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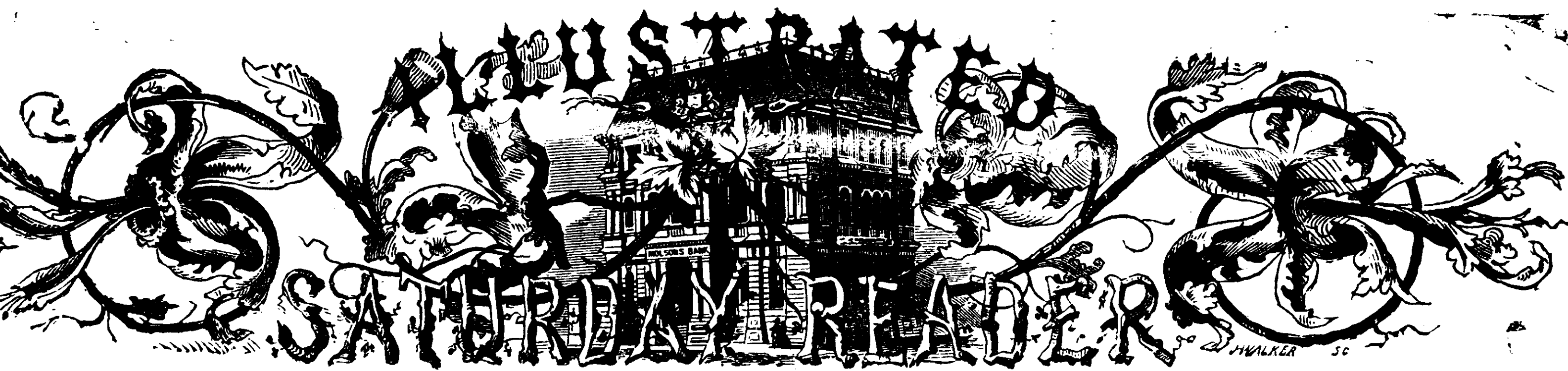


VOL. III.—No. 64. FOR WEEK ENDING NOVEMBER 24, 1866. SEVEN CENTS.

THE PARLIAMENT BUILDINGS, OTTAWA.

WE, this week, devote all the space at our command to illustrations of the Parliamentary Buildings at Ottawa. Our readers will thus have, in a form suitable for preservation, four distinct views of those splendid buildings, which, whether regard be had to commanding site, magnificence of design, or to the grandeur of the surrounding scenery, are without a rival on this continent. The buildings, as most of our readers are aware, are situated on what was formerly known as Barrack Hill, and are widely detached, forming three sides of a quadrangle; the main building facing Wellington street, and the Departmental buildings, which form two sides of the square, facing inwards. The style of the building is Gothic, of the 12th and 13th century.

The Parliament Building, as approached from Wellington street, presents a very imposing appearance. The central of the seven towers, which is very rich in design, projects its width from the front of the building. The body of the building in front is about forty feet high, above which rises the slanting roofs of slate, surmounted by lines of ornamental iron cresting. The length of the building is 471½ feet, and its depth from the front of the main tower to the rear of the library is 570 feet, covering an area of 82,886 superficial feet, or about three and seven-tenths acres. It stands at a distance of about 600 feet from the street, so that the quadrangle formed on three sides by the buildings and on the fourth by Wellington street, is 700 feet from east to west, and 600 feet from north to south; thus affording a very spacious square. The ground upon which the buildings stand varies somewhat in elevation, that portion forming the site of the Parliamentary Building being the highest; but this inequality of surface rather than otherwise improves the general effect. The Parliament Building contains the Legislative Council, Legislative Assembly Library, and a large number of committee and clerks' rooms. A corridor, which is to be used as a picture gallery, connects the Library with the main building.

The Eastern block of the Departmental Buildings is a very irregular and picturesque pile. It is 245 feet on the West front, and 319 feet on the South. In this building are situated the Governor General's Office, the Executive Council room, the President of the Council, the Minister of Finance, and Audit Office, the offices of the attorneys and Solicitors General for Upper and Lower Canada; the Provincial Secretary; Provincial Registrar and the Bureau of Agriculture, Patents and Statistics. There is also a large model room connected with the Patent Department. From the Eastern front of these buildings, extensive views are obtained, embracing the lower part of the city, and the country stretching beyond.

The Western block of the Departmental Buildings is similar in style to that just described, but more regular in its construction and not quite so large, being 220 feet long on the East front or that which looks over the square, and 277 feet on the South front or that which faces Wellington Street. It is somewhat less imposing as to its main entrance, a circumstance which is probably accounted for by the fact of the Governor General's room and the Executive Council Chamber being in the Eastern block. In it are located the Crown Lands Department, the Board of Works, the Post Office Department, and the Adjutant General's Office and Militia Department. The West front of these buildings looks upon the Upper Town, and beyond it towards the Chaudière Falls, and Hull, and gives a fine view of the wooded shore on that side of the river and the distant range of hills beyond, including an extensive view of the river and its banks, stretching to the southwest in the direction of Aylmer. Similar or still more extensive views are obtained from the west front or end of the Parliament Building.

The Government Buildings at Ottawa have been erected at a cost and on a scale somewhat disproportionate to the Provincial finances or requirements. Happily, however, this disproportion will no longer exist when Ottawa has become, as in all probability it shortly will, the seat of Government of a great Confederation. So mote it be.

PARLIAMENT BUILDINGS, OTTAWA—VIEW FROM THE SHORE, NEAR HULL.

CONFEDERATION OF BRITISH NORTH AMERICA.

WE resume this important subject from the last number of the READER.

As we have formerly intimated, the question ought to be considered on its own merits, irrespective of the past or present opinions of those who are now either the advocates or the opponents of the measure. We have already spoken of Mr. Joseph Howe's antagonism to it; and Mr. George Brown is accused of a change of a contrary character, he having, at one time, strongly denounced the Union, of which, since 1864, he has been one of the most zealous promoters. Of Mr. Howe's duplicity in the matter, Dr. Tupper's pamphlet scarcely permits a doubt; but Mr. Brown stands in a different position. He asserts that, having arrived at the conviction that the Confederation of the British American Provinces has become a necessity, he is willing to sacrifice much to obtain it; and there are numerous converts to the cause of Confederation besides him, who have withdrawn their opposition to the scheme from the same reason. Many persons, for instance, regard the construction of the Intercolonial Railway as undesirable, viewing it from a merely commercial point of view; but they consider it as the price that must be paid for Union; and, as such, they are prepared to incur the expense, because, without the railway, we cannot have the Union. But, as we have said, individual opinions or motives should only be taken for what they are worth; and it is not difficult to come to a decision on the great question of the Confederation of British North America, by even a slight examination of facts and circumstances with which we are all sufficiently conversant, and which do not require any special wisdom to comprehend and appreciate.

In every legitimate argument, it is necessary to lay down some fact as an admitted truth. We shall therefore assume as a major proposition that the experience of other countries and all ages has proved that the union of two or more small neighbouring communities or states is based on sound policy. There may be, it is true, exceptions to the rule, but such exceptions are rare, and arise from conditions which do not often exist. Few persons in the present day will contend that a united Britain, a united Italy, or a United Germany, to say nothing of the United States, represent a series of political blunders. No one can well deny that a union of the three Scandinavian kingdoms—Sweden, Norway, and Denmark—or that of the present Austrian dominions, would add to their strength and prosperity. No one doubts this who is not swayed by passion, prejudice, or individual selfishness and interest. Its truth is patent to all the world besides. How is it, then, that the British North American Provinces would not be gainers by Union? Do they come within the rule or the exception? Let us review the facts of the case, regarding the subject, not from a party point of view, but as an incident of the history of the day; and as such, of far more consequence to us than that of the past, which is only of value from the lessons it teaches, or that of the future, which we can but see as in a glass darkly, and which is almost wholly beyond the sphere of our influence.

That the British colonies on the North American continent possess many of the elements calculated to constitute a great nation, will not admit of dispute. In fact, from the Atlantic to the Pacific, they exceed the whole of Europe; the climate, if severe for a large portion of the year, is highly favourable to human life; they are capable of producing in abundance all the cereals and almost all the other articles of food known to the temperate zone; they abound in mineral wealth; their forests of timber are unequalled on the globe; their seas swarm with fish; and their lakes and rivers are navigable for seagoing vessels for hundreds of miles, from the ocean into the very heart of the North American continent. It has been computed that, at the rate of increase from 1841 to 1851, Canada alone will contain a population of 20,000,000 by the end of this century; and if the other colonies should advance in anything like a similar ratio, the population of the whole would exceed that of most of the great European states. It were easy to enter more into details on this head; but it is sufficient for our present purpose to show that in the attributes of territory, products, and future population, British North America may justly aspire to the position of one of the great empires of the world.

What, then, are the obstacles in the way of such a consummation? For ourselves, we do not believe that there is much danger to be apprehended from the mere ambition, rivalry or hatred of the United States, whether directed against Great Britain or her colonies. In the first place, we do not imagine that the Americans will ever attempt to conquer these Provinces contrary to the wishes of the great body of the Provincial people, nine-tenths of whom are strongly averse to annexation, and would oppose it by every means in their power. Our neighbours have trouble enough on their hands with their disaffected brethren in the South, without allying themselves to four millions in the North, equally or more disaffected. That would certainly be "gaining a loss," as their Fenian friends might say. But we again declare that we have little fear on that head. In the second place, we think nothing more unlikely than a war between England and the United States. They are both bound over to keep the peace towards each other by the simple fact of their possessing the two greatest mercantile navies of the world, and a war would entail an enormous loss, if not utter ruin on the one as well as the other. Neither would have a merchant ship on the ocean in the first year after hostilities commenced; the best proof of which is the destruction caused to American commerce by only a couple of Confederate cruizers during the Southern rebellion. We repeat, then, that notwithstanding appearances, England and the United States are the two last countries likely to go to war with each other.

The real difficulty against which we would have to contend is of a different character. It is what may be called the geographical difficulty. It is useless to shut our eyes to the grave fact, that for nearly one-half the year our commerce and means of communication will, in a great measure, be at the mercy of the United States. From December to May we can communicate with the Red River Settlement but through American territory, and for the same period our neighbours can close the route to and from the Atlantic against our trade. It is true that the ports of the Maritime Provinces will be open to us, after we have constructed the Intercolonial Railway; but the distance from Montreal to Halifax is about 900 miles, to St. John, New Brunswick, about 700 miles, while that to Portland is under 300 miles. Supposing, therefore, that the freight of a barrel of flour to Portland would amount to 2s. 6d., it would be 7s. 6d. to Halifax, and, say, 5s. to St. John: consequently the Canadian merchant would lose one dollar per barrel, and half a dollar, as the case might be, by forwarding his flour to a foreign market through the ports of the Maritime Provinces, instead of the American port. Our whole imports and exports would be similarly burthened for five or six months of the year, enabling the Americans, who have shorter routes to the seaboard than we have, to monopolize the trade of the West, from the fall to the beginning of summer, as they could undersell for that period in Europe and elsewhere.

This is simply a question of facts and figures; but to disregard it in our scheme of a new nationality, would only lead to disappointment and disaster. It is "the lion in the path," which must be got rid of in some way, before we can assume the status of an independent power in America, whether in connection with England or otherwise. We do not, indeed, insist that the difficulty is insurmountable; but it is great and obvious, and calls for grave consideration from those engaged in effecting the Union of the Provinces. For ourselves, we can conceive no other impediment to Confederation that could not be met and overcome; and we suggested more than twelve months ago that the sole remedy was a winter port in the Lower St. Lawrence, which so many persons, entitled by knowledge and experience to pronounce a judgment in the matter, believe to be a feasible project. At all events, the problem ought to be solved.

We are not ignorant that the views we have thus expressed will be unwelcome to many of our readers, who have been taught to regard the Union of British North America as being of easy accomplishment by the mere volition of the colonies and the mother country. But we should not deceive ourselves. Is it at all likely that the Imperial Parliament will include Nova Scotia in an Act of Union, in opposition to the wishes of its people, or that there can be a union of the Provinces without Nova Scotia? Is it not true that our only present communication with the ocean, in winter, is through foreign territory; and that the ports of the Lower Provinces will not be available to us for commercial purposes, even after the Intercolonial Railway shall be made? To conquer difficulties, we must first understand their nature and extent; and if we fail to do so in this instance, the gorgeous vision of a British North American Empire may vanish into air, and we may have to exclaim, like him of old: "I awoke; and, behold, it was a dream!"

MR. BRIGHT IN IRELAND.

