most cruel enemies of France." It was at first sapiently thought that this was a confession of conspiracy, but professional judges later saw that it was intended to be sarcastic.

Meanwhile the Duke had been carried into the little antechamber which was behind the royal box, the most convenient place that offered—the last place in the world where a Prince could ever have supposed that he was to die. No such reflection, at least, would have occurred when the gay party retired between the acts after witnessing the regular operatic agonies of, say, the tenor's dying moments. And here it may be said that nothing more noble, or Christian, or becoming a descendant of St. Louis could have been conceived than the way in which this dying Duke comported himself. When he recovered consciousness his first words were, "Is he a foreigner?" and on being told he was not, said sadly, "It is a cruel thing to die by the hand of a Frenchman." The doctors had now arrived, and some members of the royal family. The wretched wife was on her knees; her rich dress, flowers, and jewels all bathed in blood; while through the slender partition came the loud crash of the orchestra and the sound of bursts of applause. The ballet was still going on. But gradually the news spread, the performance terminated, and the audience departed, awe-stricken and whispering. That night there was a brilliant ball at the Duchess of Albuefera's, to which the news was presently brought. The dancing stopped, the guests gathered in groups, and soon silently departed.

Now the Duke's own surgeon actively applied his mouth to the wound to encourage the flow of blood, for the Prince was oppressed by the inward bleeding—a step of considerable risk. "What are you doing?" he said, gently pushing away this faithful servant: "the wound may be poisoned." Now, priests, surgeons, more members of the family began to fill the little room; his little girl was brought by the governess. "Poor child!" he murmured, "may you be less unfortunate than your family has been." All that he longed and prayed for now was to see the King, principally for the purpose of obtaining the pardon of the assassin. This was no romantic whim, but his ardent, eager purpose, up to the last moment.

He was now carried into the committee room of the administration, where it was found necessary to enlarge the wound. The great Dupuytren had now arrived, and proceeded to perform this operation. Nothing could exceed the patient's resignation and piety. It was then that he begged that his two illegitimate children should be brought to him, and the scene begins to lose something of its dignity from the rather demonstrative "effusion" of those about him. They were sent for, and "two graceful little girls" were roused from their sleep and brought in. The Duchess "threw herself on the incident" with a passionate excitement. She would be their mother. She led up her own little daughter to them with the invitation, "Embrace your sisters," and whispered to her husband, "Charles, I have three children now!" An austere voice—that of the ascetical Duchess of Angoulême—came from behind the couch, "She is sublime!" The "two graceful little girls were later adopted into the family, and brought up under the same governess with the lawful offspring. Towards three o'clock he began to grow weaker, and the last rites of the Church were administered by the Bishop of Chartres, the Duke making his confession aloud, and asking pardon from those present for any scandals which his life had occasioned. It seems rather a hard lot that when a person of such distinction in France dies, he should be obliged to hold a sort of levée of all the important functionaries of the kingdom, who come to offer their compliments, or at least sympathy, at so dreadful a moment. Thus "the marshals of France" were now among the

groued gathered round the couch, which, by the way, had been hurriedly made up out of such stage cushions and properties as came to hand. To the marshals he said he wished that he could have died on the field of battle in the midst of them. Still, he was looking anxiously for the King, whom, it is to be presumed, they did not wish to disturb, and was listening eagerly for the sounds of his arrival.

At last, about five o'clock, when the Duke was beginning to sink, he cried out: "I hear the escort," and the clatter of cavalry was heard in the street. The narrow approaches were crowded with soldiers, and the roused inhabitants of the quarter saw with wonder the flaring torches and the glitter of arms. Almost the first words of the Duke were an imploring appeal for mercy for the assassin. The King gently but warily put it aside. "My son, you will get better. We will speak of this again. We must think of you now." The Prince murmured, "And yet the man's pardon would have soothed my last moments." It must be said that public justice might have made this sacrifice, as the person most injured required it; and some extreme punishment, worse in severity than death itself, might have been devised to satisfy the law.

The end was now at hand. With an ejaculation, "Oh, blessed Virgin, aid me! Oh, unhappy France!" he expired. But he had made one speech which almost imported the element of romance into the ghastly scene. The malicious while giving credit to the Orleans family for deep grief and sympathy, credited them with a certain complacency, human enough, which found comfort in thinking that this catastrophe had effectually cleared the road to the throne. Had such a feeling been in their breast, it must have been chilled by the strangely dramatic incident that occurred. When the Duke saw the Duchess overwhelmed with anguish at the surgical operation they were performing, and vainly tried to console her, he suddenly said, in a strong voice, "My love, you must not let yourself be overwhelmed with sorrow in this way. You must take care of yourself for the sake of the child that you bear next your heart!"

At these words, continues the account, a sort of electric flutter passed over all present, with the exception. it might be insinuated, of those whose interests the news promised to affect. There was something, indeed, mysteriously apropos in this sudden announcement of life in the midst of death. A strange mystical being who had visions had been brought to the King a few months before, and had uttered a sort of exalted prophecy, "Out of death should spring life!" These words were now recalled over the stage couch on which the dead Prince was stretched.

No announcement of the kind, or of such importance, was, perhaps, ever made under such circumstances, or so much apropos; and thus mysteriously was the coming of the Count of Chambord announced to tife world.

KITTY RYAN.

It was a sultry afternoon in July, and Kitty Ryan was growing drowsy over her sewing, when her mother came briskly up the box-bordered walk and entered the cosy sitting-room, near one of the vine-draped windows at which the young girl was seated.

Mrs. Ryan and her daughter were as unlike each other as mother and child could well be.

The widow was tall and angular in form, with flinty black eyes, and hair of the same color, glossy and straight, and always combed from the low, broad forehead with critical precision.

The broad mouth was firmly drawn down at the corners, while the whole contour of her face betokened an inflexible will and a firm adherence to any formed opinion.

While Kitty was short in stature, slender and sylphlike in form, with deep blue eyes full of melting tenderness.

Then she had the curliest auburn hair, and lips that in their smiling curves bespoke a yielding disposition.

"Kitty," said Mrs. Ryan, as she took off her sun-bonnet and wiped the perspiration from her heated face, "the geese have all got into Ralph Homer's wheat, and you will have to go and get them out.

"If young Homer should find them there they would all come home with broken bones. Ralph is just such another as his father was before him.

"There never was any good in any of the Homer stock.

"So run along and get the geese home before he sees them. Strange that George and Will always happen to be away just when they're wanted at home."

Soon Kitty was walking down the maple-shaded lane which ran between the two farms.

The wind murmured musically through the leaves of the trees, and the little brook, which skirted the roadside, purled over its stony bed in soft and harmonious responses.

And Kitty heard, and, naturally enough, gave way to musings quite foreign to her errand.

But though the geese running riot in Ralph Homer's grain were forgotten, the young master of the domain himself was not.

Kitty's memory carried her back to the days when, as schoolmates, she and Ralph Homer had been all in all to each other, and the time when the boy, then grown to young manhood, came home from the academy to set her childish heart fluttering with his lover-like attentions.

Then came one of those schisms which so often destroy the harmony and good-will of long-tried friends.

Mrs. Ryan and her husband considered themselves the injured parties, the former declaring that henceforth neither she nor hers should have aught to do with the Homers.

And old Homer, equally ready to lay the blame on the Ryans, forbade his family ever to renew the acquaintance, now virtually at an end.

Several years had passed since then, and the heads of both families were mouldering back to dust, and yet the neighbors kept aloof from each other.

All this, and a great deal more, came to Kitty's mind as she walked, and she wondered with a little sigh whether Ralph remembered her as she did him, and whether they were always to be as strangers to each other.

But the great flock of geese were doing mischief surely, and Kitty soon forgot her cogitations in pursuit of the truant bipeds.

A goose has either less brains, or more obstinacy—or both—than any other creature, and these either could not or would not see the broken board through which they had entered; and Kitty's patience was becoming exhausted when her foot caught upon a stone, causing her to fall to the ground.

She attempted to rise, but a violent pain in her ancle rendered it impossible.

In another moment Kitty was lying upon the ground in a dead faint.

When she recovered she found herself in the shade of a huge maple, which overhung the brook, with somebody who was bathing her head with water from his hat.

And somebody's eyes looked tenderly into her own as she opened them; and then, seeing she was so pale, a stout arm encircled her waist for support.

Kitty was in the care of Ralph Homer.

And with his arm still about her, and his face so close to hers that their hair almost mingled, Mrs. Ryan found them as she came in quest of Kitty, whose protracted stay had somewhat alarmed her.

The widow's face grew dark with passion, and her eyes had a ferocious gleam in their black depths as they rested upon the frank though now slightly flushed face of the young man.

"Kitty, I am utterly astonished at you; and for you, sir, your presumption is only equalled by your stupidity. Never dare, sir, to speak to my daughter again."

"And why, madam?"

"You know very well why; if you do not let your memory of the past help you to the knowledge. Never attempt to span the gulf that years ago came between us. Come, Kitty, what ails you? Get up and come away at once."

Then Kitty found the use of her tongue, and stammered forth the cause of her non-return.

"Well, I can carry you home," said the widow coldly, her pity for her daughter's suffering lost in her anger at finding her in company with the man she considered her bitterest enemy.

She was bending over Kitty and endeavoring to lift her, when Ralph pushed her gently aside, and with a low-spoken "Permit me," addressed more to the daughter than the mother, he lifted the suffering girl in his arms as though she had been a mere child, and bore her homeward, Mrs. Ryan following close in his path, silently anathematising both the young farmer and the unlucky accident which had made his assistance necessary.

When they reached the widow's cottage, Ralph deposited his burden on the sofa, received Mrs. Ryan's formal and insincere "thank you," pressed Kitty's hand in a way that sent the warm blood in a rosy flush to her pale face, and departed.

But if Mrs. Ryan flattered herself that here the affair would end, she was doomed to disappointment, for every morning during Kitty's confinement to the house, Ralph was with her, and Mrs. Ryan, though very angry, made no open opposition to his visits, but muttered something about "farmers leaving their work to take care of itself, while they forced their company where their room was better."

But gradually, as she saw more of the young man whose daily visits always brought such a happy light to Kitty's eyes, Mrs. Ryan, almost unconsciously to herself began to like him, and as this new feeling grew upon her, she often found herself glancing with admiring eyes down the maple-shaded lane to rest on the broad stretch of meadow and upland beyond.

It was the finest farm around, the widow began to acknowledge to herself.

And then came, though more tardily a second acknowledgment, viz., that if Ralph was a Homer he was not so much like his father after all, but more resembled his mother, against whom personally Mrs. Ryan could remember nothing evil.

The widow was standing in the doorway overlooking the Homer estate when the conclusion became settled in her mind.

Probably the undulating stretch of the well-tilled acres had its influence in bringing about this decision.

Be this as it may the next morning when Ralph called as usual to learn how Kitty was doing, instead of sending the little maid to admit him, with injunctions to stay with her young mistress until Mr. Homer left, Mrs. Ryan herself met him at the door, and conducted him, with encouraging smiles and pleasant words, to the cool parlor were Kitty was reclining.

Of course, after such a generous and unlooked-for reception, the young man's visit was longer than common; and before he left he was made happy by the assurance that Kitty's love and her mother's consent to an early union were his.

And all this through the predatory proclivities of a flock of geese.

MRS. SPRATT'S STORY.

"Lobelia," said pa, "don't you never have nothin' more to say to that young man."

You see pa was set in his ways, and when he said a thing he meant it.

Lobelia had been going about considerably with Nathan Spoke, and, pa, he hadn't any idea of Nathan.

"He ain't very forehanded, and comes of a poor stock."

That's what he used to say, anyhow; and he had no idea of our Lobelia throwing herself away on him.

Lobelia; yes, that was our daughter.

I dunno whether it's a curious name or not.

About the time she was a week old, there came into our part of the world a botanistical gentleman with a box that he had put leaves and flowers and things into, and he said Lobelia would be a nice name to give her, and we did.

Domine, he larfed, and axed pa if he was so fond of his pipe as that.

I dunno what he meant

Anyhow, he christened her all the same, and she'd growed up to be sixteen years old, and Nathan Spoke, as I told you, was casting sheep's eyes at her.

She was a pretty gal was our Lobelia—couldn't find a prettier in all the world.

Well, when pa said that, Lobelia sat down and began to cry.

"He's my steady company, pa," she said. "Please don't ask me to give up my steady company."

"I call him your onsteady company," said pa. "There won't be much steadiness in him, if he's a chip of the old block. Mind what I say. No more of his visits for you. And mebbe when you can bake a cake a body can eat without spitting it with a hatchet, and can sew on a button so it won't blow off, I'll hunt up a decent husband for you—one worth money."

Well, I felt sorry for Lobelia.

She was my only gal, and such a timid critter.

A cross word frightened her to death, and she wouldn't go upstairs in the dark alone, and a mouse was enough to give her convulsions.

As for a thunderstorm, the minute she heard one, she'd scamper after me, wringing her hands and screaming—

"Oh, ma, lemme hide my head somewhere!"

And she wasn't contented until her head was hid—generally by putting a pillow on it.

I often told her it was sinful to be so frightened when we were in the Lord's hands, but she couldn't help going on so any more than a baby could help crying—that she couldn't.

Poor little timid thing!

I felt sorry for her when pa spoke so about Nathan.

I hadn't any dislike to the young fellow, for my part.

Well, after this, of course, the poor girl didn't let him call on her.

As far as I knew, she never saw him, and Dean Grimes, a widower, and worth his hundred thousand, came over almost every evening, and pa made up his mind that was the match for Lobelia.

She didn't not say nothin', poor thing, but it wasn't likely a girl of sixteen could take much of a notion to a man of his age, and e'en a'most as big as the fat gentleman they exhibited in the circus last year, that couldn't get out of the tent when he once got in until they took it down.

'Twan't for me to interfere, though I petted her, and let her know that I stood by her, but I didn't want to rile pa up.

Pa ain't pleasant when he's riled.

But one day, when she asked me to let her go and take her knitting and spend the day with Fannie Brown, I was so glad to see her look so chipper and feel like going out once more, that I said yes right off.

Well, she went about nine o'clock in the forenoon, and about ten there came up a most awful thunderstorm.

The lightning zigzagged, and the thunder it bellowed, and the rain it poured down like cats and dogs.

I was frightened myself, and I knew just how Lobelia felt.

"Oh, pa," says I, "I know how she's a-carryin' on jist this minute. Shouldn't wonder if she'd do something ridiculous."

"Women folks are always doing something of that nature," says pa. "It wouldn't be anything out of the common if she did."

So I got no comfort there.

After a while the storm calmed down a bit; at least it went further off—the thunder did—and I sat looking through the rain, out o' the front winder, when who should I see coming along the road but two people? — a man and a girl.

He was walking pretty fast, holding up an umberilla, and doing his best to keep the rain off her.

She was tugging on to his arm, and every time the lightning flashed hiding her head in his coat sleeve.

I knew she was our Lobelia, by her blue muslin dress and her little gray sacque, but at first I could not guess who the man was.

In a minute more I saw it was Nathan Spoke.

Yes, and there was pa a-looking too.

"It's that feller," says he.

"Well," says I, "see how it's storming, pa."

"Ah," says pa. "I am glad of it. I'll show Lobelia how to disobey me."

And out he ran into the hall.

I followed him, and what was he doing but locking the door?—and arter he'd done that he flew to the kitchen door and fastened that.

He didn't leave a place to get in at before he was done, not so much as the cellar way.

And he put all the keys in his pocket and walked into the parlor and sat down on the sofa and began to read the newspaper.

I was nearly dumbfounded.

"Oh, pa," says I. "Oh, pa, dear; oh, you ain't going to lock your own girl out in a storm like this."

"Hold your tongue, ma," says he. "I'm master in my own house."

"But she may be struck," says I. "She may be struck, pa."

"Women never have any scientifics," says he. "Don't you hear the thunder revomberiating away over there. If it strikes anybody, I'm a goose."

"But she'll be skeered to death," says I.

"Jest what I want is to skeer her," says pa. "I'll skeer her out of sparking with Nathan Spoke."

And jest then comes bang! bang! bang! at the door, and my poor Lobelia's voice comes through the key-hole.

"Oh, ma, lemme in! Oh, ma, lemme in! The lightning seems as if it was a-trying to strike me, and it will too. Lemme in, and lemme hide my head in the pillar. Oh, lemme hide my head in a pillar."

"Your pa has took the key out, Lobelia," says I, "and won't give it to me."

"Oh! oh!" says Lobelia. "Oh, oh, dear! Is he mad at me for coming home with Nathan?"

"Yes, dear," says I.

Just then came a crash and a shriek.

"That one most struck me," says Lobelia. "Oh! Oh! Pa, dear, lemme in to hide my head somewhere. I was so skeered I'd have come home with any sort of feller. I didn't care how horrid he was, so't he had an umbrella. Lemme in, pa."

But he wouldn't.

I told him I'd have highstrikes, but all he said was—

"Well, they are easy cured with a bucket of cold water."

And I knew he was equal to doing it, though I had my new Japanese poplin on.

"After the storm is done I'll let Lobelia in," says he.

"Not a mite sooner. I'll cure her of sparking with Nathan Spoke."

Well, I sat down by the door and cried and listened, and cried and listened.

After a while I didn't hear anything more, and in an hour or two the storm was over.

But pa never budged until dinner-time was come.

Then he took down his hat, and throwed me the key of the front door, and went out the back way himself.

I rushed out, and I looked up and I looked down, and I couldn't find Lobelia.

After a while pa began to look too.

But there was no sign of her.

She wasn't in the wood-shed.

She was anywhere.

"You've killed my poor girl," says I.

"Dead folks is to be found. They don't vanish like smoke."

But he was as white as a ghost when he said it, and after going down cellar and up attic, and over to neighbor Jones's, he put on his coat, and I got my bonnet, and we harnessed up the horse and chaise, and rode down into the village.

Everywhere we asked they shook their heads.

She hadn't been here—she hadn't been there, and we were almost frightened out of our senses, when at last what should we see but Nathan Spoke himself coming out of the inn with two plates of dinner in his hand, and a tin kettle of coffee on his arm.

"Hullo!" says pa.

"Hullo!" says he.

"Where's my girl?" says pa.

"Hiding her head!" says Nathan.

"Where?" says pa.

"Up in my room," says Nathan. "I've been keeping bachelor's hall at Widow Gunter's over the way, She's up there, hiding her head,"

"How darst you take her there?" says pa. "You shall be punished for this. Here, where is she? Fetch her down."

"Can't be did," says Nathan. "See these plates, don't ye? One of 'em is for me; one for my wife. I married Lobelia just as that biggest clap of thunder came — the one that sounded like a thousand of bricks, and struck somewhere, sartin sure."

"Married!" says pa.

"Married!" says I.

"Yes," says Nathan. "It's all your doing. She begged to come in and hide her head, and you wouldn't let her. Then she says to me—

"'Let me hide my head somewhere; oh, let me hide my head somewhere!'

"'Lobelia,' says I, 'there's one place—that's my bosom. Just come to Parson Grey's with me, and he'll give you the right to hide it there for ever, as the banns have been out a week."

"She says—

"'Oh, anything, so I can hide my head."

"So we went to the church. There's the certificate.

"I brought her over here afterwards, and she hid her head as much as she liked.

"I've just been out for some dinner. I'll get

two more plates if you'll stay and dine with us—with me and my wife.

"You see, sir, you locked your daughter out, and I wouldn't have been half a man not to help her find a place to hide her head in, not to find the best I knew."

"Hold your tongue," says pa.

But we went upstairs and saw Lobelia.

She was lying on a sofa, with a pillow on her head, but she took it off when we came in.

"Oh, ma and pa," she said, "don't be angry. I had to hide my head somewhere, and you wouldn't open the door."

You see she had right on her side, and she was married, and it couldn't be helped, and even pa has got over it now, though it took a long time first.

But he don't pride himself on managing folks as he did before that thunderstorm when he wouldn't let Lobelia hide her head in a pillow, and she hid it in a husband's heart instead.

TENDER AND TRUE.

Tender and true, tender and true,
Ever, O Love, the sweet refrain
Is set to music, and my heart
Repeats it o'er and o'er again.

Repeats it o'er and o'er again,
While throbbing pulses count the time,
And every thought and wish and hope
Finds echo in its thrilling chime.

Tender and true, tender and true!
O heart of sterling gold!
There are no sweeter thoughts in love
Than those these two words hold.

Then be but true and tender,
And I yield to your control,
Without reserve or doubting.
Heart, and life, and soul.

HOW I WAS NOT MARRIED.

"A happy new year!" It's all very well to wish a fellow a happy new year; but I should like to know how I am to have one. I was to have been married to dearest Eugenia the day before yesterday; but just as I was about to raise the cup of happiness to my lips, it was dashed to the ground—and here I am, the most miserable of men. Eugenia says she will have nothing more to do with me; and although she has the sweetest disposition in the world, still when she says a thing she sticks to it. I've tried to explain, but explanations are useless; she won't listen to them.