THE visit of the member for Birmingham to the "sister isle" is likely to constitute an important era in the history of the United Kingdom; and we are only surprised that the course he has pursued was so long unattempted. Many years ago the famous French statesman Guizot told the people of Ireland that their true policy was to accept the Union with England, and make the best of it; and Mr. Bright is now labouring to give practical effect to that advice, by persuading the Irish to adopt it, and act up to it. He tells them that the people of England, as well as they, have grievances of which they complain, and wrongs for which they seek redress; and he argues that the true interests of the two countries would be best served by a combined effort to attain their common objects. This is so evident that we cannot conceive how even the most obtuse can fail to appreciate it. Ireland has long tried the opposite course, and failed. When Spain was the greatest power in Europe; when Louis the Fourteenth was in the zenith of his glory; when the French Republic was the terror of the continent; when the First Napoleon wielded the imperial sceptre of France: from each of these the Irish sought aid to sever their connection with Britain; and in the present day they place their hope in the United States with the same end in view. It were wiser in them to listen to the counsels of Mr. Guizot and Mr. Bright. Ireland must continue a portion of the British empire, at whatever cost; and she can only cease to be so, when England has lost her place among the nations, and has become as powerless as Spain, or Sweden, or Norway. Right or wrong, for weal or for woe, the two islands must be one and indivisible. But to return to Mr. Bright and his Irish policy.

The first item in his scheme contemplates the abolition of the Protestant Church Establishment. Few liberal Protestants will differ from him on that head, so that the reform be conceived and executed in a spirit of mercy and justice. There is much said, even by those favourable to Mr. Bright's views about the preservation of vested rights; but it should be remembered that these rights, whatever they are, reside less in the clergy than in the laity. While the interests of a temporary holder of an income derived from church property ought certainly to be respected, the more prominent interests of his flock ought not to be forgotten. But under any circumstances, there can be little doubt that the Irish State Church, as it now exists, must disappear, before long, as an institution incompatible with the spirit of the age, and the prevailing ideas of right and wrong. The next project for the removal of Irish

grievances concerns the tenant class, who have demanded, for so many years, that they should be repaid for the improvements made on the lands held by them, at the expiry of their leases. This point, too, must, sooner or later, be conceded to the applicants, and should rule in every other country as well as in Ireland. It is, in fact, but the extension to tenants of a principle of the civil law in the case of proprietors.

By that law, if a man is compelled to surrender to another a property which he has held by a bad title, but of which he became possessed in good faith, he is entitled to be reimbursed by his evictor to the extent that he has added to the value of the property in question. This last condition sufficiently meets also the objection to the measure urged by the Irish landlords, namely, the danger of their being forced to pay for the supposed improvements of the tenant, which might be made by him without their consent, and perhaps without benefit to them, for if the lands or tenements did not acquire an increased value by the outlay, the loss must fall on him who expended his money and labour to no useful purpose. If the tenant of a farm, for instance, laid out one thousand pounds upon it, in what he called improvements, and it was decided that the actual value of these to the property did not exceed one hundred pounds, he would receive the latter sum, and no more. This would be just to both parties, and we trust that the day is not distant when it shall be universally adopted, not only in Ireland, but everywhere. We have strong misgivings as to the practicability of Mr. Bright's third proposal for the cure of Irish discontent. The absence of many great land owners from the country may be an evil, but it is one, we fear, for which legislation can scarcely provide a remedy. The subject, however, demands more time and space for its consideration than is now at our disposal.

That the member for Birmingham has undertaken a great and good work in his endeavours to reconcile Ireland with the rest of the kingdom, few but bigots will deny; and we heartily pray that his efforts will meet with the success that they so richly deserve. A real union of the two peoples would be rendering both a service such as few men, living or dead, have conferred on the empire.

NEW SERIAL TALE.

We shall in our next issue commence the publication of a new serial tale by Miss Braddon, entitled "Birds of Prey." Our readers are familiar with this lady's wide-spread popularity as a writer of fiction; and we believe we shall, in reproducing her last work as rapidly as it appears, be adding a new feature of great interest to the pages of this journal.

BROUGHT TO LIGHT.

BY THOMAS SPEIGHT.

Continued from page 150.

CHAPTER XXXI.—LADY SPENCELAUGH'S APPEAL.

"Her Ladyship's compliments, and she will be glad to see you in her dressing-room after breakfast, if you will kindly go as far."

Thus said one of the Belair Abigails to Miss Spencelaugh, the morning after Frederica's visit to Grellier's almshouses. More strongly convinced than ever that John English's narrative was based upon truth, and that for her there was now no going back from the cause she had taken in hand, Frederica had pondered through a sleepless night, questioning herself as to what her next step ought to be. She had at last decided to send Lady Spencelaugh a copy of John's Statement, together with a supplement embodying the further information given by Jane Garrod, and the result of Frederica's own visit to the almshouses; with a request that her Ladyship would throw some light upon that portion of the narrative which seemed to inculpate her in some mysterious way, and to mix up her name in a nefarious transaction, of the workings of which she might, after all, be in utter ignorance. In any case, Frederica decided that she would take no unfair advantage of Lady Spencelaugh, every particular of the case as known to herself should be made known to her Ladyship also. But this request for a personal interview changed Frederica's decision. "I will see her, and tell her everything," she said to herself. "A few simple words of explanation from her may show how entirely innocent she is of any complicity in this dark plot. I pray Heaven that it may prove so!"

"My dear Frederica, this is really very kind of you," said Lady Spencelaugh with a languid smile, as she extended the tips of her fingers to Miss Spencelaugh. "My nerves are very terrible this weather, and I did not feel equal to the task of looking you up in your own rooms. You have breakfasted of course?—Yes. How I wish that I possessed your energetic habits, and talent for early rising. It is a talent, dear, depend upon it, that of getting up early these dark, cold mornings. But sit down, pray. Not so far off. That is better. I want to have a cozy chat with you this morning. And yet how to begin?—Ah, I see your eyes are taking in the pattern of that embroidery.—Quite new, I assure you. Clotilde did it. She is certainly clever with her needle; but in some things, a pig—yes, *cara mia*, an absolute pig. But her accent is good: I am ready to admit that: good, that is to say, for a person in her position."

Although the day was still young, Lady Spencelaugh had been carefully made up, and looked very fresh and charming in her demi-toilet, as she dawdled with her dry toast and chocolate. Frederica wondered in her own mind what her aunt's long preface would lead to: generally speaking, her Ladyship was rigidly polite, and as sparing of words as the occasion would admit of in her intercourse with Miss Spencelaugh.

"You know, dear, I am much older than you," resumed her Ladyship, a little diffidently, "and you must allow me for once to use a matronly privilege, and give you a little wholesome advice."

"Go on, please," said Frederica with a haughty little bend of the head.

"I have lately been informed—how, it matters not," continued her Ladyship, "that for a short time past you have been mixing yourself up in the affairs of a certain Mr. English, a wandering photographer, whom Sir Philip was so injudicious as to ask here to dinner once or twice. I do not seek to know your reasons for doing this, my dear child; that you had some reasons, I will at once assume; but however strong they may have seemed to you, *I* have every reason to believe that you have been imposed on; and in any case, for you to go roaming about the country, looking after this young man's affairs, is, to say the least of it, both unlady-like and ridiculous. Excuse me, dear, if in the excitement of the moment I use strong language, but really the case seems to me one which demands a strong remedy. The health of Sir Philip, as you are aware, is too precarious for him to be troubled with such details; and this being the case, I consider myself as being in some measure his delegate, and assume an authority in speaking to you which on any other occasion I should be sorry to exercise."

"Pray, make no excuse on that score," said Frederica coldly. "But before deciding that I have been either unladylike or ridiculous, would it not be well to inquire more particularly into the nature of the business which has made me appear either one or the other in your Ladyship's eyes?"

"Certainly not," said Lady Spencelaugh hastily. "I have no wish to know more of this wretched matter than I know already."

"But I think it highly necessary that your Ladyship should at least know as much of the case as I do. When you sent for me, I was about to copy out a certain Statement which is in my possession, and send the copy to you, together with the outline of certain other facts with which I have become acquainted." so

"I am very glad you did no such thing," said her Ladyship warmly.

"Let me, at least, fetch the Statement, and read it to you."

"Certainly not. I should consider myself degraded by listening to such a farrago of nonsense."

"Your Ladyship cannot know how serious are the interests involved, or you would not speak thus."

"I know quite sufficient already, and I have set my face against knowing more. I know that this man—this John English, as he calls himself—has put forward some preposterous claim by which he seeks to make people believe that he is a great man who has been defrauded out of his rights. I know further, and from reliable sources, that he is a common swindler and impostor; and that this is neither the first nor the second occasion that he has striven to make himself out as a scion of some family of position; and at the present time, as you yourself are no doubt aware, he is not to be found—no one knows whither he has gone. Is it not so?"

"It is," said Frederica a little shaken.

"But you don't know the reason of his sudden disappearance," went on her Ladyship. "Well, I happen to be in a position to enlighten you. He fled to avoid being arrested and brought to account for his previous impostures. I think he is too wary ever to show his face in this part of the country again; but should he do so, and I become aware of it, I shall certainly have him apprehended as a notorious swindler."

Frederica was staggered. The audacity of Lady Spencelaugh verged on the sublime, but her Ladyship's tone, bold as it was, was wanting in sincerity, and carried no conviction to her listener's heart. "If you would but allow me to tell you all that I know of this matter!" said Frederica in a voice of genuine entreaty.

"Certainly not, Frederica; and I am astonished, after what I have said to you, that you should still persist in such a foolish request. For the heiress of Belair to have her name mixed up in any way with that of this impostor, is a degradation to the family, and one which, were it to reach the ears of Sir Philip, might well, in his delicate state of health, prove fatal to him. Take my advice, my dear child, and have nothing further to do with this man or his affairs. He is trying to compromise your name by trading on your good-nature."

Frederica wrung her hands. "Heaven help me!" she exclaimed. "I know not what to do."

"Do? Why, take my advice, of course," said Lady Spencelaugh, "and don't allow yourself to appear any further in this wretched business."

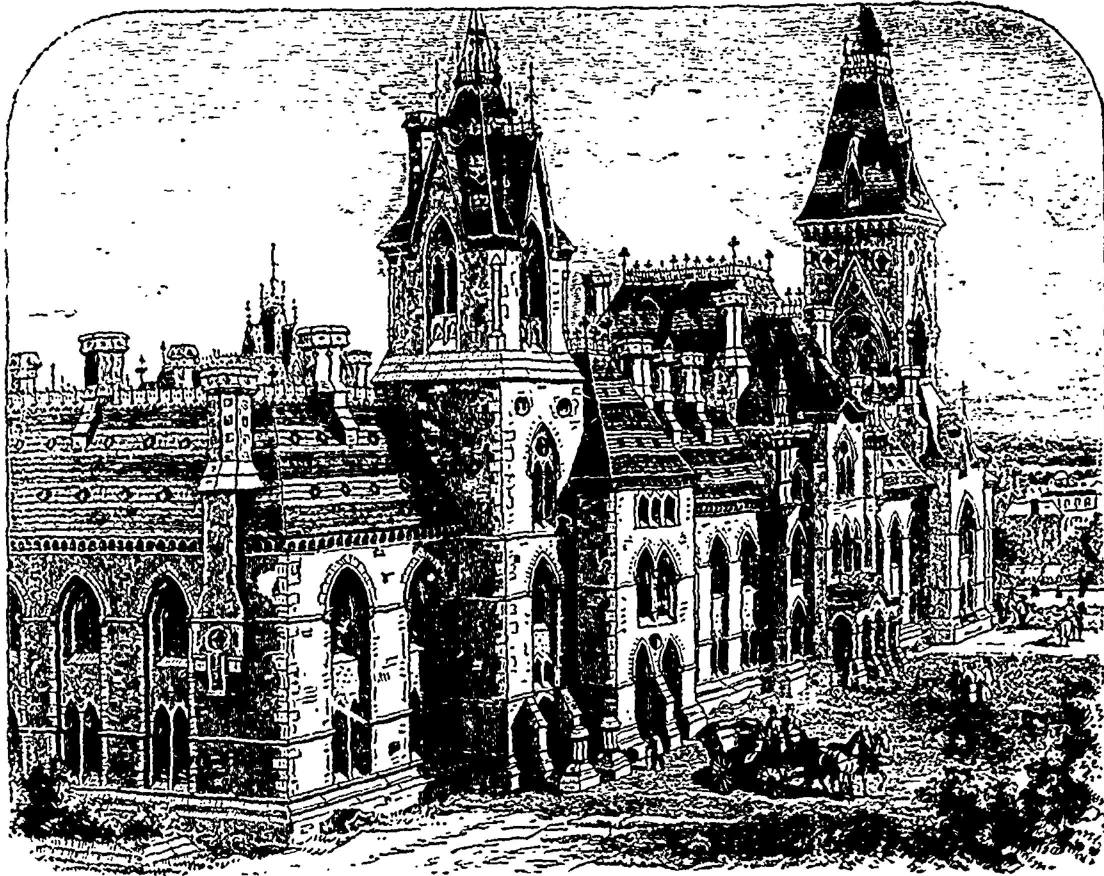
Frederica sat in painful silence for a few moments, watched eagerly by Lady Spencelaugh. "No," she said at length as she rose from her chair, while a deep flush overspread her face—"No, I cannot think that Mr. English is an impostor. I believe him to be as true and loyal a gentleman as ever breathed. Mistaken he may be, but not intentionally so, I am sure. That he will some day come back, if alive, I fully believe. Meanwhile, I will comply with your Ladyship's wishes in one respect; I will take no further steps in this matter personally, but will put it at once into the hands of Mr. Penning, my lawyer, and leave him to deal with it in whatever way he may think best."

With a little tremulous cry, Lady Spencelaugh started forward from her easy, lounging posture. "Frederica Spencelaugh, you will do no such thing!" she exclaimed. "Do you want to kill your uncle, rash girl! and such a scandal would kill him."

"It is too late now for me to go back," said Frederica sadly. "The task was not of my seeking; but now that it has been given me to do, I dare not shrink from it till I arrive at the truth. Oh, dear Lady Spencelaugh, pray believe me when I say"——

She stopped suddenly, affrighted at the strange look on the face of the woman before her. Her Ladyship's mask was pushed aside for a moment, and the lurking fiend behind peeped out in all his native hideousness.

"Am I, then, to understand that it is your



DEPARTMENTAL BUILDINGS, OTTAWA—EASTERN BLOCK.

fixed determination not to give this matter up?" asked Lady Spenceclaugh in a tone of ice.

Frederica bowed her head, but did not speak. Lady Spenceclaugh touched the small silver gong at her elbow. "The door for Miss Spenceclaugh," she said to Clotilde. Frederica passed out slowly and sorrowfully without another word.

"Let her do her worst," said Lady Spenceclaugh to herself as soon as she was left alone; "I can still defy her—defy all of them. I shall triumph in spite of everything—but at what a terrible cost!"

She took a scrap of paper from her sachet, and opened it. It was the telegram which had been received by the landlady of the *Hand and Dagger* on the previous day. Its contents were embodied in one line, and that one line ran as under: *The Ocean Child* has foundered with all on board." Lady Spenceclaugh's eyes glittered, and her mouth puckered into an evil smile as she read these words. "It's an ill wind that blows nobody any good," she muttered as she replaced the telegram in her sachet.

The fast afternoon train of that same day bore Frederica Spenceclaugh and Jane Garrod swiftly London-ward.

CHAPTER XXXII.—JIM BILLINGS IS WANTED.

Miss Spenceclaugh took up her quarters at the house of a friend in Harley Street, and was waited upon, the morning after her arrival in town, by Mr. Penning.

A quiet, shrewed, middle-aged gentleman was Mr. Penning; the embodiment of prosaic common sense, if there were a spark of imagination anywhere about him, he concealed it so carefully from the world that its presence was never suspected

"Oblige me by reading this paper carefully through," said Frederica as she gave John English's Statement into the lawyer's hands.

Quietly observant of him as he sat opposite to her, Frederica saw his white eyebrows go up several times in the course of the reading, but he said no word till he had mastered the last line; then folding up the documents carefully, and allowing his double eye-glass to drop from its resting-place on his nose he turned a face of mild inquiry on Frederica, and said: "A singular document, my dear Miss Spenceclaugh—a very singular document Have you any corroborative evidence to offer as to the truth of its statements?"

Frederica gave him an epitome of her visit to Grellier's almshouses, and then called Jane Garrod into the room. Mr. Penning listened attentively to Jane's narrative, and took notes of the chief points.—"This, I presume, completes the case as far as it goes at present?" said the lawyer when Jane had left the room.

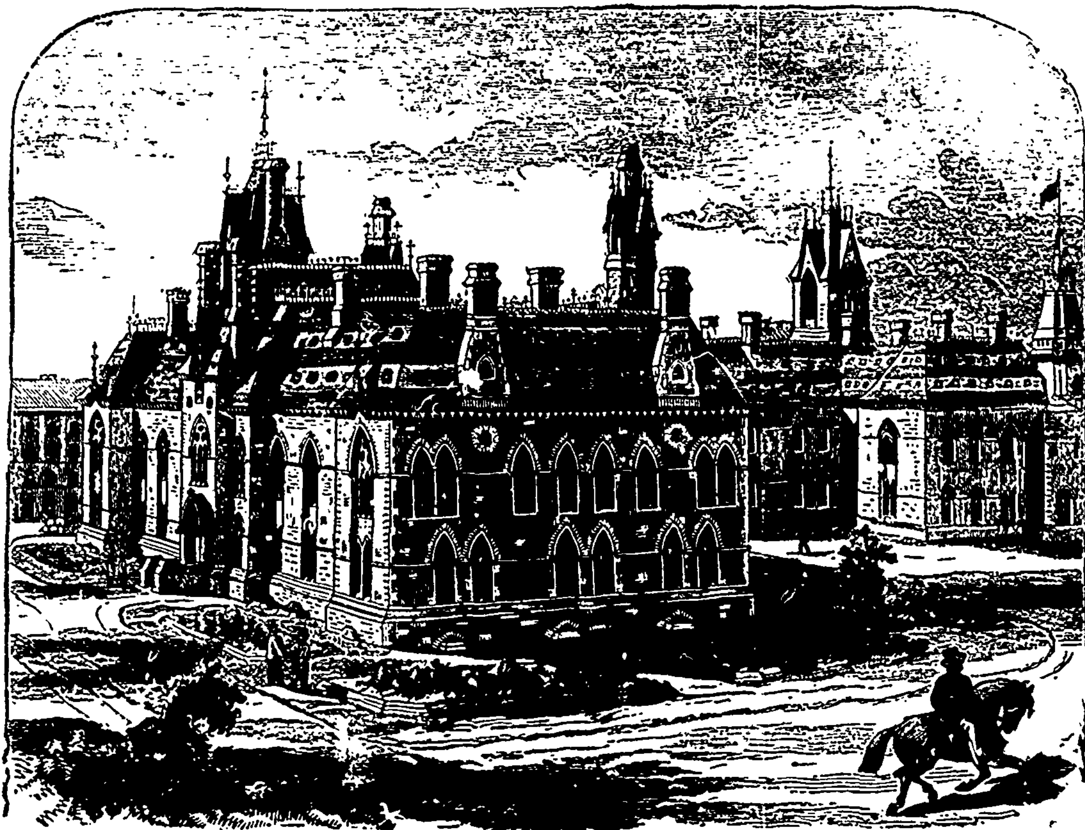
Yes, Frederica said, that was all the evidence she had to offer.

"In the present state of this affair," resumed the lawyer, as he saw Frederica's eyes fixed inquiringly on him, "you must please excuse me from offering any opinion as to the value or worthlessness of what I have just heard and read. I have seen so many strange cases in my time which seemed at the first glance to be built up of such strong evidence that it was almost impossible to doubt their validity, and which yet, when they came to be looked into, were found to be utterly worthless, that I have learned at last to doubt everything that is at all out of the common course. There is certainly an air of romance and improbability about Mr. English's Statement; but for all that, it may contain an underlying vein of truth, sufficient to necessitate further investigation. As you tell me that you are determined to go on with the case, I will at once put it (with certain reservations) into the hands of one of my people. The whole affair is certainly complicated by the unexplained absence of Mr. English. Were he here, our first duty would be to ask him to prove his identity with that of the child taken to America by the man Kreefe and his wife, in support of which fact we have nothing at present beyond his bare word. As, however, he is not here, the first point for us to take up is to try and track out this Jim Billings, who is said to be the only person able to throw any light on the parentage of the child taken to White Grange by Mrs Winch. Mind you, I think the chances of our finding him, even if he be still alive, are very faint indeed. But we will try, and meanwhile, my dear young lady, you must wait patiently till I bring you some news as to the success or non-success of my efforts. One last word at parting—don't be over-sanguine."

The mention of Lady Spenceclaugh's name was studiously avoided both by the lawyer and Frederica.

So Jane Garrod went back home, and Miss Spenceclaugh waited in Harley Street for the news that seemed so long in coming. Three weeks passed away before she saw anything further of Mr. Penning, but at the end of that time he called upon her.

"I always said Meriton was a sharp fellow," he began, after the usual greetings, "and this case proves the truth of my opinion. He has actually hunted down this man Billings, and is watching for him at the present moment, as a terrier watches for a rat, ready to pounce on him the moment he makes his appearance Excuse the vulgarity of the simile, my dear Miss Spenceclaugh, and listen to my explanation—Meriton ascertained, in the first instance, at which town Billings was convicted, the nature of his sentence, and the date of his departure for Australia. There you would naturally think that all trace of the fellow would cease, at least on this side the water. But not so. Meriton, by some means best known to himself, and with the assistance of his good friends the police, discovered, from some register of such transactions which is kept at head-quarters, that Billings was let loose with a ticket-of-leave before the expiration of his sentence, and came back to this country about eight years ago. Following up the clue thus obtained, Meriton found further, that Billings had not been many weeks in England before he was again convicted on a charge of robbery with violence, and was again sentenced—this time, to ten years' penal servitude. That sentence—reduced by a term of two years—he has been working out at Portland, and it expired a fortnight ago. But, as if it were destined that he should not escape us, Billings is



DEPARTMENTAL BUILDINGS, OTTAWA—WESTERN BLOCK.

still there, in the infirmary, suffering from a severe accident, which he met with while working in the quarries. Meriton is waiting close at hand, ready to pounce on him the moment he shows his scoundrel's face outside the walls, and if this fellow has any secret worth knowing, Meriton is just the man to twist it out of him. We shall probably have further information in a few days; but don't be over-sanguine, my dear young lady—don't be over-sanguine."

Three days later, Mr. Penning came again, bringing a letter with him. "News at last," he said. "But I had better, perhaps, read Meriton's letter, and enable you to judge of its importance yourself." He adjusted his eye-glass with a little show of importance, and then read as under:

My dear Sir.—As my last letter informed you, I have been dawdling away my time here for more than a week, awaiting the discharge of Billings. I had been apprised by a friendly official that he would leave the infirmary this morning, and I took him in tow the moment he was outside the gates. I had secured a snug little place beforehand, where our interview would not be likely to be interrupted. Billings is evidently much reduced by his illness, and therefore perhaps more amenable to my little persuasive ways than he would otherwise have been, which is so far fortunate for us. A more thorough scoundrel I think I never talked to; not that he is by any means unintelligent, or wanting in shrewdness, but in that he is so thoroughly brutalised by the kind of life which his crimes have compelled him to lead. He was suspicious of me from the first moment. "Ah," said he, "such gents as you don't take any interest in coves like me unless you have got some end of your own to serve." "Quite right," I said; "I have got an end to serve, and if you will come quietly with me, I'll tell you what it is." The moment I spoke of White Grange, he started guiltily. Then with a sneer and an oath, he exclaimed: "That's the business you have come about, is it? But you're not going to get anything out of me about White Grange. I've not kept the secret all these years to be carneyed out of it by a white-faced fox like you. I know a trick worth two of that." I really thought at one time that he was going to prove impracticable; but after a good dinner, followed by an ample supply of old rum and strong tobacco, he became more amenable to reason; and not to trouble you, sir, with useless details, I did actually succeed in talking him over, and in inducing him to see on which side his bread was buttered; and I may be allowed to say that I felicitate myself a little on the victory. The terms are rather high, I must confess, but a lesser figure would have been of no avail. In return, I have obtained full information as to the name and parentage of the child, and Billings has consented to lie quietly by for a few weeks, in case he should be required as a witness. Further details I reserve till I see you: but as you will probably be anxious to know *exactly what it is that I have been told, and as* I think it hardly advisable to trust such information to this letter, I will telegraph to you in cipher to-morrow morning, half an hour after post-time, as I shall go on from here to Exeter to see Mr. Collinson *re*: the disputed-will case. Yours respectfully,

Frank Meriton.

"You have got the telegram?" said Frederica eagerly when Mr. Penning had finished reading the letter.

"I have, said the old lawyer gravely. He saw that Frederica's eyes were fixed anxiously on him. Writing materials were on the table, so he took a strip of paper, and writing a few words on it, handed it across to Frederica. "That is a copy of Meriton's telegram," he said.

Frederica's cheek grew pale as she read, and next moment tears sprang to her eyes. "Oh, Mr. Penning," she exclaimed, "what terrible mystery is here? My poor dear uncle"——

There was a knock at the door, and a servant etered with a salver, on which lay a strange-looking letter, addressed to Miss Spencelaugh. Frederica opened it. It was another telegram. "Sir Philip Spencelaugh is dying. Come at once."

"Pray Heaven that I shall be not too late to tell him this strange news!" said Frederica through her tears.

"Better that he should die in ignorance of it, my dear young lady," said the old lawyer gently —"far better that he should die in ignorance of it."

Five hours later, Frederica alighted at the porch of Belair. The housekeeper, with a sorrowful face, was waiting to receive her. "My uncle"——said Frederica, and then she stopped, reading but too clearly in the face of the other the tidings she dreaded to hear.

"Sir Philip died th[illegible] hours ago," said the housekeeper. "Your [illegible]e was the last word on his lips."

To be continued.

A REQUIEM.

Stone Cold! Stone Cold!

Ever thus is memory sighing,
Where my boyhood's love is lying,
I, the while, those words defying,
Stone cold! Stone cold!