I'll tell you how it was. I'm a nervous man—I own it; and when the day before yesterday came, of course I was in a great state of trepidation. I got up earlier than usual, so as to have plenty of time for my preparations. In fact, I was so early that my hot water had not been brought, so I had to shave in cold; and the consequence was, what with cold and nervousness, I cut myself in two or three places. Court-plaster being applied, my visage appeared more like Doctor Syntax's after his return from the wars than that of an expectant bridegroom.

I took care to get my dressing over long before the time of starting, in case I might be delayed at the last moment by any difficulty with my necktie, or in parting my hair. I never can do those two things in a hurry. I part my hair in the middle, because Eugenia use to say that it suited my expression. I generally make about six attempts before getting the parting straight; and then, the seventh time, nerving myself, I suppose, by what I was taught at school about Bruce and the spider, I usually succeed. So you can easily understand that, if I am in a hurry, there is no saying how long I may be before arriving at a satisfactory result. I must say I like parting my hair, although there is a certain element of disappointment in not being able to get the parting straight after several efforts. I often think of the words of the poet—

"Parting is such sweet sorrow,
That I could part my hair until to-morrow."

I have given up poetry for some time—my Eugenia is too practical for it; but those lines cling to me. But I am wandering from the point.

I live in Charlotte-street, Bloomsbury-square. My best man lives in the country; so we arranged that we should meet, before the ceremony, in the vestry of the church—St. Martin's Church. Dearest Eugenia's father has his office and also lives in Spring-gardens; and as he is a vestryman as well, he naturally wished us to be married at the parish church.

I decided that eighteen minutes would be sufficient to allow myself for driving to the church; so, after waiting about an hour and a half in about the same state of mind as a criminal before his execution, I sent the servant for a cab.

"Cheer up, sir," said my landlady, kindly, as I left the house; "lor! it's nothing when you're used to it. I've been through it myself three times now, and I buried my third two years ago come the tenth of next month."

I shuddered as I went down the steps. I was only number one.

The cabman held the door of the cab open for me as I got in; and as he shut it he looked me full in the face, and, with a savage scowl, said—

"Oh! it's you, is it, my man? I've got yer at last, 'ave I?"

With that he jumped on to his box, and drove violently off.

I am not a large man, and I must say that that savage scowl startled me. I am rather timid with cabmen at the best of times, and always make a point of giving them sixpence over their legal fare. I could not understand what his remark about having got me at last meant, but I felt considerably relieved when he mounted his box and drove off.

As we drove down Bloomsbury-street, I got a shilling more than the right fare ready, in order to appease his wrath when I got out.

"Hallo!" I thought, suddenly, "he's going wrong," as, after going a short distance down St. Andrew-street, he turned sharply off to the left, into some of the purlieus of St. Giles's.

"Hi! cabman," I cried, putting my head out of the window; "wrong way—St. Martin's Church—keep t'y'r right."

The man only gave a diabolical grin, and, putting his tongue into his cheek, gave his horse the whip.

"Dear me," I thought, distractedly, "the man's drunk: and I shall be late at the church. What will my Eugenia think?"

I got half out of the window in my desperation.

"St. Martin's Church!" I screamed again.

"I know what I'm about. You keep quiet," roared the cabman, in return.

"He doesn't seem drunk," I thought; "but what can he be about?"

We were now in the midst of the slums of St. Giles's—places that I had not been in before in my life.

All at once I remembered having heard of people being taken away in cabs, and never heard of more—murdered, perhaps, for the sake of the money they had about them. I burst into a cold perspiration.

"Let me out!" I called at the top of my voice, getting half out of the window.

"Not if I know it," bellowed the cabman; "I've been on the look-out for you for the last two months, and I don't mean to let you slip through my fingers now."

And again he whipped on his horse.

"Oh, dear! oh, dear!" I said to myself, "there's no mistake about it: he means to take me to some den and there murder me. Oh, my darling Eugenia, I shall never see you any more!"

I thought once of jumping out of the cab; but the man was driving at such a furious pace that I should have been killed in the attempt.

The streets we were passing through were of the lowest description, and the few people that were to be seen were in keeping with the neighborhood. However, I thought that even they might be induced to come to my rescue. I entreated them to stop the cab, and used every gesture I could think of to explain my meaning; but they only smiled, as if it was the best joke in the world. I suppose they took me for a lunatic going to the madhouse. I sank back despairingly into the cab.

"This is awful," I soliloquized; "to be borne away in the full light of day, and without one's friends having the least idea what has become of one."

And then I thought of the paragraphs that would appear in the different papers about the "mysterious disappearance of a gentleman."

I looked out of the window: the streets appeared so deserted that even here, in the open street, it seemed very probable that I might be robbed and murdered before help could arrive.

I made another frantic appeal to the cabman, beseeching him to let me out.

"Sit quiet, or I'll turn you over," he said, threateningly, over his shoulder.

Thoughts of contusions and broken limbs passed through my brain, so I drew back. All uneasiness about the wedding party waiting for me at the church had now left me, in the greater anxiety for my own safety.

We were going at the same violent pace when the cab suddenly turned a lane narrower than the rest.

"Now my fate is sealed," I thought; but no, still my agony was prolonged, and in a minute we emerged into a wider thoroughfare; and at last, after another turn or two we pulled up.

The man jumped down, and opened the door.

"Now, then, tumble out," he said, brutally.

I am not a large man, as I think I said before, but I resolved to sell my life dearly. I sprang out.

Hurrah! the first person that met my gaze was a policeman.

"Here, policeman, help!" I cried, rushing up to him.

"Well," he said, slowly, "what's the matter?"

I was proceeding to explain, when the cabman pushed forward.

"I gives this 'ere cove into custody," he said, "for going off without paying his fare."

I started.

"Two months ago," he went on, "I druv him from the City to the Burlington Harcade; and when I put him down, he slipped in at one end and out of the other without paying me.

"There's some mistake," I exclaimed. "I wasn't in London two months ago." Looking at my watch, I found it was five minutes to eleven. "There's certainly some mistake," I continued; "and what's more, I must be off. I have an important engagement."

"Not so fast, sir, said the policeman, laying his hand gently but firmly on my arm; "come to the station, and the inspector will take the charge."

There was nothing for it but to comply; so I accompanied the two into the police-station, for it was there that the cabman had driven to in such hot haste.

When I saw the inspector, I protested to him that it was all a mistake, but without effect.

"The magistrate's sitting now," he said; "and after one or two other cases are disposed of, he will be able to take yours."

My heart sank. What was I to do? I ought already to be at the church, and I pictured the consternation which must already have begun at my non-appearance.

"I can't wait a moment longer," I exclaimed, passionately. "I must go."

The inspector expressed his regret, but told me that I could not.

All at once a happy thought struck me.

"Here, cabman," I said, "what was the amount of the fare?"

"'Alf-a-crown," he answered.

"Then here are five shillings," I replied handing him the sum.

The man slowly closed one eye, and thrust his hands into his pockets.

"I dessay you'd like it," he said; "but you don't catch me a-taking it. I mean to prosecute yer, now I've got yer, to the last drop."

My spirits fell again.

"How long is it likely to be before we can get it settled?" I asked, anxiously.

"Can't say exactly," replied the inspector; "ten minutes or a quarter of an hour, very likely."

"But—but—I am going to be married this morning," at last I blurted out; "and I ought to be at the church by this time."

"Very sorry, sir," said the inspector, coolly, as if I had only said it was time I went to lunch; "but if gentlemen will get into trouble, they must take the consequences."

"But it wasn't me at all, I've told you," I replied, furiously, regardless of grammar.

"Jest wot the claimant says," remarked the cabman, sententiously.

"You see," continued the inspector, "the case must either come on now, or you must be bailed out; and it would take as long to do the one as the other."

I paced up and down the room in uncontrollable excitement, looking at my watch the while.

Five—ten minutes elapsed, and still the other cases were not finished.

I had reached a state bordering on frenzy, when the inspector at last said it was our turn, and he went into court.

I felt almost as guilty, as I entered, as if I had really committed the offence,

The cabman stated his case; about some person who had taken the cab from the City to the Burlington arcade, and had gone away without paying his fare.

"And there he is," he said, pointing to me.

Of course I flatly denied the charge, explaining the impossibility of my being in London at the same time that I was at Margate.

"How do you know this is the gentleman?" inquired the magistrate.

"I knows him by his general look," answered the cabman, "and partic'larly by them black things about his face."

"I only put the sticking-plaster on this morning," I exclaimed, triumphantly.

The cabman said nothing to this, as he was fumbling in his pocket.

"This'll prove it," he said at last, drawing forth a glove; "he left this behind him."

"Let the gentleman try it on," said the magistrate.

The glove was passed to me. Now I am rather proud of my hand. I take seven and a half, ladies' size; and this was about nine.

"That is certainly not a fit," said the magistrate, smiling, as I put my hand into it.

The cabman, changing countenance, looked rather sheepish.

"That's queer," he said, slowly, scratching his head.

"Are you still certain this is the person whom you took to the Burlington Arcade?" asked the magistrate.

"Well, I don't know," replied the man, dubiously. "You see I made sure it was him, specially when I saw that black stuff on his face; but p'raps, arter all, it was some one else. Now I come to think of it," he added, "the fare as out away was cross-eyed."

"Was what?" asked the magistrate.

"Cross-eyed," replied the other, in a louder key, under the impression that the magistrate was slightly deaf.

"Do you mean he squinted?"

"On course I do, your wushup."

"Kindly look at me, sir," said the magistrate, addressing me.

Dear Eugenia use always to admire my eyes—she said they were so expressive; so I turned them with confidence on the magistrate.

"This gentleman does not squint," he said.

The cabman was now thoroughly at fault, and could only scratch his head and say nothing.

"You have clearly made a mistake," said the magistrate, severely, turning to the cabman; "and I consider the gentleman has just cause to complain of the slight grounds on which you have based the charge against him. It appears to me that the sole proof of identity that you had was the sticking-plaster."

"Well, and wot does he go a-sticking the stuff about his face, a-deceiving of folks, for?" asked the cabman, in injured tones.

"The case is dismissed," said the magistrate, curtly.

Casting a look of mingled rage and reproach at the cabman, I hurried from the court. I did not venture to take another cab, but sped on foot by the shortest route to the church. When I arrived there, it was only to see the verger closing the doors.

"Be you the gentleman as was to have been married to-day?"

I replied in agony that I was.

"Then the party left five minutes ago," he said. "They thought you wasn't coming."

I thought at first of going in pursuit; but I found it was too late to be married then. Besides which, I was in such a state of excitement that I could not make up my mind to encounter the wedding party; so I rushed off home, and as soon as I had a little recovered, I penned a note of explanation to Eugenia.