Sware I not that Time should never
From my heart her image sever?
Still the sad voice murmurs ever,
Stone cold! Stone cold!

Whilst defying, Faith is fleeting,
Doubt within me wildly beating,
And I hear myself repeating,
Stone cold! Stone cold!

But I say, My love is sleeping,
Strive to wake her with my weeping,
Truth into my heart still creeping
Stone cold! Stone cold!

Then I fling fresh vows upon her;
Cry aloud the words that won her;
Echo answers only "honour,"
Stone cold! Stone cold!

Now I raise the faded tresses;
Warm the lips with past caresses;
But the touch despair impresses,
Stone cold! Stone cold!

Hide the pale dead face with flowers,
Cull them sweet from bygone hours,
Black conviction o'er me lowers,
Stone cold! Stone cold!

Theo. Kennedy.

JOE MILLER AND HIS MEN.

THE name of Joseph (more succinctly and familiarly Joe) Miller brings back before us, life size, the face of an honest, grave, respectable, taciturn English comedian, in hat and wig of the period (Georgio Secundo Gloriosissimo Regnante). Not one of the light-heeled play-acting crew, but a performer who trod the boards of Drury, heavily, in Colley Cibber's day, with a proper sense of the sobrieties and gravities of broad comic life.

The want of family papers is one to be lamented in the conduct of many biographical inquiries of the highest moment, and perhaps no more striking instance could be found of the loss posterity has suffered under this head than the case of the late Mr. Joseph Miller. The materials for this biography are so distressingly slight, that Miller lives for us only in a few straggling and insulated facts. We know nearly as little of him as Mr. Steevens knew of William Shakespeare, of Stratford-on-Avon, though not quite so little. We have plays by Mr. Shakespeare, and if we have none by Mr. Miller, we have playbills and the book which passes current as Joe Miller's Jests. This book is itself a joke. As there are notorious wits, so there are men notorious for never having made a joke themselves, nor seen the point of another man's joke, in their lives. Mr. Miller's celebrity sprang from the latter cause. Mr. Miller, a man of social habits, fond of company, of tobacco, and of good cheer, seldom spoke and never laughed. In the scale of literary attributes, his abilities pointed to zero; for he could neither read nor write, and he learned the parts with which he adorned the stage, orally: his wife proving herself the better half by reading them to him. Yet he held a good place among such sterling theatrical geniuses of the pre-Garrick school as Barton Booth, Wilkes, Dogget, Cibber, Norris, Pinketman, Spiller, and others, immortalised in the Tatler and Spectator, and while Sir Richard Steele was one of the royal patentees. He filled, with general applause, the parts of Clodpole, in the Amorous Widow, and Ben, in Love for Love. In the King and the Miller of Mansfield, the Miller was appropriately performed by Mr. Miller. But his supreme effort, suiting as it did his natural bent, was Trim, in Steele's Funeral, or Grief à la Mode.

Mark what happened in the year seventeen hundred and thirty-eight, and in the month of August. Mr. Miller died, leaving a widow. The question was, what was to become of her? Such questions will arise when tangible estate dies with the owner. In this case, however, the departed left a name, and an acute publisher found the answer in that name.

This was an epoch when the public had a sweet tooth for dead players' jokes. Consequently, dead players' jokes were the only articles of this special description worthy their paper and print, singular as it may appear, no man, unless perchance he was a dead player, joked in those days. If we might take certain title-pages upon trust, these dead players were a marvellously mercurial race, making, during their whole lives' time, hoards of the primest fun, and not letting a soul have the faintest inkling of it until they were fairly under ground. Of these jest-books, previously put out by the hearseload, none were so popular as Spiller's Jests and Pinkethman's (elliptically Pinkey's) Jests.

What was mortal of Mr. Miller had been placed under a stone in St. Clement's churchyard, Portugal-street. We proceed with the story of his less perishable part—his name.

There was then established in Dogwell-court, Whitefriars, a bookseller and stationer, named Read, a person of a shrewd and speculative turn of mind. Mr. Read was what we call not a first-class publisher, yet a pushing man, most valuable to literary gentlefolks-errant who were in want of occasional jobs, or in possession, by some rare piece of good fortune, of an idea calculated to put small sums of money into their own pockets, and large s[illegible] into Mr. Read's.

Whether Mr. Read himself originated the notion that there was a good deal in Mr. Miller's name *quasi* Dead Player, and spake on the subject to a gentleman who he believed able to assist him; or, whether it was the gentleman who took the bold initiative, is not now ascertainable. At any rate, enter Mr. Mottley. Mr. Mottley had seen better days, and was just then seeing very bad days. It had lately gone worse and worse with him.

Mr. John Mottley—a real name, and not a practical joke—was only son and heir of John Mottley, lieutenant-colonel in the service of his Sacred Majesty King James the Second, and afterwards commandant of a regiment in that of the most Christian monarch Louis the Fourteenth, recommended for the post by his Sacred Majesty King James, who had retired from business to St. Germains, and referred persons, applying for situations, elsewhere. The colonel was unlucky enough to be killed in seventeen hundred and six, at the battle of Turin.

Young Mottley does not seem, at any period of his life, to have lain under particularly weighty obligations to his father, the favorite of two kings. His mother was no Jacobite, and from the mother's friends, the Guises and Lord Howe, he derived whatever means of support he ever had, independently of literature. His father was a spendthrift, and he did not very much care whether it was his own money he ran through, or somebody else's. His mother, a Guise by birth, had a fortune of her own, and her father at his death left her son, Mr. Read's casual acquaintance, a second. The colonel all but dissipated the one, and Mrs. Mottley's debts swallowed up the other. Still, young John had friends, who kept him alive and tolerably well for several years on two splendid promises and one small place in the Excise. Moreover, Lord Halifax, during his lord treasurership, gave his word to Mottley that he should be a commissioner of wine licenses. The only circumstance which prevented the fulfilment of the promise was that, just before the place was to have been patented to Mottley, somebody else got it.

John Mottley's next episode was a bit of downright cruel dealing. In seventeen hundred and twenty, Mr. Mottley resigned his emoluments in the Excise, on being appointed by Sir Robert Walpole an officer in the Exchequer. He thought he had found smooth water at last. But even when Mr. Mottley had become entitled to draw no more than three days' pay, came the Right Honourable Sir Robert Walpole's compliments to Mr. Mottley, and was exceedingly sorry he should only just have recollected that the place was bespoken for Mr.—— somebody else! It did not occur to the right honourable gentleman that his honour was in any way concerned in providing other employment for Mottley, and the latter was thrown upon the world simply destitute.

Bereft of all hope of aid from his own family, abominably deluded by ministers, poor John Mottley, broken down in health and spirits, was reduced to the need of earning his bread how he c[illegible]d. He wrote plays which were not unsu[illegible]cessful. Of four or so, he was the unassisted author, and he was concerned in others. He sold his talents to the booksellers. He became acquainted with strange associates. His was soon among the familiar faces at the coffee-houses and other places of entertainment resorted to by the wits and the literati of all grades.

It seemed as if Mottley were to be haunted by that bad genius of his, ill-luck, to his life's end. He had no sooner got into a fair connexion with the theatres, than the gout took the use of his right hand away, and thenceforth he was a confirmed valetudinarian. Mottley was in this sad predicament, crippled and half bedridden, when one day, in seventeen hundred and thirty-nine, quite early, Mr. Read, of Dogwell-court, called on him touching a little literary business. It was thought that it would be a profitable jest to gather together all the good things about town, put them into a shilling book, and make the late Joe Miller, notoriously so impervious to a joke as a Quaker, its foster-father. Mottley would have been a name of names for the title-page, one would have fancied, but Mr. Read held differently. Mottley was not a dead player, and Miller was. People who knew anything, knew that the late Mr. Miller was one of the dullest dogs that ever sipped ale out of a black jack; and when they saw with their own bodily eyes Joe Miller's Jests on every stall, what a merry sensation there would be in all the old actor's old haunts about Drury-lane, and what a stir among the mighty butchers of Clare Market, who would spare a shilling, every butcher of them, to see what it *could* all mean. Mottley even sunk his name, assuming that of Mr. Miller's "lamenting friend and former companion," Elijah Jenkins, Esq.

Anyhow, it was a bouncing shilling's worth, and Mr. Read cleared a very handsome profit. Let us hope that Mr. Read did not forget the widow. The title-page ran thus:

"Joe Miller's *Jests*: or, The Wit's *Vade-Mecum*. Being a Collection of the most Brilliant Jests; the Politest Repartees; the most Elegant Bon-Mots, and most pleasant short Stories in the *English* Language.

"First carefully collected in the Company, and many of them transcribed from the Mouth, of the Facetious GENTLEMAN whose Name they bear; and now set forth and published by his lamentable friend and former companion, *Elijah Jenkins*, Esq.

Most Humbly Inscribed
To those CHOICE SPIRITS *of the* AGE,
Captain Bodens, Mr. Alexander Pope,
Mr. Professor Lacy, Mr. Orator Henley,
and Job Baker, the Kettle-Drummer.
London:
Printed and Sold by T. Read, in *Dogwell Court*, *White* Fryars, Fleet-street. MDCCXXXIX.
(Price One Shilling.)

So there was laughter all round in the Jubilee year, seventeen hundred and thirty-nine, when JOE MILLER'S JESTS, OR THE WIT'S VADE-MECUM, came from Mr. T. Read's Printing and Publishing Office, Dogwell-court, Whitefriars, Price One Shilling.

The public laughed, as those laugh who love good jokes, brimming measure; and Mr. T. Read laughed, as those laugh, who win. For, in the soberest seriousness, we take it that he went shares with Mottley and the widow, much in the same manner as the lion in the fable goes shares with the ass.

The jokes about town at that immediate period embraced an extraordinarily wide range, and the pseudo-Jenkins collection abounds in illustrations of those minuter traits of character, which lend us, coming afterwards, such an insight into the men. Here we are presented with the choicest memorabilia possible concerning King Charles the Second, of ever-worshipful remembrance; Mr. Gun Jones, Sir Richard Steele; the Duchess of Portsmouth, a Country Clergyman, Mrs. C——m, Sir William Davenant, Ben Jonson, two Free-thinking Authors, A Very Modest Young Gentleman of the County of Tipperary, Lord R., Tom Burnet, Henry the Fourth of France, the Emperor Tiberius, and others too numerous to rehearse.

But—and this has been hitherto a secret among these gems of wit and humour—there crept in, unawares, two items, which breathe an abnormally Christian and reflective spirit, and which we learn, from sources inaccessible to the editor of 1739, were Mr. Miller's own composition. We must go to the works of some men, if we wish to understand their true dispositions and temperaments. Let us, for this purpose, go to the works of Mr. Miller, luminous, though not voluminous. The first is moral, the second philosophical. To begin with the moral (instead of ending with it):

"Jo Miller, sitting one day in the window of the Sun Tavern, in Clare-street, a fishwoman and her maid passing by, the woman said, "Buy my souls, buy my maids!" "Ah, you wicked old creature!" said honest Jo. "What! Are you not consent to sell your own soul, but you would sell your maid's too?"

If this were really a joke made, hibernicè, by a man whose intelligence was joke-proof, there would be an end of the jest of imputed authorship; but it is nothing of the kind. The horrid cry reached Mr. Miller's ear as a detestable fact, and he prosed it out to his friends with the settled conviction that, under pretence of sell-

ing fish, the costerwoman carried on some other traffic.

This concludes the moral works of Mr. Miller. The philosophical works now commence, and into these the sentimental element has manifestly been infused.

"It is certainly the most transcendent pleasure to be agreeably surprised with the confession of love from an adored mistress. A young gentleman, after a very great misfortune, came to his mistress, and told her he was reduced even to the want of five guineas. To which she replied, "I am glad of it with all my heart." "Are you so, madam?" adds he, suspecting her constancy; "pray, why so?" "Because," said she, I can furnish you with five thousand!""

This ends the Philosophical and Sentimental Works of Mr. Miller, heretofore (in common with the former) undiscerningly printed with all the editions of the book vulgarly denominated *Joe Miller's Jests.*

As to Mr. Mottley, the reduced gentleman and disappointed candidate for government patronage, the gout let him live long enough to see many and many an impression of *Joe Miller's Jests* pass from the bookseller's counter to the always-rightly-appreciating public; but neither his name nor that of the Widow Miller appeared after 1739, that we can discover, in the credit column of Mr. Read's ledgers. The longevity of misfortune and misery was exemplified in Mottley. He kept alive (principally between blankets) till the year of Joe Miller's Jests, eleven. In 1750, death took him away. The hand of the harvestman was quickly cold, and almost as quickly his name sank out of recollection. Even the generation of which he was one, forgot him, perhaps, notwithstanding the place accorded to him in some of the dictionaries of the time, and among the neat little memoirs which supplement Winchope's tragedy of Scanderbeg. If he were remembered, it was as a dramatist chiefly. But Mottley's plays have vanished long since into limbo, and his present and future claim to notice must rest upon his intimate identification with one of the most permanently popular books in the English language.