She sent back a cutting reply, refusing to have anything to say to me, and concluded by telling me that she could never consent to be led to the altar by one who had stood in the felon's dock.

Now wish me a Happy New Year!

CONTEMPT OF COURT.

Mr. Rawley walked in, and close to his heels stalked Bitters. Both seated themselves: the one on a chair and the other on end, directly in front of the Surrogate. Mr. Jagger looked at the dog with the solemn eye of a Surrogate, and shook his head as only a Surrogate can shake it.

"Are you the witness?" inquired he of the dog's master,

"I am, sir," replied Mr. Rawley. "I was subpœnaed to testify."

"What's that animal doing here?" demanded the Surrogate.

"Nothing," replied Mr. Rawley. "He comes when I comes. He goes when I goes."

"The animal must leave the court. It's contempt of court to bring him here," said Mr. Jagger, angrily. "Remove him instantly."

Mr. Rawley had frequently been in attendance at the police courts, and once or twice had a slight taste of the sessions; so that he was not as much struck with the Surrogate as he otherwise might have been; and he replied:

"I make no opposition, sir; and shall not move a finger to prevent it. There's the animal; and any officer as pleases may remove him. I say nuffin ag'in it. I knows what a contempt of court is; and that aint one." And Mr. Rawley threw himself amicably back in his chair.

"Mr. Slagg," said the Surrogate to the man with the frizzled wig. "Remove that dog."

Mr. Slagg laid down his pen, took off his spectacles, went up to the dog, and told him to get out; to which Bitters replied by snapping at his fingers, as he attempted to touch him. Mr. Rawley was staring abstractedly out of the window. The dog looked up at him for instructions; and receiving none, supposed that snapping at a scrivener's fingers was perfectly correct, and resumed his pleasant expression towards that functionary, occasionally casting a lowering eye at the Surrogate as if deliberating whether to include him in his demonstrations of anger.

"Slagg, have you removed the dog?" said Mr. Jagger, who, the dog being under his very nose, saw that he had not.

"No, sir; he resists the court," replied Mr. Slagg.

"Call Walker to assist you," said Mr. Jagger.

Walker, a thin man in drabs, had anticipated something of the kind, and had accidentally withdrawn as soon as he saw that there was a prospect of difficulty; so that the whole court was set at defiance by the dog.

"Witness!" said Mr. Jagger.

Mr. Rawley looked the court full in the face.

"Will you obey the court by removing that animal!" said Mr. Jagger mildly.

"Certainly, sir," said Mr. Rawley. "Bitters, go home." Bitters rose stiffy and went out, first casting a glance at the man with the wig, for the purpose of identifying him on some future occasion; and was soon after seen from the window walking up the street with the most profound gravity.

A MODOC LETTER.—That disreputable red man, Scar-faced Charlie, chief of the few Modocs left unhung, has entered the epistolary field, and in the crisp sentences which follow, addresses a gentleman of Yreka:—

"QUAPAN AGENCY, I. T.,
"SENECA, P. O., MO., *December* 15, 1873.

"Mr. Steele, *Yreka, California:*

"MY FRIEND,—Me all right here. Nobody kill me when I come down on cars. Make me chief. Bogus Charley, Steamboat Frank, and Shacknasty Jim help me. They give me clothes, shoes, hat all right. I got good country, plenty eat, plenty wood. Got friends here Injun. Nobody trouble me. He at school now, my boy. All good heart Injun here. I good new home now. My friends way back think I had this country?—No, I well. Got good new heart. Live with what call Shawnee Indian. This Injun all good friend. After a while every body know me. Tell Frank Riddle he see this tell it to all Injun.

"Your friend, SCAR-FACED CHARLIE."

"ONLY JUST TO SAY GOOD-NIGHT."

Say, Lee, do you remember
In the years of long ago,
One cold night in December,
When the fields were white with snow?

When the full moon sailed above us,
With a calm and silvery light,
How we lingered on the doorstep,
"Only just to say good-night?"

The air was very frosty,
For the year was growing old;
But with your arm about me,
I did not mind the cold.

Life seemed to be as cloudless
As the sky so bright and fair,
For while we were together,
We had not a thought of care.

While we lingered, scarcely speaking,
Moments flew on wings of light,
Till at last you stooped and kissed me,
Saying "I must go—good-night."

Years have passed—I sit here dreaming
Of those moments short and bright,
When we lingered on the doorstep
"Only just to say good-night."

PAUL TEMPLAR.

A PROSE IDYLL.

BY EDWARD JENKINS.

(Concluded.)

The little cry again. I looked about me. I was standing at a well-known point of the road. Here there jutted up two great pinnacles of rock, named the Danish Twins, and the road-maker had carried his road round them on the land side. Betwixt the pinnacles, which were about twenty feet apart, was a chasm, which came up to the edge of the road, in the shape of a letter V, sloping gradually from the apex. Around its lips and sides were mingled together rocks and brushwood and broom. It sloped down some fifteen feet towards a broad ledge of rock, a vantage place sheltered by the pinnacles, where I had often stood and gazed at the glorious prospect; and then there was a sheer fall over the ledged of two hundred feet, down to the monster rocks that threw up their jagged points below.

I leaned over the lip of the upper end of the chasm, peering down through bush and brier, towards the first ledge, and then, as my eyes fell on two light objects stretched upon the ledge, with the wind and rain whirling about them, my heart nearly stopped its beat, and the breath went out of my body.

I stooped down and examined the road. 'Twas clear enough what had happened. Here was the mark of the wheel which had come too near the treacherous point of the chasm, and had broken away its crumbling apex. There just below were the bruised bushes to show how the cart had turned over—cart and horse and precious freight—and, for the rest, by some God's chance, there, before my eyes, were the two figures lying upon the ledge. As for the cart and mare.....

I remember how, when seeing that sight and taking into my soul all that it implied, there seemed to well up within me a fountain of devotion and resolve, such as I had never felt before. Of a sudden it was as if I had become possessed with a supernatural power. My heart grew like steel. I forgot, in the mastering enthusiasm of the moment, my poor, nerveless body; and the soul within me, big with the idea of saving those two loved and precious lives, seemed to swell with a giant's strength.

"Eva!" I shouted in the mad noise of the elements.

The larger of the two dim figures did not move. The smaller I thought I could see take an arm from the other's neck. Then it cried out piping and shrill:—

"Uncle Paul! Uncle Pau—u—u—l!"

"Eveline!" I cried, "darling Eveline, keep still for God's sake! What's mamma doing?"

"O, O, O Uncle Paul, come here!"

Down I dashed in a stupid frenzy, headlong and careless, and missing my grasp of a bush, stumbled and fell. A sharp scarp of rock received my thigh on its point, rent it down for twenty inches, and then let me drop on my back, roughly on the ledge, beside the figures.

It was many minutes before I recovered my senses. All the while the pitiless storm beat on us three. I came to myself to find Eveline with her arms round my neck, calling still, "Uncle Paul!"

The blood was running copiously from my wound. I tore the skirt from the little girl and bound up my thigh as well as I could. I felt that their lives depended on mine. When I turned to look at Eva, I found her lovely face pallid and wet, her clothes and hair drenched with the rain. On her right temple was a bruise. She showed no signs of life. I chafed her hands. I breathed into her cold lips. I dragged her in under some sheltering bushes and urged the little one to help me rub her mamma's hands. At length there were symptoms of life, and by and by she opened her eyes and spoke to me. She could lie there conscious, but she could not move. I knew why..... there was a fourth, a hidden life in the balance that night.

We could now scarcely see each other's faces. I drew the child in under the brush and tied her to her mother. I besought them both not to stir hand or foot. I took off my coat and threw it over them. I buttoned my waistcoat about the little one. And then I resolved, wounded and half-naked as I was, to try and get to Winnersly, our home, for help. There was no dwelling nearer. I hoped that Harold's anxiety might bring him out in search of us, and that I should meet him on the way. By this time, what with loss of blood and the forlorn responsibility of my situation, I began to feel giddy and weak.

Then I knelt down and prayed. I know not what I said. I only know I pleaded for their precious lives—and offered my own as a ransom for them if it might be. I only know that in the course of that transcendent appeal I seemed to see new light and gain new strength, though the sharp pain in my thigh warned me that the work I had to do would task my very life. Then I kissed them both—I could no longer see their faces—and commending them to the God of the winds and storms, I essayed to climb to the top of the cliff. Into the rough bushes, among the thorny broom, grasping and letting go—feeling and doubting—step by step upward I fought my way. I forgot the anguish of my wound, in the freshness of my spirited resolve to save the dear ones below. Twice or thrice I heard Eva's gentle voice cheering me and saying—

"Are you up yet, Paul? Save us, Paul. God help you, Paul."

I kept my groans quiet, thrilling as was my pain. Twice I missed my hold and nearly fell backwards, twice recovered with bleeding hands and fainting breath, but my soul was strong and hopeful.

"God bless you, Uncle Paul! Save us, Uncle Paul. God help you, Uncle Paul!" echoed a tiny voice, and my heart leaped to hear it.

"Paul, weakling, now for a steady, determined heart. They must and shall be saved!"

At length I stood on the brink. The most dangerous part of my work was over. For the sake of their lives it had been carefully and slowly done. But the exertion left me feebler. I had to stop and adjust the bandage. The lacerated thigh was so painful, I could scarcely bear to touch it. With a grim resolution I clenched my teeth, and drew the cloth tight, until the anguish was intolerable. I hoped to stay the bleeding.

"Good God, how shall I ever do these four miles?"

I had not even a stick to lean upon, to relieve my leg. Yet I set out briskly. On my back was hurled the fury of the storm as I stumped and limped toil fully along. Every step was a fresh agony. But every moment I seemed to hear:

"Save us, Paul! God help you, Uncle Paul!"

And it formed a sort of burden and refrain, keeping time with my trembling footsteps as I labored along. It was so dark I could never have kept the road had it not been very familiar to me. An age seemed to have passed when I knew, by a change in the level, that I had gone only one mile. My heart began to sink, and I sat down a moment to rest. The stiffness and soreness of my wound were keenly brought home to me by the act. Could I possibly go three miles more in my present state? I ran over in my mind the difficulties of the way. There was not a hut or a house between me and home. A long piece of common, a deep dip in the road, and a hill, up which I had often bounded—these things lay before me, and here was I groaning with pain and the very life flickering in me.

"But," I said, "Harold's wife and Harold's child must be saved. Courage, Paul. 'God bless you, Paul! God help you, Uncle Paul!'"

As I put my hand on the ground to raise myself, it lighted on a round object. I seized and felt it. It was some wayfarer's staff. He had gone on his journey, but he had left this here for me,—I thought. My spirit revived.

"Bravo, Paul! push on. God hath sent thee a staff to lean upon."

I was so encouraged that I did the next mile almost rapidly. My thoughts went back to the two poor things behind me—"Oh! shall I be in time?"—and they went on to the house before me, with the five sturdy, unconscious men, who, had they known, would have swept along this rood with great rapid strides, and have borne my beauties in their giant arms home to life and warmth.

So I seemed to walk and leap and praise God for the help of the staff. But in the faith of it I was doing too much. I was using up my strength at a terrible rate. When I knew I had gone more than another mile, my steps slackened, and with my heart palpitating and my breath gone, I tumbled on the ground. The shock wrung from me an irrepressible shriek of agony.

"*O via dolorosa!* I cannot go on. This anguish is greater than I can bear. God himself seems pitiless, as his storm comes down so ruthlessly, and the awful gloom drapes and stifles my ardor and my hope. *O via crucis!*"

These last words reminded me of the Great human Redemptor. "Is it not so, ever?" I said. "Is not the way of love the way of tears?"

Here was I wailing over my own anguish, and there were the three lives, and the voices ever in my ear, yet unregarded in that moment of selfish depression. "God help you, Uncle Paul." I staggered again to my feet, and with desperate slowness and patience halted along—that torn hip excruciating me at every movement.

How I got on I know not. Weakness and pain were fast subduing my zeal. So how often succumbs the noblest soul to bodily anguish! I must have become delirious. I shouted and sang—I adjured my own body to be patient—I called aloud to Heaven to help me, I said,

"They shall be saved, Paul. "God help you, Paul." And then I stumbled again, coming cruelly to the ground. The staff flew out of my hand, and I sank down with a groan, thinking that at last God had deserted me.

"Oh!" I said, "I had hoped that this poor, weak, and worthless life might have been redeemed from its abjectness in my brothers' sight, in my own consciousness, in God's estimation—by the saving of those three lives. Gladly then would I have lain down to die rewarded by the manly shout of my manly brothers. 'O well done Paul. Well done!'"

But, as it seemed, it was not to be. I lay on my side unable to move. The groans I could not repress answered the wild menace of the winds, and said—"I yield ye all."

I groped for the staff. It was past recovery. Vainly I tried to get upon my feet without it. My wounded leg was now useless.

Then I was tempted to lie still there and die. The life was gradually chilling in me. My head swam. I nearly swooned. But again there came before my vision the two pictures: the precious lives to be saved, there on the ledge behind me—in front of me the noble hearts to be blessed.

"O Paul, if every step were bloody, yea with great drops of blood, and every movement a new torture, it were thy meed to save them."

My heart grew stronger at the thought. I dragged myself along on hands and knees, weeping, with anguish, as I went, but praying and hoping still. . . . I cannot describe the horrors of that part of my way. A good deal of it I must have gone on unconscious. I was losing my reason. Hands and knees were bleeding. The cold driving into my exposed body made my teeth chatter. At length I swooned in good earnest. . . .

I know not how long I had lain thus, when suddenly I woke up, with a vividness that was startling. I thought I heard a terrible shriek, which pierced through swoon and deadness—to my very soul.

"Paul, for God's sake save us, quick!"

I could just lift my head. It was all I could do. The numb, stiff, bruised limbs, I no longer had power over them. There was only one more effort left to me. I shrieked with all my remaining strength like the voice I had heard—like a maniac: shrieked out unceasingly, the wild wind carrying away my cries from me, on its wings, God knew whither. I thought, "I will spend my last breath to save them." And so thinking, as my voice grew weaker and I felt myself to be dying—I concentrated my strength in one last effort—

Yes! O thank God, there was a responsive cry close at hand! Voices and lights, and in a minute or two, the four strong men with Harold at their head, had reached me!

"Paul, for God's sake, Paul, what does this mean? Where are they?"

He had gently taken up my head, while the lantern glow fell upon my ghastly face and on my glazed eyes. I could not answer him. I simply clasped my hands in token of thankfulness.

The strong man wrung his hands.

"Give him brandy, quick. Do you know where they are?" I tried to nod. "He does. O Paul, wake up and tell us. Nay, look here, look here, brothers! How dreadful!"

They looked at my bleeding hands, then at my knees, then at the bloody wrappings round my thigh. I began to revive. In a few minutes I told them slowly where I had left Eva and Eveline.

"Where did you hurt yourself?"

"There. At the Hurry Scar, below the Twins."

"Have you come all the way like this?"

I nodded.

"O well done, Paul, bravely done!" cried the lusty giants in a chorus, and I swooned away for joy.

* * *

Long was I the hero of that homestead, where by-and-by another little Evangel came to look upon the uncle who had saved her life. Sweet, sweet and priceless to me are the memories of the grateful devotion of them all to me—still further wrecked and weakened by the terrors of that night. For my wounded thigh long kept me in peril of my life, and when it was healed, had so shrunk up, I could only walk with the help of crutches.

* * *

Nevertheless from that night, the imbecility of my past years went away. I had learned a lesson in the mysteries of life. It were possible, I had then discovered, that even I should hold in my hand the precious balances of human fates, and with weakling but determined zeal, there were yet left to me by Providence, powers of good, of rescue from evil.

A ROYAL BOOKWORM.

BY DR. RUDOPH DOEHN.

King John of Saxony had some time ago expressed his desire to read to me his translations into German of Southey's, Shelley's, Burn's and Bryant's masterpieces. When I called at Pi-nitz last month I found that the royal translator was too sick to receive me. But my card was delivered to him, and so I received a few days ago another request to call upon him.

I found the genial old man in an easy chair at an open window in his library. I believe that there is hardly a literary man who would not be envious upon visiting that library. It is full of the rarest literary treasures, and everything in the quaint, old-fashioned room is so conveniently arranged that the book that is wanted can be found in a moment.

The king looked wan and very pale. He made an attempt to rise, but seeing that he was very feeble, I hastened to beg him to keep his seat.

"You have been very sick, sire," I said respectfully.

"Yes; my days are numbered," he replid in a low tone, "and yet a month ago I thought I would live several years yet."

I attempted a word of encouragement, but he interrupted me by a sad smile, shaking his head once or twice.

Then he brought up the subject of his translations. Everybody pays homage to his splendid translations of Dante, which will always remain a standard work in German literature. The more anxious I was to hear some of his translations from the great poets of England and America. He handed me several large sheets of parchment, on which he had written in blue ink, in unusually large characters.

In so doing he remarked smilingly:

"My eyesight has long since failed me to a great extent. But still I do not use glasses. I am writing in regular lapidary style, though, as you see."

The sheets I read contained translations of some of Shelley's minor poems. I read them carefully and compared the rendering with the original.

The king pointed out the difficult passages and consulted me as to the felicity of his translation. I gave him my opinion frankly, and he unhesitatingly accepted my suggestions.

"I met poor Shelley in Italy many years ago, and passed two days with him at Sorrento. Tieck was with me, and I was amused at the rather excited discussion the two had about difficult passages in Shakespeare, whose plays Tieck was then translating into German."

"I was told," I remarked, "that your Majesty was likewise at work upon a translation of some of Shakespeare's plays."

"Only 'Romeo and Juliet,'" he replied; "but I am dissatisfied with my work and shall not allow it to be published."

He told me then exactly what he had ready for the press—some seventy poems. About one-fifth are from Bryant and several other American poets.

"The English language caused me a great deal of difficulty when I attempted to learn it first. That was forty years ago, when I spent three months at the court of King William IV. of England. I suppose I had made myself so familiar with Italian, of which I was passionately fond in my youth, that the strong, terse British tongue was rather indigestible for my spoiled southern stomach, and I gave it up in despair. But about 1860 I resumed the study of the language, and I have now grown very fond of it. I read English papers every morning, and for years at our receptions I have been able to converse with Englishmen and Americans in their own vernacular."

I expressed to the old King my gratitude for the appointment as Professor of English at the University of Leipsic.

"It was a great oversight of my predecessors," he said, in reply, "not to have made such an appointment long ago. Since 1850, at least one-fourth of the trade of Saxony has been with England and America; and now, thank God, every pupil at our lyceums who reaches the second class, has to learn to speak English!"

The King sent for refreshments, and sipped a little champagne.

"It is the only wine I can stand," he said. "It's the poet's wine. How different from the thick, strong old Falerian, which Horace praises so highly! Had the genial Roman known champagne, I believed he would have despised his Falerian as we do."

The King rose, and I thought it was a signal for me to depart, but he restrained me and said: "Keep your seat and look over my translations. If you find anything to alter note it down on this sheet. I am going to lie down. It does me good to sleep an hour or two at this time of the day."

He shook hands with me, tottered feebly out of the room, and left me alone at his desk.

I performed my work conscientiously, and found a good deal to suggest. When I paused during my work I could not help wondering at the child-like confidence with which the old King had left me at his own desk. But I often heard similar traits of his. I looked a while at the old desk. It seemed to have stood there many a year. Momentous documents, involving the life and death of many, had undoubtedly been signed on it. A curious feature was the King's writing-tools—raven's quills, which he cuts himself. There lay also the old penknife which he uses for that purpose. No school-boy would give more than a few cents for it. On the floor, beside the King's chair, lay a copy of Victor Hugo's "Année Terrible." Had his majesty thought of translating the terrible book of the republican bard of France?

When my work was done I rose and a servant from the anteroom stepped in and informed me that my own conveyance had been sent back to the city, and that one of the royal carriages was waiting for me.

MISCELLANEOUS ITEMS.

PLAGUE AND AGUE.—In the *Reminiscences of Holland House* we find the following anecdote of Voltaire, which will be new to most if not all of our readers: While learning the English language (which he did not love), finding that the word *plague*, with six letters, was monosyllabic, and *ague*, with only the last four letters of *plague*, dissyllabic, he expressed a wish that the *plague* might take one-half of the English language, and the *ague* with the other!"

THE FIRST U. S. PATENT.—Samuel Hopkins was the first person who ever received a patent from the United States government. It was granted July 30, 1790, and was for the manufacture of pot and pearl ashes. The third was to Oliver Evans, of Philadelphia, so famous for his inventions in high-pressure engines, of whose invention President Jefferson remarked that "it was too valuable to be covered by a patent, and there should be no patent for a thing no one could afford to do without after it was known." This was said in December of that year. For many years afterward the Patent-office was but a clerkship in the State Department.