A PERFECT TREASURE.

I AM not a man to have hobbies—far from it —but everybody, I suppose, likes one thing more than another, and what I like is Plate; good serviceable gold and silver, such as is pleasant to see upon one's table, whether by sunshine or candle-light, and which one likes one's guests to see. It is whispered by malignant persons (so at least certain good-natured friends tell me), that I should not give so many dinner-parties, if it were not to exhibit these costly articles. I am not conscious of such a motive for my hospitality; but if it exist, it need not surely be objected to; it is I who have to pay for the weakness, and not my friends—as happens in some cases I could name. If I possessed a selection of the most hideous china in the whole world, and filled my drawing-rooms with unhappy persons, *after* dinner, who are compelled to bow down before Bel and the Dragon (if I may say so without impiety), as Colonel Twankay does, for instance, *then* I grant you there would be some ground of complaint: or if I invited people to "at-homes" every Wednesday evening (a most impertinent form of invitation, in my opinion), in order that they should have the pleasure of hearing me confute Professor Piebald upon the question of the Theory of Development, as my good friend Dr. Twistie is in the habit of doing: or if I had a daughter with high notes, and inveigled the Unwary with the bait of "a little music," like my neighbour, the Hon. Mrs. Matcham—so proud and stuck up, that she is as often as not called Lucifer Matcham—who, I dare say, thinks her invitations quite an honour to the recipients—— But there; I have no patience to speak about such people. These, forsooth, are the persons—*these,* with their tea and thin bread and butter, and threepenny-worth of cream, and with what they call "a light refreshment" to follow—weak lemonade and cheap ices—to charge me with the crime of Ostentation! If that means to "shew off," which, I believe, is its strictly classical sense, I should like to know which of us four is the most guilty. At all events, there is something *beside* show in my little entertainments; my dishes, if they do happen to be silver-gilt (and really the moulding is worth looking at,) have, at all events something *in* them; I don't ask men to put on black broad-cloth and polished leather boots, in this sultry June, with nothing to come of it all except perspiration. That's vulgar, according to Mrs. Matcham, I have no doubt: but it's true. If one could cool one's self by means of the frigidity of one's hostess, her drawing-room would be a very pleasant place; but as it is, I fancy folks prefer the contemplation of my ice-pails—as pretty a device in frosted silver, by the by, as you will often see.

Do not imagine that I am annoyed towards persons who, when they *do* give a dinner-party, omit to supply ice in this weather (though it would cost them but one penny a head), I am incapable of such a feeling. Ostentation, indeed! At this very moment—11.30 P.M., and the thermometer next door at 85 degrees at the very least, I'll answer for it—I can hear Miss Lucifer Matcham screaming through the wall.

I was not looking at my gold and silver plate, I suppose, which made my mother-in-law bilious; she might have stopped a long time, at some other houses I could name, without getting the quality, or even the quantity, of food that would produce an indisposition of that kind. Mind, I don't blame her; she gave way to an amiable weakness (it was truffles), poor lady, and she suffered for it more than enough. Neither was it was mere Ostentation, I suppose, that caused me to provide her with a sick-nurse—Mrs. Maqueechy. My wife, of course, did everything she could for her mother, but ours is a large household, and we see a good deal of company; so we thought it best to provide a person exclusively to wait upon her. We had the highest written testimonials as to character, and her behaviour was everything we could wish. Instead of "interfering," and setting the other domestics by the ears, as persons of her class are accused of doing, she kept herself *to* herself, and when anything was wanted, she would fetch it in person, rather than give anybody trouble. I used to meet her walking all over the house upon these little errands, and I noticed, to her great credit, that though she must have weighed nearly twelve stone, she made no noise. She so won upon me, indeed—for I am not at all a man to be familiar with my inferiors, and should certainly *not* "take a pleasure in exhibiting my plate to a maid-of-all-work or a crossing-sweeper," as some people have been so good as to affirm—I say, I was so pleased with Mrs. Maqueechy's quiet and respectful manners, that finding her upon one occasion in the dining-room admiring my two new shield-shaped salvers upon the side-board, I took pains to explain to her the design of the engraving, and especially the embossed cipher; with which her intelligent mind was highly pleased. In short, she was a perfect treasure, and if we had wanted a housekeeper, or any confidential servant of that sort, I should certainly have retained Mrs. Maqueechy in that position, after her duties as a sick-nurse were concluded; and in that idea my wife entirely concurred. Mrs. Maqueechy was neither young nor good-looking, but a more thoroughly respectable-looking person, in her condition of life, it was not easy to find. Although I had every confidence in Bowles—Bowles has had the charge of my plate for these ten years—yet there seemed somehow to be a double warranty for the safeguard of my property, while Mrs. Maqueechy was under my roof. She was not a suspicious person, far from it; but she once remarked to me, in a meaning way, that the charge of so much valuable plate was a great responsibility, and would be even a temptation to some people; and I saw she kept her eye on Bowles. As the event proved, alas, Mrs. Maqueechy had only too good reason to do so.

Last Wednesday, we happened to have rather a large dinner-party; I had been dining out a good deal at various clubs lately, and of course it was necessary to invite my entertainers in return. It is not that I will ask *anybody* to come and admire my plate, but certainly some of the men were not intimate friends of mine, but only acquaintances. However, I suppose the fact of persons belonging to such clubs as I frequent, is a sufficient guarantee for their social position. They were quite good enough, in my opinion, to meet Mrs. Lucifer Matcham at all events, and they met her. The dinner had gone off uncommonly well. The shield-shaped salvers had been very much admired, and so had my new tureen. The ladies had retired to the drawing-room, and I had just passed the vine-leaf claret-jug to Colonel Twankay (on which the old hunks did not pass the slighest remark, by the by) when Bowles stooped down and whispered in my ear that a person wished to see me in the Hall, upon very important business.

"Ask him what it is," said I. "It is impossible that I can leave my guests."

"I did ask him, sir, and he refuses to state," replied Bowles confidentially. "It is my opinion he's a begging-letter impostor; but he says he must see you in person."

I was upon the point of saying: "Tell him to leave the house," when something or other in Bowles's manner struck me so decidedly that I resolved not to do so. Why should he say a man, about whom he could know nothing, was a begging-letter impostor? Perhaps I placed rather too much confidence in my butler, as Mrs. Maqueechy had hinted that very morning. Actuated by a vague presentiment of distrust and danger, I rose from table, made a hasty apology to my friends, and went with Bowles into the Hall. A shabby-genteel sort of person, answering, indeed, very tolerably to my man's description of him, was standing by the umbrella-stall.

"What is it you want with me, sir?" said I, in a magisterial tone.

"One minute's private conversation with you," replied he, with a glance at the butler.

"You may leave us, Bowles," said I; and he withdrew accordingly, although, I am bound to say, very unwillingly. The thought flashed across me like lightning: "Bowles has something to fear from this man's disclosure;" and the next words of my visitor confirmed me in the suspicion.

"I am a member of the detective police force," said he, "and I come to warn you that there is something wrong in your house."

"Nothing to do with my plate, I hope?' said I with considerable anxiety.

"Very much to do with it, sir," returned he grimly. "There is a thief harboured here; and by this time to-morrow, you will not have a silver spoon in your possession, unless I find him out. I must see every soul you have got under your roof."

"A thief!" said I: "impossible! I never have even so much as a strange waiter: That butler has lived with me for ten years, and my two footmen even longer. I will answer for their honesty."

"Let me *see* 'em, sir; that's all I want," was the decisive reply.

"It is not Bowles?" said I appealingly; don't say it's Bowles;" but, although it agitated me beyond measure to think that I should have to trust a new butler with all my plate, I confess that I had a horrible idea that it *was* Bowles.

"I think not," said the detective quietly. "Let me see the other men." I turned the gas-light over the door as high as it would go, and called them both into the Hall.

"It is not them," said he. "What other men have you got in the house?"

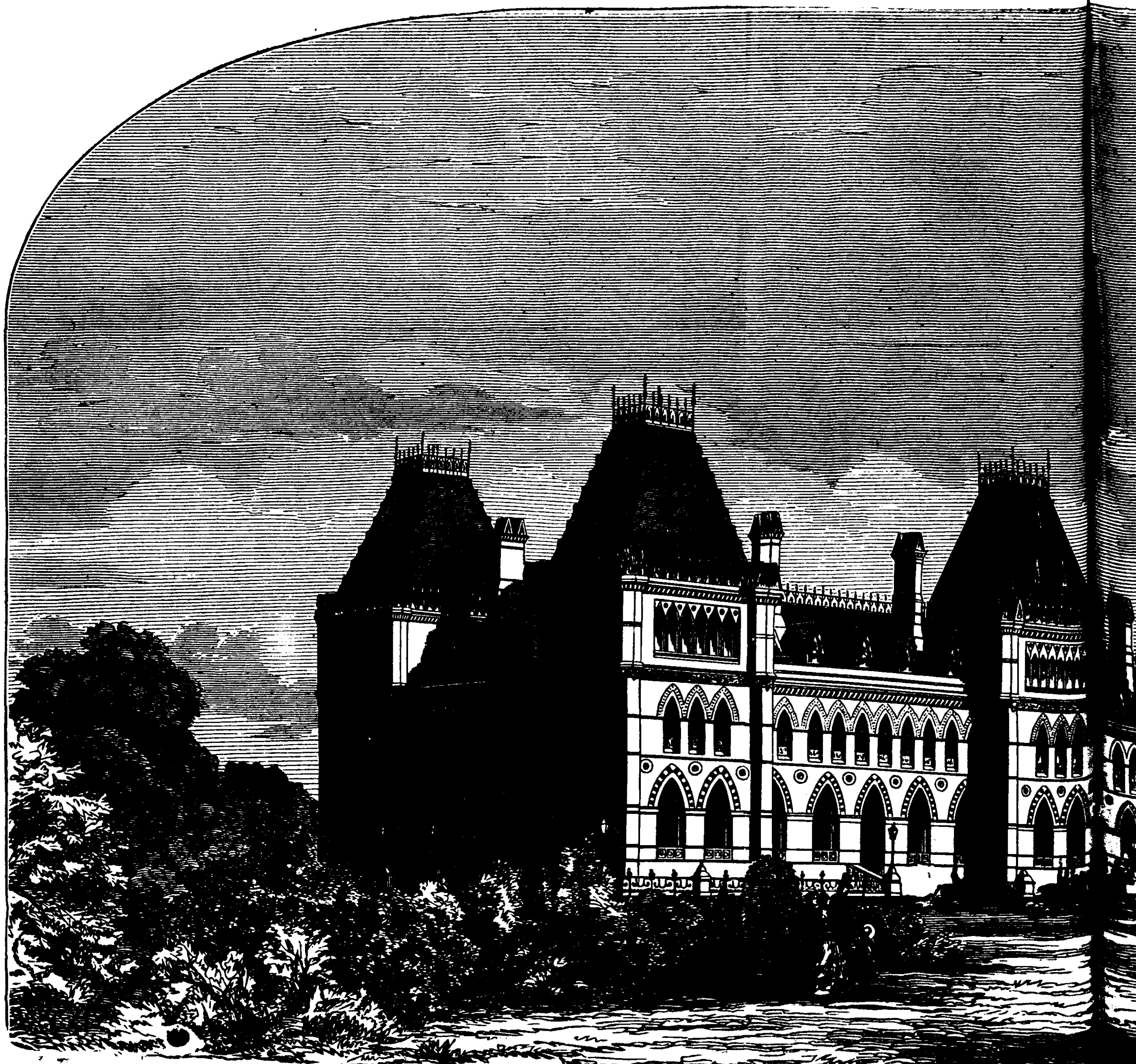
"None but my guests," said I, "here in the dining-room."

"Do you know them all very well, sir? Are none of them mere acquaintances or neighbours?"

"Well," returned I with hesitation, and feeling very glad that Mrs. Matcham was not a third party to this interview, "I know some, of course, better than others."

"Just so," said the detective quietly: "then I must see them,"

This was a shocking proposal, and made me



THE PARLIAMENT BUILDIN[GS]

feel hot all over: but still I was not going to run any risk with those shield-shaped salvers. Major Pinkey, I now remembered, had expressed a great wish to examine them, and perhaps that fact had had some weight in my inviting him to dinner, Who the deuce Major Pinkey *was*—except that he belonged to my club—I certainly knew no more than the detective, and perhaps a great deal less. Still it seemed a very base thing to open the dining-room door, and let this fellow scrutinise my guests, in hopes to find a scoundrel among them.

"Upon my life," said I, "Mr. Detective, I can't do it."

"Very right, sir—very natural," replied he, smiling in his quiet way. "It would never do, would it? But look you, sir: I'm a waiter, a hired waiter. Who is to know that I have not business at your sideboard? In one minute, I could run my eye over the whole lot, and spot my man, if he's there, as sure as taxes."