AN OFFENSIVE REMARK.—An Englishman who had but lately arrived in the United States was astonishing the unsophisticated "natives" in Cleveland the other day by describing the many wonders in Great Britain and the vast superiority of the country over "Yankeedom." Referring to London he descanted at length upon the immense number of buildings which the "village" contained, concluding with the statement relative to the enormous amount of square miles which they covered. At this point, however, a person in the crowd interrupted him with the query: "That's all well enough, mister, but what I want to know is, has she been fenced in yet?"

A BOWL OF PUNCH AS WAS A BOWL.—A remarkable bowl of punch was made across the water in 1844. It was made in a fountain in a garden, in the middle of four walks, covered overhead with orange and lemon trees, and in every walk was a table the whole length of it, covered with refreshments. In the fountain were the following ingredients: Four hogsheads of brandy, twenty-five thousand lemons, twenty gallons of lime juice, thirteen hundred-weight of white sugar, thirty-one pounds of grated nutmegs, three hundred toasted biscuits, and one pipe of dry mountain Malaga. Over the fountain was a large canopy to keep off the rain, and there was built on purpose a little boat, wherein was a boy, who rowed round the fountain and filled the cups of the company. It is supposed more than six thousand men drank from the fountain.

PENALTY OF GALLANTRY.—A story is told of a prominent politician which now, for the first time, finds its way into type. Some years ago this gentleman and Senator M—— were in New York, and about to embark for Albany on the Drew. An old German emigrant woman loaded down with baggage, happened to reach the gangplank at the time. The noise and confusion of the scene as the boat was about to start bewildered her. Our political friend, a gallant man, taking the state of affairs at a glance, immediately relieved her of the load, and requested Senator M—— to give her his arm. The upper deck was crowded with gay people, many of whom recognized the gentleman in question. Mr. P—— then marched them the whole length of the boat, gracefully waving his hand, and exclaiming, "Clear the way! *Make room for the bridal party!*"

A NATIONAL CUISINE.—It is proposed in England to establish a national school of cookery, in connection with the annual international exhibition at South Kensington. An influential meeting recently held for the purpose of advancing the project agreed to the following resolutions: 1. That such a school should be at once founded, to be in alliance with school boards and training schools throughout the country. 2. That the aim of the proposed school should be to teach the best methods of cooking articles of food in general use among all classes. 3. That an association should be formed with the intention of making the school self-supporting. 4. That it would be prudent to secure a capital, say £5,000. The provisional committee, containing some very eminent names, were authorized to take the necessary measures to establish the school by means of shares, donations, and guarantees. In time it is expected that schools of this description will be established in all the great towns of the kingdom.

AN EAGLE STORY.—Some time ago, a large eagle was observed in the neighborhood of Lochtreig. Lately, however, his liberty was considerably curtailed in the following manner:—One morning two men, who were engaged in thatching a house a good distance from any inhabited house, on arriving at the scene of their labor, found the remains of a rabbit which had been newly killed and eaten close to the house, and on looking round were surprised to find a large eagle vainly attempting to fly. Being afraid to encounter the eagle at close quarters, they took the precaution of covering him with brackens, when he was easily secured. It appears the greedy animal had so gorged himself that he was unable to rise quickly, especially as the day was very calm. He is now chained up, and undergoing a change of diet and exercise.

BEECHER'S ADVICE TO THE YOUNG.—Henry Ward Beecher gives to the young—we think it might fitly be taken by all—this sensible advice:—

"Use fiction as you would spices in your diet. No man takes a quart of cloves, nor exhausts the cruet, at a single meal. These things may be used with moderation to season one's food with, but they are not to be used alone; and so fictions, while they are not to be resorted to exclusively, may be used with discretion to season life with. If you find that using them brings you back to duty with more alacrity, with more cheer, and with more aptitude, if you find that it makes you better in your relations to your fellow-men, then it does not hurt you, and you are at liberty to use them. But if you find that using them makes you morose; if you find that it gives you a distaste for work; if you find that it inclines you to run into a hole that you may get away from your fellow-men; if you find that it makes you unkind, disobliging, and selfish—then you may be sure that whether it injures any body else or not, it injures you."

A PATRIARCH.—The *Anglo-Brazilian Times* claims the aquaintance of a living Brazilian who was born on the 29th May, 1695, and who is consequently in his 178th year. Don Jose Martins Coutinho is we are assured, still in possession of his mental faculties, and the only bodily ailments he complains of is "stiffness in the leg joints," which in a gentleman of his years is hardly to be wondered at. In his youth Coutinho fought as a soldier in Pernambuco against the Dutch, and remembers the most notable facts in the reigns of Don John V., Don José, and Donna Maria I. It is added that he can count 123 grandchildren, 86 great grandchildren, 23 great great grand children, and 20 great great great granchildren, which is, perhaps, the least astonishing part of the story.

BEAUTY'S BOOT.—The following is at once a joke and an argument for separate sleeping cars for the fair and for the other sex: A gentleman occupied the upper berth in a certain section and the lady the lower. In that dim, uncertain daylight which dawns on the travellers in heavily curtained "sleepers," the gentleman referred to tried to find his boots, but nowhere about his narrow bed could he see more than one of them. Looking downwards he thought he saw another on the berth below him; so reaching down he tried to lift it up. Strange to say, it lifted to a certain height and then fell from his hand. He tried again with the same result, and yet again with no better luck, when suddenly the boot apparently became endued with life and evaded his grasp. Then the situation flashed upon him and he became contrite. Contrition is a good thing, but it may also become a nuisance, for fancy a gentleman in the upper berth apologizing to the lady in the lower for mistaking her boot on her own foot for his own.

ECONOMY IN THE GHETTO.—Anna Brewster writes: "Ghetto has altered more than any other quarter in Rome within the last two or three years, especially in regard to cleanliness. It is an extremely interesting place to visit, and I counsel every tourist in Rome to make two or three walks through the Ghetto. It is a veritable beehive. I have often mentioned that you never find beggary there. I have never been asked for alms by a Jew, man, woman, or child, since I came to Rome. You see apparent poverty in the Ghetto, but no absolute indigence, and the most patient, cheerful industry. They sit at their doors occupied in sewing, sorting out rubbish, and always on the social lookout for custom. I noticed at many of the house entrances great heaps of old shoe soles and small bits of old leather. The rag and rubbish gathering men whom you can see in the streets of Rome every night or early morning, with a bag on their shoulders, a lantern and a stick pointed with iron in their hands, and they examining closely every dirt-heap and drain, gather old shoes out from among the offal and take them to their Ghette homes. There the shoes are cleaned, taken apart, the leather soaked, and new ones of smaller size made out of the pieces. Economy of every nature and the smallest kind is practised in that curious place."

THE CULTIVATION OF FRENCH FIELDS.—From Havre to Paris (says a correspondent) there is scarcely an acre of uncultivated ground, with the exception of the Parks belonging to large estates. The villages all look very old, the houses are of gray stone, with sharp-pointed roofs rising one above the other, with a little old church half fallen to decay in their midst. Every house has a flower garden, even to the railway stations. It looked so pretty and so strange to see so many flowers in November. The little gardens were one mass of color—purple heliotrope, tea-roses, scarlet geraniums, red rosebuds and pink; always framed in with the dark, glossy, green leaves of the ivy, that grows everywhere with the greatest luxuriance. There are no fences around the fields, they are simply laid out in very straight rows, and planted with different kinds of vegetables, with occasionally a grass-plot or small field of grain between: the different shades of green give a most beautiful effect to the landscape. There is not a stone or a stick to mar the perfect smoothness and beauty of these fields, nor an inch of ground left uncared for. They are intersected at intervals by roads bordered on either side by rows of tall poplars; roads so smooth, so hard and white, that one longs to gallop over them.

A CINCINNATI paper relates the following amusing incident: "A few days ago a 'lady' walked into an engraver and stationer's establishment on Fourth street, and asked a young red-headed country boy, who is an apprentice in the establishment, to show her some samples of visiting cards. The boy, anxious to receive an order during the absence of his employer, made haste to comply, and showed the lady quite an assortment. On some of the most fashionable looking cards, ornamented with the names of our 'pure aristocracy,' the lady noticed the mysterious letters, P. P. C. 'What is the meaning of these letters?' she asked. The red-headed boy, who, although a genuine country rooster, did not believe in the policy of acknowledging his ignorance, readily replied that P. P. C. were words which all the 'big bugs' always used on their cards. So the lady ordered two hundred, with strict orders to copy the talismanic letters. The order went to the engraver. The cards were done the next day, and the lady called as she promised, and meeting the red-headed boy's boss, she ventured to ask if the P. P. C. stood for any thing else but 'good family.' The proprietor opened his eyes and mouth wide, and explained to the lady the meaning of the words. 'Good gracious!' said she, 'I have come to live here permanently; just left Chicago last week.' The lady objects to paying for the cards, and the boss is going to stop the price of them out of the red-headed boy's salary.

A DREADFUL SACRIFICE.—A strange and tragic story is that of a crazy woman who wanders among the mountains about Partenheinn, in Bavaria. A short time ago she was the handsome and happy wife of a man who had but one evil habit—that of poaching. One night he was pursued by a forester, and, turning, he shot the man. The deed was seen by others, and he was obliged to fly. With his wife and two children, one of them an infant, he went toward the Austrian frontier, and at night, while all were sleeping, concealed in a thicket, the sound of hoofs were heard. Touching his wife's arm, the husband whispered, "The gendarmes!" She started so suddenly and so violently that the infant resting in her arms awoke and began to cry. The father ordered her to keep it quiet, and the poor mother held the little one closer, endeavoring to stop its cries, while the gendarmes had halted and seemed to be listening. Then her husband laid his hand upon the child's mouth and held it there for the ten minutes his pursuers remained quiet. When, at last, they rode away, the child was dead. The family went on its way, and at the frontier the Custom House officers inquired if they had anything to declare. "Nothing," said the murderer; but the unhappy mother, uncovering her dead infant, told her wretched story, only to lose her reason in the conflict of wifely and motherly affection.

GATH, writing to the Chicago *Tribune*, of Mrs. Dahlgren's pamphlet on Washington etiquette, thus details her statement of the proprieties of a State dinner: "The length of time preceding the dinner invitation marks the degree of formality. Eight or ten days commonly precede a State dinner. You may wait for the President, if he is late, fifteen or twenty minutes. To great dinners men wear delicately tinted gloves, and remove them at the table, and white chokers. Ladies wear *grande toilette*. After dinner gentlemen do not replace their gloves, but the waiters must not take theirs off. A very elegant waiter "ought to have his thumb wrapped in a damask napkin"—somewhat, we presume, like the steward in the parable who wrapped his one talent in a napkin and hid it away. The scriptural waiter, however, was not understood by his uncultured master, and was kicked either into the coal-hole or into the back-yard; for the account says "outer darkness." It must have been the back-yard. The host and hostess take the central seats, opposite each other; the ends of the table should be left open; folks opposite ought to be previously introduced. One wine at a time, and delicate wines at that—Rhenish, Claret, or even the light American! The caterer, or chief steward, should serve the courses, and the host and hostess forget that it is being served. Dress your own table, and hire no finery to set it off. Rising from the table, the hostess leads the way to the drawing-room, where small cups of coffee are served, and one hour later the hostess herself serves tea. The men stay at the table and smoke as they like."