I did not like even this arrangement; but still it seemed the only thing to be done. So, sending for Bowles, I arranged with him the plan of proceeding, and then returned to the dining-room. My feelings are not to be described, when, a few minutes afterwards, sitting at the head of my table, I heard the door open, and knew that the detective was in the room. He was much longer at the sideboard than he had promised to be, and every hair on my head seemed to stand upright all the time. Suppose he should suddenly fall on Major Pinkey, and cry: "This is my man!" Nay, suppose Colonel Twankay himself should prove to be the offender! I seemed to have lost all confidence in my fellow-creatures. After a period of anxiety no measure of time could indicate, the supposed waiter took his departure.

"You've got a new man, I see," said Dr. Twistie carelessly: "with so much plate about, I hope you are satisfied about his honesty."

I was exceedingly glad to find old Twistie was honest, and had not been taken by the shirt frill, and walked off to Bow Street; but of course I did not tell him *that*.

"Please, sir, you're wanted again," whispered Bowles as he brought in another bottle of claret.

"If the kitchen chimney is on fire, I am glad we have dined," observed the major good-humouredly: "if I can be of any service, pray command me."

I did not inform him what a relief it was to me that he was *not* Wanted, but remarking that it was only a little domestic matter, I once more sought the inspector.

"The one I'm after is not among *them*, sir, *so far as I know*," observed this official, jerking his thumb in the direction of the dining-room. "Are you sure there are no more men in your house beside those I have seen?"

"Yes," said I; "there are no more."

"Then now I must have a look at the ladies."

"The ladies!" cried I, aghast at this proposal. "You don't want to go into the drawing-room?"

"It would be more satisfactory," observed the detective coolly. My information is very reliable. But, at all events, Who is there?"

"Well," said I, "my wife is there for one: you have no information against *her*, I suppose?"

He nodded satisfaction so far.

"Then there's the Honourable Mrs. Matcham and her daughter."

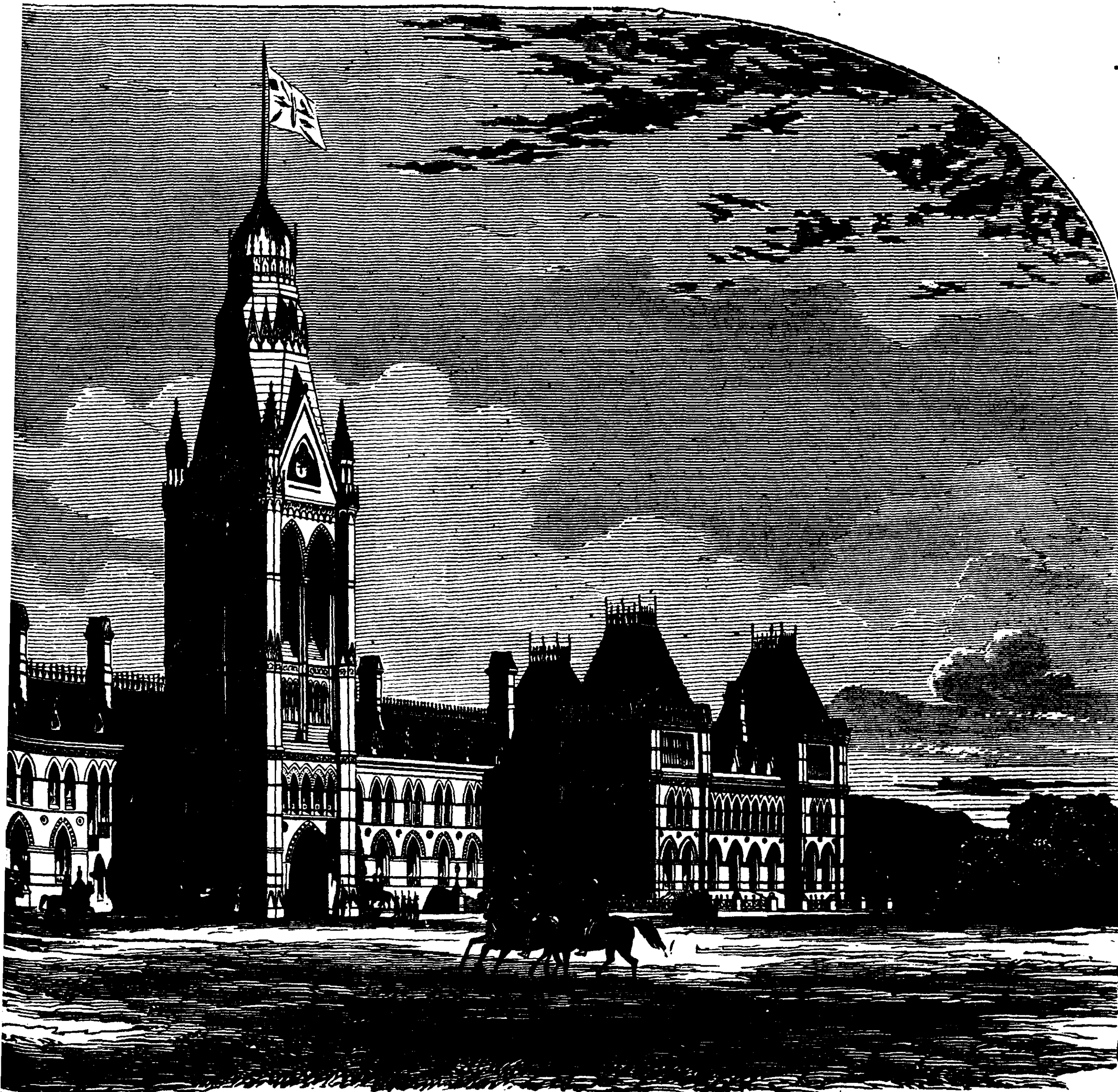
"Safe!" rejoined the detective, checking them off on his fingers.

"Mrs. Twistie of Regalia Square, and Lady Bobbington."

"I suppose they're all right," remarked my inquisitor doubtfully. "Are you sure there are no more?"

"There's my mother-in-law, but she's in her own room, and exceedingly unwell."

"Very good," observed the detective inconsequentially. "There's a Plant somewhere in this house, however; you may take your oath of that, and very likely in the last place where you



DINGS, OTTAWA.

would ever look for it; so now I must see the maids."

It was astonishing even to myself in what complete subjugation this man had placed me. Once, and once only, a terrible misgiving seized me—I was as full of suspicions by this time as a porcupine of quills, and darted them in as many directions—that the detective himself was a "Plant" that would presently blossom into a burglar; but my overtaxed mind refused to bear this burden. If it was so, I would trust to his clemency—just as an inhabitant of Dubernitz, deserted by Feldzeugmeister von Benedek, might have trusted to a Prussian—to leave me a silver fork or two to carry on the business of life. If this man turned out to be anything less than what he described himself to be, all authority would henceforth lose its effect with me. If Solomon had ever had to do with a metropolitan detective, he would never have spoken so slightingly of mankind. I had read of "the grasp of the law" in works of fiction, but I had never understood the tremendous nature of that figure until I felt this gentleman's knuckles (metaphorically) inserted in my white cravat. He had to repeat: "So now I must see the maids," in his undeniable manner, before I could collect myself sufficiently to lead the way on the kitchen—a spot to which I should not alone have ventured to penetrate. To say that the cook and the kitchen-maid stared at the phenomena of our presence, is to underrate their powers of vision.

"Now, I daresay you have no charwoman nor any temporary assistant, my good lady, even on an occasion like the present," observed my companion urbanely; "but you and this young woman do all the work yourselves."

"That's true, sir; we don't mind hard work now and then," returned the cook; tossing her head; "and besides, I don't like strangers in my kitchen," added she with meaning, "*especially when I'm busy, and would rather have their room than their company.*

I could have given that woman five shillings upon the spot (and I did so the next morning) for that rapid discharge of words: the detective's tongue, although I had found it so terrible a weapon, was silenced by my domestic's needle-gun, and he retired much discomfited, I could see, notwithstanding that he strove to conceal his defeat beneath a contemptuous smile.

"Now, if I'd been an ordinary policeman, and in uniform," whispered he to me, as we reached the Hall again, "I could have come over that cook in no time."

Without remarking upon this confession of defeat, I led the way up to the nursery. The servants in that department were not unused to visitors, and evidently imagined that my companion was some family-man among the guests, who had expressed a wish to "see the dear children" in their cribs. He, on his part, immediately understood the *rôle* he was expected to play, and walked admiringly from cot to cot, as though he were a connoisseur in babes.

"Charming children, and well taken care of, I can see," observed he, with rather a familiar nod (I thought) towards the under-nurse. "It's neither of *them*," he added in a low whisper. "You have got a housemaid or two, I suppose?"

His tone was exactly that which an ogre might have used in making inquiries concerning the larder at a Cannibal inn.

The housemaids were inspected, and pronounced to be free from suspicion. "But I cannot have seen everybody," said he decisively.

"Yes," said I, "everybody, except Mrs. Maqueechy."

"Friend of the family?" inquired the detective, with a disappointed air.

"Well," said I, I "might almost say so. She came to us not only with the best of written characters, but my wife had an interview with her late mistress, a Mrs. Ogilvie, who pronounced her a perfect treasure; and we ourselv s have found her all that could be wished."

"I should like to see the 'perfect treasure,'" quoth the detective, smiling grimly: we often find them to be the very people we want."

"Nay," said I, "but in this case your suspicions are quite groundless: Mrs. Maqueechy is a superior person, and takes an interest in us which you seldom find in a domestic except after years of service. Besides, she is my mother-in-law's sick-nurse, and most likely they have already made their arrangements for the night. It would be a pity to disturb them."

"I must see Mrs. Maqueechy," returned my companion gravely; "she seems altogether too charming to be missed."

"You detectives are clever fellows," replied I with irritation; "but you often spend your time very fruitlessly. It is a pity that a man can't be determined, and yet avoid being obstinate. However, since you have gone so far, you shall go through with the business."

With that I knocked at the door, and, admitted to the sick-room, informed my mother-in-law briefly of what was taking place; while the invaluable Maqueechy retired with her usual delicacy to the dressing-room. Perhaps I spoke a little too loud—for that Mrs. Maqueechy could stoop to eavesdropping, it is hard to believe—but at all events, that intelligent woman must have possessed herself of the substance of what I related, for when I opened the door to admit the officer, I found her already outside, and in his custody. She had endeavoured to escape through the second door of the dressing-room—"bolted like a rabbut," said the detective—but had run into the very danger she would have avoided, and there she was with a couple of handcuffs over her neat mittens.

"We know one another very well, me and Mrs. Maqueechy," observed the detective grimly.

"I was told I should find an old friend in this house, although I had no idea who it would be until you mentioned Mrs. Ogilvie. She is very charitable, *she* is, in getting her fellow-creatures situations in respectable families where there happens to be a good deal of plate. It was this very night that this good lady here had engaged to open your front-door to her husband and a friend of his, who keeps a light cart in the mews yonder. Being a sick-nurse, you see, nobody would be surprised at her being about the house at all hours.—Wasn't that your little game, Mrs. Maqueechy?"

"Well, I suppose it's a five-year touch?" observed that lady with philosophic coolness.

"Well, I'm afraid it is, ma'am; since that other little business in Carlton Gardens still remains unsettled.—Good-bye, sir; you will see Mrs. Maqueechy again, once or twice before you have done with her; and in the meantime you take my advice, sir, and in hiring another sick-nurse for your mother-in-law, don't you apply to Mrs. Ogilvie."

And off he walked with our "perfect treasure."

AN OCEAN WAIF.

IN NINE CHAPTERS.—CHAPTER VIII.

I contrived an awning this day, and on we still bounded before the wind, for the breeze held good, keeping as steady as could be. The ladies slept by turns, and watched by turns poor Tom, who seemed, poor fellow, to be getting worse and worse, and we unable to do more than tend him lovingly! and we did, too, for he had been like a brother to me; but all seemed no use, and the poor fellow lay at last quite light-headed. It was no use; I could do no more. I kept up to the very last, and until I felt myself going to sleep every minute, when Miss Mary took the tiller out of my hand, and declaring she could steer, ordered me to lie down.

I didn't want to do so, but I knew I must sleep sooner or later, so I gave her a word or two of instruction, and she promised to call me if there was the least need; and then, with the sun just sinking, I lay down, to be asleep in an instant—a deep sleep, for I was worn out; but I only seemed to have just lain down when I opened my eyes again, to see the sun rising, Miss Mary pale and quiet-looking, with her white hands clasping the tiller, and the little boat still going free before the wind.

I jumped up, for I was savage and ashamed of myself, and asked her why she had not woke me.

"I was only too glad to have been of some use," she said; and then she gave up the tiller; and after Miss Madeline had brought out some of the provision, they both lay down, and had a long sleep.

And so we sailed on for days and days, steering nearly due north, in the hope of making land, or crossing the path of some vessel; and then it fell calm. Poor Tom had been tended with all the care we could give to him, but in spite of all we did, he grew worse and worse; and at last, when he recovered his senses a bit, he was so weak and feeble that we could scarcely catch his words. He talked to us, too, a good deal, and did not seem sorrowful or unhappy, though he said he knew he was going.

"I've been no good to you!" he said to Miss Mary as she was kneeling down weeping by his side one evening when there was not enough air to make the sail flap—"I've been no good to you, but I did what I could.—Put her head a bit more to the west, Jack," he added, and just managed to take hold of Miss Mary's hand, and put it to his lips; and then, "Jack," he says, "you've had it all to do, mate, and you've got it to finish; and I won't ask my old mate to swear, but you'll do what's right by them both, won't you?"

"Ay, lad," I said, "I will," and the water came in my eyes as I said it; for he spoke so that I was afraid something was very nigh indeed.

"Then I shall go easy, Jack, mate, for I am going to give up the number of my mess;" and then he was silent for a bit, till Miss Mary sobbed quite aloud, and said she was going to lose a dear, true friend.

"No," said Tom, smiling sadly; "only a poor sailor, miss, as tried to do his duty by you, and broke down; but Jack here will take my watch for me; and God bless you all, for I don't think I shall see the sun go down again."

"Come, Tom," I says, "try and look up, mate;" but it was done in a cheerless way, and the poor fellow only smiled sadly.

"It was that chap Hicks as did for me, mate," he said; and then he looked hard at me, and we understood one another, for he looked as he did that morning when he told me to wash the blood off my face; and somehow or other I could not help feeling glad I had made an end of the villain who gave my poor mate his death-blow.

And poor Tom lay half-sleeping, half-waking, all that calm night, and I watched by him till just as the sun was beginning to rise, when he seemed to quite wake up, and stared out towards the east, as if he had been called.

"What is it, mate?" I says, lifting his head on my arm, and taking his hand.

"Tell 'em I'm ordered aloft, Jack," he whispered; and then, with quite a smile upon his face, my poor mate closed his eyes, and dropped off into his long sleep; and there, with the sun shining upon his face, I didn't know it, he went off so quietly, till I heard the young ladies sobbing behind me, when I gently laid his head down, and sat at his side with my face in my hands for some time, for Tom Black and I were old shipmates.

It was a sad blow that to fall upon our little ship's company; but I did all as I knew my poor mate would have liked, and as I know he would have done by me. I lashed him up in one of the sheets, with a shot at his feet—one that had been in the boat for ballast—and at sundown, Miss Mary said some prayers over the poor fellow, and then, with a more sorrowful heart than ever I felt before, I hove my poor mate overboard, and then sat down in the bows, feeling as if I didn't mind how soon it was me as was called, till I thought of what I had promised poor Tom, which was to do my duty by them as was in my charge; when I roused up, tried to make all ship-shape, and waited for the wind, which soon came; and away we dashed again all that night.

CHAPTER IX.

"Put her head a bit more to the west, Jack," said poor Tom, and I did; and taking turn and turn with me, Miss Mary gave me a watch below, or, of course, I could not have held up; and one day—the second after poor Tom went—I was dreaming about what was the case, namely, that our supply of water was out, when I felt my arm shook, and, waking up in a fright, I found that Miss Mary had thrown the wind out of the sail, and there she was, looking frightened and horrified-like at a vessel standing right across our course.

"Oh, what shall we do?" she cried.

"Frigate," I says, "man-o'-war," as I took a good look at the stranger.

"What! not the *Star?*" she exclaimed, clasping her hands.

"No," I says, taking the tiller, and running down towards the stranger; but though we were out of water, I could not help doing it with a heavy heart, for it seemed that a great change was coming. But those two loving hearts were together, and when I saw them praying, I kept my eye upon the frigate, and would not shew what was passing in my own mind.

In a couple of hours, we were alongside, and our boat was hoisted on board, and the ladies had a cabin given up to 'em; but it fell to my lot to tell the story of my sufferings, and I did to the captain and some of the officers, for it was a Queen's ship. I saw the captain frown more than once, and he got up in a hasty, fretful way, and began to march up and down the room till I had done, when he says: "My man, we must have you, if you'll stay with us."

A few days after, we were at the Cape, where the captain stopped to land the ladies, of whom I had seen but very little since we went on board the frigate, for they hardly left their cabin, though it was wonderful what respect the officers paid them, and how kind every one was to me, specially when they saw how them two ran to speak to and shake hands with me when they did come on deck.

I thought it all over; what the captain had said, and all about it; and I went to see the ladies once, by their own invitation, while they were staying at a gentleman's house; and I felt more low and sad than ever when I saw them dressed in deep mourning, for it brought all the scenes up again of that unlucky voyage; but I tried to rouse up, for though no scholar, and only a sailor, I knew as it was now time to wake up from a sort of wild dream as I had been in.

So I said "Good-bye" to them, and they both cried at our parting, and made me promise that I would go to see them when I was in England; for I knew that their passage home was taken, and I had made up my mind what was best; and I told the ladies I was going to join the frigate. It was a sad afternoon, that, and they seemed both of them cut to the heart to say "Good-bye," and I was too. But the words were said at last, and they each gave me a little ring to wear upon my handkerchief for their sake; and then, when I was coming away, Miss Madeline first put both her hands in mine, and put her face up as naturally and tenderly as a little child would, and kissed me; and then Miss Mary put both her hands in mine—little white soft hands in my rough horny palms—and she, too, with a childish, loving innocence, and with the tears running down her cheeks, said "Good-bye," and she, too, kissed me as a dear sister would a brother.

There was a feeling as of something choking in my throat as I too tried to say the parting words, for I was now quite awake from the sort of dream that of late had come on me at times, and I hurried away.

We did not return to England for two years after that; but before I had been ashore—a'most as soon as we were in port—there was some one on board as wanted to see me, and I was soon standing face to face with a tall, sharp-eyed, officer-looking gentleman, who told me his name was Captain Horton; and he shook hands heartily, and thanked me for what he called my gallant behaviour to his sisters. He said I was to go and see them, and left the address; and

when he went away told me, and gave it me on paper, that there was fifty pounds for me in one of the banks whenever I liked to draw it; and also, that I was never to want for a friend while he and his sisters lived; and then he shook hands, and left me standing thinking of the bygone, and looking at the packet he left with me.

I took and opened that packet, and there was a handsome silver watch in it, and a five-pound note inside a letter, which was written and signed by Miss Mary; but there was a great deal in it as coming from her sister. It was a letter as I didn't feel it a disgrace to drop a few tears on; and it was like that kiss, such a one as a dear sister would write to her brother. It said I was to go and see them; and there was a good deal in it about the sad past, and what she, too, called my gallant behaviour, when it was nothing more than my duty. She said, too, that they would ever pray for my welfare, and begged that I would wear the watch for their sake, while I was not to think less of it because it was not of gold, for their brother thought that a silver one would be the more suitable present.

And that part somehow seemed to hurt me, for it was like saying a silver one was more suited for a man in my station, which was quite right; but for all that, it seemed to rankle, though I knew at heart as the letter was all tenderly and lovingly meant. But all that went off again; and the letter, and the note in it, and the watch, lie together in my chest; and so sure as I take 'em out and look at them, I get in that dreamy way again; and at times, in the long watches far away at sea, there's a bright face with golden hair floating round it, which seems to smile on me, and it's there too in calm or storm; and when I've hung over the bulwarks thinking, and calling back all the troubles of that sad voyage, I've thought, perhaps, that if I had been something better than a common sailor, what I felt might have been Love.

And now you have it all down, sir, though I can't tell you what became of my old ship, though I've always thought as she went to the bottom, from being badly handled.

THE END.

A FIRESIDE STORY.

TOLD BY THE POKER.

THE hearthrug ought to tell this story, because she had much more to do with it than I had. But, spread out there before the fire from morning to night, she thinks only of making herself comfortable, and I daresay considers it a hardship to be shaken out of her drowsy self-sufficiency even once in the twenty-four hours. So if the story is never told till the hearthrug takes to story-telling, nobody, I fancy, is ever likely to be the better for listening to it. The fender, I am bound to add, is very little more inclined to exert himself unnecessarily. As for the tongs and shovel, they are not quite so indolent, and I wish them joy of the compliment. The hare has not much to be proud of in being able to run faster than the snail. I don't think too much of my own activity therefore, when I say, that but for an occasional waking up on my part, we should fairly be considered a slow and sleepy lot. What I mean by all this is, that it is not out of conceit of my own ability that I now put myself forward to tell this story. I do so simply because I am the only one of our fireside companionship with energy enough in his composition to take so much trouble for the benefit and warning of domineering wives in particular, and in the interests of husbands in general; and I adhere to my original opinion, that the hearthrug ought to have told it.

Should the observation I am going to make at starting happen to be repeated within hearing of any individual following the same calling as myself, he will, I am sure, understand in a moment my feelings when I say that my mistress's face, in fact her person altogether, is such a one as a drawing-room poker reflects with warm and invariable satisfaction. As to her other good qualities, I shall not express my own opinion, which might be open to the suspicion of partiality, but shall report rather that of Mr. John Thomas the footman in his own words, uttered one morning while he was in the act of putting coals on the fire, a moment after she had left the room: "By George! master's a lucky man to have such a wife! If I was sure Amelia Catharine" (upper housemaid, equally good-looking and well-conducted) "would make me such another, blow me if I wouldn't marry her without even asking to see her savings'-bank book!" Mr. John Thomas had lived in many other families, and was therefore qualified to speak knowingly on such a subject. My own impression is, that his admiration of his mistress, in her capacity of wife of his master, is abundantly justified. Of Mr. Silver, my master, I have only to say that, though he is a member of the Stock Exchange and any thing but a saint, he is certainly not at all a bad sort of gentleman. He uses me a little roughly at times; but if it were not that in doing so he makes his wife start unpleasantly on her chair, I should not object to be so treated—should rather like it, in fact. That they are a thoroughly happy pair is what any one would soon discover who had my opportunities for observing them together,—a privilege I have used judiciously, and without a suspicion of impertinence, I hope I may safely say, for very little short of ten years: to be precise, from about the seventh day after their return from their honeymoon trip, when my mistress took formal possession of her home, and sent my rusty predecessor travelling on the way of old iron.

Premising that from my recumbent position on the fender I saw and heard everything I am about to relate, this is my story:

Fires had not yet been begun in the drawing-room, but, from the force of habit I suppose, Mrs. Silver, when there was no company, would sit reading or at work by the side of the fireplace while her husband went for a ride after dinner, which he did very often in the summer twilight. One evening while thus seated alone, I noticed that she paused reflectively, and presently I heard her say:

"No, no; I'll not remind him. To say to him, 'My love, for the first time in ten years you have forgotten the return of our wedding-day,' might sound like a reproach. No; neither tears nor reproaches belong to a day from which date ten years of tranquil happiness. I am sure his forgetfulness arises from no want of love for me. Active and occupied as he is, I know how many other things he has to think of. If he *had* remembered—well, it would have been very delightful. However, since he has chanced to forget, let me reflect that his memory might be as retentive as that of the almanac, and yet he might not love me. No; if I avenge his forgetfulness, it shall be in my own way—by making the fireside of which he is so fond more than usually pleasant to him this evening."

Mrs. Silver smiled and resumed her work, which that evening was a handsome smoking-cap she was embroidering for master; but I certainly saw the beginning of a tear in one of her eyes—the one nearest to me.

"The other day," she continued, meditatively, "he was regretting that the old custom of having hot suppers had passed away. I've a good mind to surprise him with one to-night! Yes, I will do it! But what shall it be?—what is he specially fond of?"

I beg here to be allowed to say that though I have never had any other mistress than the lady whose behaviour I am now describing, a poker who for ten years has been in the very best middle-class society, and who has assisted at the reading aloud of all the fashionable novels and a few of the most interesting divorce cases, is able to understand the exact difference between the best and the worst of wives.

"Ah! I know what I will order!" cried my mistress, after a long pause; "a lobster *rissole*, a roasted chicken, and a lemon pudding. That shall be my great revenge."

She was just about to ring the bell, when the drawing-room door was suddenly opened, and a lady friend of hers, too much agitated to stand on ordinary ceremony, flounced into the room, exclaiming in tones which reminded me of the grating of a file—with which inharmonious noise I had been painfully familiar at an earlier part of my career—for even a poker can attest the truth of the French proverb, *il faut souffrir pour être beau*—

"My dear, I knew you *were* at home, so came up—only for a moment. Don't disturb yourself. I've no time to sit down. I'm boiling over with indignation!"

"Dear me!" replied my mistress.

"Quite as much on your account as on my own, my love!" cried Mrs. Toovey, throwing herself on to the ottoman in the centre of the room, and untying her bonnet-strings almost fiercely.

"It's very good of you, I'm sure," said my mistress.

"You may smile, my love, but it's no smiling matter for all that, I can assure you," cried Mrs. Toovey.

"Not tragic, I hope?"

"I don't know that!" replied Mrs. Toovey, whisking her shawl out of the way, and plunging her hand into the pocket of her dress. "Do you know this hand writing?"

Mrs. Toovey held out a letter to my mistress, as if it had been a cup of poison.

"I've no doubt it's my husband's," said my mistress, without taking it out of Mrs. Toovey's hand.