THE CURSE OF CHINA.—A San Francisco reporter has explored the Chinese quarter of that city, and gives the following description of an opium den: "The bold explorer finds himself in a room ten feet square, fitted up like the steerage of a ship. The half-dozen bunks, one above the other, occupy three sides of the dark, filthy apartment, and strips of matting form the only covering. An apology for a pillow rests at the head of each bunk, and a single blanket is within the reach of the occupant, when he shall need it. The room is feebly lighted with a lamp, and its rays do not penetrate far into the Plutonian blackness of even the small room, leaving the forms curled up in the blankets on the shelves indistinct and uncertain. A yellow skeleton-like human being sits before the table upon which rests the lamp, and before him are several bone vials, steel wires, and uncouth pipes. The occupation of two men lying upon their sides in one of the bunks reveals the character of the place. A lighted taper burns in a saucer full of oil between them, and one of the men is inserting one of the steel wires, upon the end of which is a dark substance, apparently glutinous in its character, into the flame of the taper, and afterwards through the minute orifice of the bowl of the pipe, at which the other slowly puffs, sending thin blue streams of smoke from his nostrils. The same operation is repeated whenever the supply in the pipe is exhausted, until the smoker sinks to slumber and reached that heaven of untold joys, or finds he has reaches the antipodes of elysium, where pain racks the frame and shapes of horrible mien burst upon him at every turn."

SCIENTIFIC AND USEFUL.

COVERING FOR STEAM PIPES.—Loose paper is wrapped round the pipes and painted with thin syrup; and this is painted with a mixture of 4 bushels of loam, 6 bushels of sand or coke-dust, 3 pails of syrup, and 30 pounds of graphite; the mass is put on 20 mm. thick, and painted with oil or tar.

NEW PHOTOMETER.—A simple arrangement, which may be exceedingly useful for many purposes, has been devised by M. Yvon. A piece of paper or card is folded in the middle, and placed upright on a table in such a manner that the two halves form right angles. In the line bissecting the angle thus formed, and at some little distance from its apex, is placed a tube, blackened in the interior, through which the observer looks at the edge of the paper or card. The sources of illumination to be compared are placed at opposite sides of the card. So long as the two surfaces are unequally illuminated, the observer has a perfection of relief; when however, the light is perfectly equalized, he sees what appears to be a plane surface.

TANNING LAMB-SKINS WITH THE WOOL ON.—Wash the pelts in warm water, and remove all fleshy matter from the inner surface; then clean the whole with yellow soap, and rinse the soap thoroughly out. When this is done apply to the flesh side the following mixture for each pelt: Common salt and alum, one quarter of a pound of each, and half an ounce of borax, dissolved in a quart of warm water; add to this enough rye-meal to make a thick paste, and spread the mixture on the flesh side of the pelt. Fold the skin lengthwise and let it remain two weeks in an airy and shady place, then remove the paste from the surface; wash and dry. When nearly dry scrape the flesh side with a knife, working the pelt until it becomes thoroughly soft.

A NEW WEATHER VANE.—The old weather-cock has two essential faults; it indicates a direction when there is a dead calm. It gives no means of learning the force of the wind; while it fails to show the true course of the same, by exhibiting merely its horizontal component. M. Tany proposes the arrangement to be attached to the ordinary lightning-rod. Just above a suitable shoulder on the latter is placed a copper ring, grooved and made into a pulley easily rotated in a horizontal plane. Around this passes a knotted cord, the ends of which are secured to the extremities of a short stick or metal rod, to which is secured a simple streamer. Thus constructed the vane indicates a calm by falling vertically, and besides shows the strength of the wind by being blown out more or less from the lightning-rod. As is evident, it is capable of motion in every direction, so that if there exist in the wind an upward tending vertical component, the same will be shown.

HINT FOR PROJECTORS OF TOWNS AND STREETS.—It is worthy of remark that the arranging of the streets according to the cardinal points involves a sanitary objection of no mean import. No fact is better established than the necessity of sunlight to health, and no constitution can long endure, without ill effects, the total privation of its health-giving power. Every house on the South side of a street running East and West must have its front rooms, which are generally its living rooms, entirely deprived of the sun during the summer. This fact, coupled with that of the indoor life of American, and particularly Western women, is enough to account for a very large share of the nervous debility which so generally prevails. If the rectangular system must be adhered to in city arrangement, it would be far better that the lines of streets should be Northwest and Southeast, and the cross streets at right angles with them, than as now disposed; in this case the rooms in front or rear of a house enjoy at least sunshine in the morning or evening. A strong proof that sunshine is wholesome is found in the fact that during epidemics people occupying rooms not exposed to sunlight are comparatively much worse off than those who enjoy that blessing.—*Manufacturer and Builder.*

THE THERAPEUTIC USE OF DRY POWDERED BLOOD.—Dr. De Pascale, of Nice, several years ago published some observations on the very beneficial effect of warm blood taken the moment when extracted from the calf or ox, killed for general domestic use. He described at that time several cases of hæmoptysis, in which a complete cure had been effected by this treatment. In a paper recently published he states that finding among his English and American patients at Nice an unconquerable repugnance to such a remedy, he was led to adopt the plan of giving the blood in the form of dry powder. This is merely the revival of a practice which was in vogue many years ago, and which has occasionally been tried in this country. The blood of the ox, after being dried in a water-bath, is reduced to a very fine powder, and grated through a sieve. Dry blood can be taken for any length of time, being almost tasteless, and no repugnance is likely to be felt, as is often the case with raw meat. It can be taken as any common powder, mixed with soups, milk, marmalade, or chocolate, or enclosed in a wafer. In some cases, where even the name of blood might have offended the patient, Dr. De Pascale has given it, mixed with a small quantity of pepsin, under the name of "nutritive powders." The quantity he prescribes has varied according to the age, sex, or the state of health and digestive power of the patient. In general, he begins with thirty grains, which is increased according to circumstances; but the quantity must be left to the discretion of the physician.

HUMOROUS SCRAPS.

A BAD egg is not a choice egg, but is hard to beat.

ROBB & Steel is the suggestive name of a firm in Chicago.

FELT slippers.—Those felt by children in their rude young days.

A YOUNG man in Ashtabula sought to secure his sweetheart by strategy, so he took her out for a boat-ride, and threatened to jump overboard into the lake if she didn't consent to marry him. But it did not work. She offered to bet him a dollar that he daren't dive in.

THERE is a story of Judge Grier, which everybody delights in, how he set aside the unjust verdict of a jury against an unpopular man, with this remark: "Enter the verdict, Mr. Clerk. Enter, also, 'Set aside by the court.' I want it to be understood that it takes thirteen men to steal a man's farm in this court."

"DOES your arm pain you?" asked a lady of a gentleman who, at a party, had thrown his arm across the back of her chair, so that it touched her shoulder.—"No, madam, it doesn't pain me; but why do you ask?"—"Oh, I noticed that it was out of place, sir; that's all." The arm was removed.

A LECTURER on optics, in explaining the mechanism of the organ of vision, remarked: "Let any man gaze closely into his wife's eye, and he will see himself looking so exceedingly small that——" here the lecturer's voice was drowned by the shouts of laughter and applause which greeted his scientific remark.

AN Irishman, newly engaged, presented to his master one morning a pair of boots, the leg of one of which was much longer than the other. "How comes it, you rascal, that these boots are not of the same length?" "I really don't know, sir; but what bothers me most is that the pair down stairs are in the same fix."

RESERVING A SEAT.—The other day, at a concert, a gentleman having put his hat upon a chair to keep a place, returned to claim it after a short absence. The hat he found, sure enough, where it had been left, only there was a stout lady sitting on it. "Madam," said he, "you are sitting on my hat." The lady blushed a little, turned round, and said, in the blandest manner, "O, I beg your pardon. I'm sure I thought it was my husband's."

A CERTAIN old lady, who had been famed for sour looks and not very sweet words, touching the various accidents of life, was observed to have suddenly become very amiable. "What happy change has come over you?" said a neighbor.—"Why," said the transformed, "to tell you the truth, I have been all my life striving for a conte nted mind, I have finally made up my mind to sit down contented without it."

WHEN a man (says a New York journal) comes home and tries to bolt his door with a sweet potato, pokes the fire with the spout of a coffee-pot, attempts to wind up the clock with a boot-jack, tries to cut wood for his morning fire with a pen-knife, takes a cold potato in hand to light him to bed, and prefers sleeping in his hat and boots, you may reasonably infer that he has been making the acquaintance of some very friendly people.

THE WAY 'TWAS DONE.—The following dialogue between a lawyer and a plain witness is a good hit as the fashion of using big crooked words:—"Did the defendant knock the plaintiff down with malice prepense?"—"No, sir; he knocked him down with a flat-iron."—"You misunderstand me, my friend; I wish to know whether he attacked him with any intent!"—"Oh, no, sir, it was outside of the tent."—"No, no, I wish to know if it was a preconcerted affairs." "No, sir it was not a free concert affair, it was at acircus."

THE LAWYER'S PORTRAIT.—A certain New York lawyer had his portrait taken in his favorite attitude—standing with one hand in his pocket. His friends and clients all went to see it, and everybody exclaimed, "O, how like! it's the very picture of him." An old farmer only dissented—"'Tain't like!" Exclaimed everybody. "Just show us where 'tain't like."—"'Tain't, no, 'tain't!" responded the farmer. Don't you see he has got his hand in his own pocket; 'twould be as like again if he had it in somebody else's."

JOHN VARNUM is a practical joker. A few Sundays ago, in returning from church, he was conversing with his wife on the subject of the sermon, and remarked that he couldn't believe saint and sinner ever dwelt so near together as the sermon represented. His wife intimated that they could, and instanced the following case:—"Haven't you and I dwelt in the same house for several years?" This was a hard hit on John, but he wormed out of it, and closed the case with the following argument: "Yes, to be sure; but did I ever call you a sinner?" Judgment for John, and no appeal.

SHERIDAN applied to Burke one day for a loan; the request was granted. "Ah, Sheridan!" exclaimed the great orator, "I wish I could make you understand the real difference between a man of good principles and an unprincipled man."—"What is it?" asked Sheridan, pocketing the notes.—"Only this," answered Burke; "the latter lives on his principal, the former lives on his interest."—"In that case, my dear Burke," rejoined the wit, "you must acknowledge that the unprincipled man is the more disinterested of the two." The readiness of this reply fired Burke with the idea of introducing Sheridan into Parliament.

OUR PUZZLER.

50. ENIGMA.

I am often seen when children play
Upon a village green;
And with me many a pleasant day
Some folks have passed, I ween.
At a christening I'm circumspect;
I'm also at a wedding;
Without my presence, the bride-elect
Tears surely would be shedding.

51. ARITHMETICAL QUESTION.

A and B are two cisterns. A can be filled in 2, and emptied in 1½ hours. B can be filled in 3, and emptied in 2 hours. Both cisterns being full, all the pipes are opened simultaneously. At the end of two hours, B is found to contain 1,600 gallons more than A. B's inlet is then stopped; and, at the end of another hour, A contains 1,200 gallons more than B. Required the capacity of each.

52. EXTRACTION.

1. A son of Mars and Callirhoe.
2. An animal this one will show.
3. In music and philosophy,
Renowned in classic history.

53. LOGOGRIPH.

Complete, I am a lady's name;
Either way no difference claim;
But if of two letters I am plunder'd,
I then shall name the sum 500.

54. DECAPITATION.

Tall and straight, we grow in the forest—
Warm and kindly we're often pressed;
Yet, when beheaded the meanest and poorest
Are happy to share in our slight bequest.

55. CHARADE.

Of the feminine gender my first and my second
Have, thro' all time, been invariably reckon'd;
But if from my second you take the hind quarter,
A son takes the place of your beautiful daughter.
My whole by physicians has often been cured.
When this was not done, the complaint was endured.

56. ENIGMA.

Without me you would surely die;
I help to keep you warm and dry;
In every vessel on the blue
And bounding sea I'm fixed, 'tis true;
And many a time, in Nelson's day,
He showed his sailors brave the way
To do me, rushing sword in hand—
Nor idle was his glittering brand.

57. DECAPITATION.

A kind of bolt I am, you'll find;
Behead, I am of roguish kind;
Behead again, and when 'tis done,
You will detect a piece of fun.

58. PUZZLE.

Just take one third of a man's Christian name;
Three sevenths of another now join;
And now the half of a female's add;
My whole is clearly shown.
Now, reader, do not show surprise;
There's some of us now before your eyes.

ANSWERS.

43. TITLES OF BOOKS.—1. Napoleon's Life of Cæsar. 2. The Waverley Novels. 4. History of England. 5. Too Much Alone. 6. Lady Audley's Secret. 7. One against the World. 8. A Soldier of Fortune. 8. The Last Days of Pompeii. 10. Shakspere's Plays. 11. Japhet in Search of a Father.

44.—CHARADES.—1. Wrist-band. 2. Bracelet. 3. Alt-i-gator (great, adj.) alligator.

45.—FLORAL ANAGRAMS.—1. Chrysanthemum. 2. Calceolaria. 3. Magnolia Kobus. 4. Russian Violet. 5. Camellia.

46.—ARITHMETICAL QUESTION.—7 eggs.

47.—DOUBLE ACROSTIC.—1. ButleR. 2. ArnO. 3. NaboB. 4. NiobE. 5. OrdeR. 6. CalmeT. 7. KnoB. 8. BarbouR. 9. Usun KoprU. 10. RelIC. 11. NilE.—Bannockburn, Robert Bruce.

48.—BIBLICAL QUESTIONS.—1. II Corinthians, iii, 18. 2. Acts xxiv, 25. Josephus Rosenmuller, and Calmet state that Drusilla lost her life at a sudden eruption of Mount Vesuvius. 3. Joshua ix, 5.

49.—AGE.

FABLES.

THE MOLE-HILL AND THE MOUNTAIN.

A towering mountain reared its head to the skies, on one side of a wide and deep valley; on the other a little mole-hill lay basking in the sun. As it contemplated the distant mountain, shooting its snow-capped brow into the regions of boundless space, far above the clouds, and beheld the gilded glories of its distant summit, the mole-hill became discontented and unhappy. It contrasted its own insignificance with the awful and majestic outlines of its mighty neighbor; it wished a thousand times it could raise its head above the clouds; it sighed at the thought that it could never become a mountain, and impeached the justice of the gods, for having made it only a mole-hill, to be trodden upon by man, and crawled over by the most contemptible insects. In short, it pined itself into wretchedness, and sacrificed all the comforts of its own littleness to the desire of becoming great.

As it one day lay gazing upward at the distant object of its envy, a storm suddenly gathered around the summit of the mountain; the lightning leaped with forked tongues, the thunder rolled, the tempest lashed its lofty sides, and the torrents poured down, tearing their way, and ploughing deed ravines in their course, while all beneath remained perfectly quiet, and the little mole-hill lay basking in the sunbeams of a summer morning. Scarcely had the storm passed away, when the earth began to rock and tremble, as with an ague; a rumbling and appalling noise raged in the bowels of the mountain, which suddenly burst, throwing volumes of smoke and showers of fire into the peaceful skies, that turned from blue to glowing red. Rivers of burning lava gushed out from its sides, coursing their way towards the valley, and scathing the verdure and the woods into black, smoking ruins. In a few hours the majestic mountain seemed as it were disembowelled, and, having nothing to sustain it, fell in with a crash that shook the surrounding world, and hid the ambient skies in a chaos of dust and ashes. The mole-hill had all this time remained quiet and safe in its lowly retreat, and when the obscurity had become dissipated, and it beheld the great object of its envy crumbled into a mass of smoking ruins, it became all of a sudden the happiest of mole-hills.

"Body o' me!" it cried; "but it is a great blessing to be little. Oh, terra! I thank thee that thou didst not make me a mountain!"

THE REVENGE OF THE BEASTS.

One day a number of animals that had been nightly aggrieved by the tyranny and injustice of man, resolved to petition Jupiter for satisfaction. "Oh, Jupiter!" exclaimed the camel, "revenge me on this indolent tyrant, who instead of carrying his own burthens, slaps them on my back, and drives me into the desert, where I travel whole days without a drop of water."—"Oh, Jupiter!" cried a great fat green turtle, "revenge me on this glution, who kidnaps me while I am sleeping in the sun—starves me for weeks on board of a ship, and eats me afterwards."—"Oh, Jupiter!" squeaked the pig, "he stuffs me first, and then stuffs himself with me after wards!"—"Oh, Jupiter!" brayed the ass, "he loads me with panniers of liquor and delicious fruits, and gives me nothing but water and thistles: I beseech thee to revenge us!"—"Behold," answered Jupiter, "thou art revenged already! Dost see that turbaned wretch yonder, chewing opium, and dosing away a miserable existence? And dost thou see yonder Christian, in his nightgown and slippers, taking doses of physic, and making wry faces? And dost thou see that wretch, reeling along, with his blood-red face, and carbuncled nose? The one is a martyr to indolence; he is thy victim, oh, bumpbacked camel; he is reaping the fruits of making thee bear his burthens, instead of carrying them himself. The physic-taking mortal is paying the forfeit of your wrongs, oh, pig and turtle! And the reeling wretch is securing to himself a life of guilt, misery, and disgrace, by means of the liquor thou carriest on thy back, oh, most unreasonable donkey! Go thy way in quiet, for again I say thou art amply revenged."

The petitioners departed; but the camel, being a quadruped of great gravity, and somewhat of a philosopher, could not help thinking to himself, neither he nor the rest of the beasts were much the better for this species of vengeance. It is thus with man. He persuades himself that revenge will redress his wrongs and assuage his sorrows, and when he hugs it to his heart, finds only the fangs of the serpents distilling venom into his wounds.

TIN or block plates are now being manufactured in England by a new process, consisting in the preparation of the iron used in their manufacture. A number of refining furnaces are employed, into the first of which the pig or cast iron is submitted to the melting process, and from thence run into other "lumping" refineries. Instead of using charcoal, as is commonly the case, the fires are fed with tan. This process has proved very satisfactory, and is meeting with popular favor by those engaged in this branch of industry.

A CHAT ABOUT CORSETS.

We suppose that women will wear corsets as long as the world lasts. The wearing of a corset does not, however, necessarily involve tight lacing, so that a good deal of the well-meaning censure which is applied to corsets in the abstract, may be spared. To denounce excessively tight-lacing, is one thing. To anathematize the wearing of corsets, at all, is quite another.

We find the corset mentioned in "Homer," or at least an article which answered the same purpose. The Circassian women, from time immemorial, have used a corset made of morocco, and furnished with two plates of wood placed on the chest—a much more clumsy article, as well as a cruel one, than that used by fashionable ladies of modern days. In the old Roman times, a broad bandage, or swath, was used, which answered the purpose of stays. After the fall of the empire, through the invasion of the Goths, the art of making these corsets was lost; but soon after, indeed, as early as the ninth century, the French women began to wear another style of corset, which is described as being exceedingly stiff. From that period down to the present time, a corset, in some shape or other, has been worn among all civilized people.

At constantly recurring epochs, during this interval, tight-lacing has also prevailed. Neither the censures of religion, nor the penalties of the law, nor common sense, have been able to prevent this absurd and dangerous practice. In the reign of Queen Elizabeth, not only the ladies, but gentlemen also laced tightly. It seems curious to know that Sir Walter Raleigh, Sir Philip Sidney, and others of that stamp, heroes and men of genius, laced; yet such is the fact. In our day, the only men who lace are the second-rate dandies of Paris. Among the other classical revivals of the French revolutionary period, was an attempt to copy the costume of ancient Greece, whose main features were loose bodies, long trains, and short waists, unlaced. This did not last long, however, and in 1810 the practice of lacing was resumed with all its former rigor. "The span" was re-established as the standard of fashionable measurement, and female chests again had to suffer the evil consequences. So extensive is the use of stays in England, that it is estimated the annual expenditure for these articles is not less than one million sterling.

Tight-lacing, however, has been out of fashion for many years. The corset, during the past generation, has been only moderately laced, and has not been, in that way, injurious; while, on the contrary, it has been of positive benefit, by taking a part of the weight of the skirts off the hips. Both crinoline and corsets have been very absurdly abused; for it is well known that if properly worn, they prevent serious diseases, which otherwise, the great weight of petticoats might bring on. It is said that the edict has gone forth, from the rulers of fashion, to lace tightly again. But, if so, we hope the edict will be disregarded. An excessively small waist, instead of being a beauty is really a deformity.

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