"Read it, my dear, read it!" cried that indignant lady.

"Pray, excuse me; I see it is addressed to *Mr.* Toovey," my mistress said gently.

"O," cried Mrs. Toovey, "take my word for it, you'll some day repent of indulging in such silly scruples. A husband and wife are one, and the wife cannot too often or too emphatically remind her husband of the fact. At least you'll not refuse to listen to the contents of this atrocious document?"

I don't think any refusal would have induced Mrs. Toovey to defer the reading of the letter for a single moment. She read:

"My dear Job, the supper party of to-night, married and single, may count on me, even to the extent of an adjournment to Cremorne. I shall not say any thing about the affair to my wife, who would be fancying all sorts of dreadful consequences inevitable."

"There, my dear! what do you say to *that?*" demanded Mrs. Toovey, refolding the letter with a spiteful jerkiness of action, and putting it back into her pocket, as if for further use.

"I say that I am much obliged to Mr. Silver for the thoughtful care he had taken to keep me in ignorance of what he fancied it might be unpleasant for me to know."

Mrs. Toovey gave herself so sharp a twist on the ottoman, that I wonder she did not lose her balance and tumble off.

"Really, my dear," she cried, "you—I must say—you make the blood curdle in my veins! You appear so wilfully blind that, positively, if I didn't know you have been married to the man for ten years, I should fancy that you were still in love with your husband."

"Your imagination would not lead you in the least astray," answered my mistress, quietly smiling; "I daresay I ought to be very much ashamed to make such a confession. But don't for a moment suppose that my love for my husband is of the high romantic kind; it never was that. He did not run away with me in a midnight storm of thunder and lightning, and marry me in spite of all the world, his parents and mine included. Time, if it has made me acquainted with his faults, has also taught me to bear with them without disgust, impatience, or weariness. There is nothing to be surprised at in the continuance of such a love as mine—entirely unromantic, jog-trot, you see. Such as it is, the sort of love I now feel for my husband, I hope to feel for him when my hair is gray, without blushing to confess it."

Mrs. Toovey tied her bonnet-strings as tightly as if her chin had been a package of hardware, and she had been cording it for exportation.

"My dear," she cried, "I can hardly trust myself to say what I think; but this I *will* say: if

any wife ever went the way to spoil her husband, you are going exactly that way now. Patience with his faults, indeed! Mr. Toovey, I daresay, would be delighted to find me patient with his—and heaven knows he has enough of them! But that is not *my* nature. I know my duty as a woman of intellect a little better than *that!* Why, my love, I have just come from having a scene with him about this shocking letter of your husband's. I made him confess everything: that after supper the whole party are to go to Cremorne. *Are* they! 'Mr. Toovey,' I said, 'you dare to go, and I'll follow you!' What is the result? Mr. Toovey has learned that when I say a thing I mean it. He has promised me he will not think of going, after my prohibition. Do, my love, let me give you some advice on the way to manage your husband."

"Oh, certainly, if it will afford you any satisfaction to do so," replied my mistress, with a good-natured little laugh.

"You won't laugh, my dear," said Mrs. Toovey, "when you find out, some day, that another woman has carried off your husband's affections; and not only his affections—but his fortune—for that's what commonly happens now. However, I see plainly enough you are prepared to despise my advice, and to laugh at my solemn warning. So be it. But, take my word for it, you'll find too soon what cause you have for repentance."

"I hope not. Really, my dear, you seem determined to imagine my husband a second Lovelace. You forget that he is not a young man of twenty."

"Good heavens, my dear!" exclaimed Mrs. Toovey; "what have their *ages* to do with it?"

"Well, even if that is so," replied my mistress, smiling; my husband is as ungallant a man as you could name."

"To *you*, perhaps, my love," answered the amiable Toovey, with her sweetest smile. If it had been winter, and I had happened to be red-hot, I should have been strongly tempted to throw myself at the lady's feet, and set fire to her at this particular moment.

"To you also, dear; for, you remember, it is only a few days ago you were complaining of his 'shocking want of politeness.'"

"Very likely; but his rudeness to *me* is easily accounted for. It is because I give you what he considers ill advice; which means that he fears to lose the power he now enjoys of tyrannising over you at his pleasure."

"My dear, have you ever written a sensation novel?" asked my mistress, with an arch smile playing about the corners of her mouth.

"What do you mean by that?"

"You have such a vivid imagination; the portrait you have drawn of my husband so much resembles that of a romance-hero," replied my mistress.

"Pray let us drop the subject," cried Mrs. Toovey. "Positively your notions are an outrage to common sense."

"I'm sure, my dear, I hope to be forgiven. You see the scope of my mind is so very prosaic; you'll think so, no doubt, when I tell you that at the moment you came I was busy planning a little unromantic hot supper for my Blue Beard—especially a lemon-pudding, of which I know he is particularly fond."

"You will find you have had your labour for your pains, for he will certainly not be at home to partake of it."

"My own impression is that he *will*," said my mistress gently. "Will you and your husband drop in at ten o'clock?"

"With pleasure, my dear; for I am sure you will be alone, and glad of sympathetic company. Do, my love, allow *me* to remonstrate with your husband, if you don't feel equal to the task yourself."

"No, no; pray don't do any thing of the sort!" cried my mistress hastily. "You are not so well acquainted with my husband as I am, and might do me more harm than good."

"Just as you please, my dear," said Mrs. Toovey, starting to her feet, and pulling her shawl about her shoulders with a spasmodic action of the hands. "Just as you please, of course; though I did not think I was quite such a fool as *you* appear to consider me."

Saying which Mrs. Toovey flounced out of the room even more impetuously than she had flounced into it.

"The foolish creature!" said my mistress, after she was gone; "it is no fault of hers if she hasn't made me very uncomfortable; and all with the best intentions. Those best intentions! What would she not have said if she had known that to-day is my wedding-day? But I am sure my husband does not care to go to this supper-party. He has been drawn into it; and if he had declined to go, might have been rallied on being under petticoat dominion. I know I have only to say to him, 'I wish you would not go out to-night,' but I will not say it, for there is a tyranny of gentleness as well as of unkindness."

She paused for a moment or two; and then, as if an idea had come into her head, rang the bell.

"I *should* like him to remain at home this evening," she continued, "but if he does so, it shall be from the prompting of his own feelings alone. John, bring your master's dressing-gown and cigar-case."

She said this to Mr. John Thomas as she passed out of the drawing-room. In the course of a few minutes her orders had been obeyed. Almost immediately afterwards my master and Mrs. Toovey came into the room together.

"I can't help it, Mr. Silver," she said, "if what I say isn't pleasant for you to hear. I repeat that you are setting my husband a bad example; and I have told him that I will not allow him to have anything to do with the supper-party to-night."

"Very well, my dear madam!" cried my master impatiently; "if Toovey likes you to lead him by the nose, that's his affair; it wouldn't suit me."

"Possibly; but you'll allow me to say that I don't believe there's another woman in the world who would put up with such behaviour as your wife has borne with hitherto. Do not suppose, however, that she will submit to your tyranny forever. You are greatly mistaken if you imagine she will let you go to this scandalous party to-night. Poor thing," she said aside; "I must defend her in spite of herself."

"Confound it, Mrs. Toovey!" cried my master; "I wish you'd mind your own business, and not drive me into saying disagreeable things to you."

"I have only one more remark to make, Mr. Silver," said Mrs. Toovey; "it is to request that you will not hold any further communication with my husband; I'll not have him corrupted by your bad example."

"Go to ——"

I don't think my master named any final destination for Mrs. Toovey, who sailed out of the room with more anger than dignity.

"Hang the woman!" exclaimed my master, ringing the bell, as if that were the order of execution; "I can't imagine how Job Toovey manages to get along with her. What the deuce does she want here?—filling my wife's head with a lot of rubbish, I'll be bound."

Mr. John Thomas came in to answer the bell.

"See that my evening dress is all ready,' said my master sharply.

"Evening dress, sir? mistress told me to bring your dressing-gown—"

"Who is master here? Go instantly and do as I tell you!" cried my master.

"Yes, sir,—of course, sir," cried Mr. John Thomas in a bewildered state of mind, in which condition he hurried from the room.

"I see what has happened," said my master, as soon as he was left alone. "I'm to be put into leading-strings. Not yet. Laura ought by this time to know that I love her with all my heart, but that I am master of my own actions; and, egad, I intend to remain so!"

My mistress came back into the room, and saw at a glance that Mr. Silver had been put out of temper by something. But she said, as if quite unconscious of any thing being the matter:

"Have you enjoyed your ride, love?"

"Pretty well," answered my master, drily. "There is no objection to my going out for an hour's ride in the evening, I hope?"

"Objection?—expressly ordered by your doctor, dear."

"An intention of mine to go out to supper this evening appears to be not equally unobjectionable?"

"My love!"

"At any rate, Mrs. Toovey—"

"My dear Edward," said my mistress, interrupting him; Mrs. Toovey is—Mrs. Toovey; whom, I am sure you will allow, I do not in any way resemble."

"I am happy to say you don't," replied my master; "but why do you encourage her visits?"

"If you recollect, you yourself particularly requested me to cultivate her acquaintance, for the sake of her husband—one of your oldest and most intimate friends."

"I beg your pardon, dear; I was wrong," said my master, a little pettishly. "The fact is, the woman's a tittle-tattler, and may be a mischief-maker."

"She has done nothing but good in the present instance; since I owe to her the knowledge of the pains you had taken to keep from me a something which you thought it would be uncomfortable for me to learn."

My master was evidently embarrassed.

"Then, my darling," he stammered, "my going to this supper does not vex you?"

"In one respect, a little bit; in another, not at all."

"Might I ask you to explain?" inquired my master, relapsing in the smallest degree into his recent ill-humour.

"O," cried my mistress, laughing pleasantly, "you don't expect me to declaim you a speech like a heroine in a melodrama? By the way, that reminds me of something I *can* do. Would you mind putting on your dressing-gown for a moment. I want to see how this cap, which I am embroidering for you, will go with it."

"Would I mind?" cried my master, taking off his walking-coat and slipping into his dressing-gown; "why it's a positive pleasure to find an excuse for putting it on. I should like never to wear anything else."

"That will do, I think," said my mistress, after comparing the new cap with the old dressing-gown. "You may take it off now."

"There's no need for hurry, my love," replied my master, throwing himself comfortably into a favourite chair; "I shall not start for this precious supper for another hour. But you were saying that my going out vexed you in one way, though not in another."

"I meant that I would rather have had you at home this evening, because I had planned a nice little hot supper for you,—a lobster *rissole*, a roasted chicken, and a dainty lemon-pudding."

"A lemon-pudding!" cried my master.

"But now I'll tell you why I do not mind your going out to supper: it's because I know you will get no wine so good as that in your own cellar; no lemon-pudding so nice as the one I've had made for you, even if you get any at all; because you'll have to wear what you call 'a choker' instead of your dressing-gown,—have your ears split with noisy conversation,—be bored to death with frothy politics,—and have no opportunity, however much you may wish for it, for saying to your wife, 'Laura, I love you better than anything else in the world.'"

What my master did is what I really believe every man in his senses would have done under the circumstances. In other words, he put his arm round his wife's waist and kissed her, and went on kissing her while the clock on the mantelpiece slowly and distinctly ticked off thirty seconds.

"You see I *must* go, Laura," he said, not quite *apropos*; "I've promised 'em."

I fancied that I detected just the faintest shade of disappointment fall upon my mistress's face; but she said quite cheerfully:

"By all means, dear; and if you would like to oblige me, there is one particular neck-tie I should like you to wear to-night. I'll fetch it."

She left the room, and in a few minutes she returned with a handsome white neck-tie, beautifully embroidered at the ends.

"Why," exclaimed my master, "this is the one I wore on my wedding-day? And you are really going to let me wear it when you will not even be present?"

"I think you'll own it's very magnanimous of me," answered my mistress, with a very significant twinkle in her eyes; "but quite in accordance with my ordinary heroism of character; and, of course, without a thought in my head of having the lemon-pudding all to myself. But what *are* you doing? I declare you've made a perfect rope of it round your neck!"

"By Jove! I've done worse—I've torn it!" cried my master.

"You have indeed," replied my mistress. "Ah, well, it's ten years old."

"Ten years old? Good heavens, Laura,—what's the day of the month?" demanded my master; and then, without waiting to be answered, he threw himself at her feet, exclaiming: "Beat me, my darling! I deserve it; thoughtless, ungrateful brute that I am! A day that was the beginning of so much happiness entirely forgotten! Put away the dear old neck-tie; I shall sup with you, love. Let them wait for me if they like. Half an hour ago I was an ass, making myself and you uncomfortable for fear some people I don't care a pin for should think I preferred your society to theirs,—ashamed of my own happiness, in fact. Let them think I am governed by my wife! You *do* govern me, Laura; I know it; and it shall always be my glory to own the influence of your goodness, kindness, and gentleness. You are the fountain-head of all my happiness; and if it is ridiculous for a man to confess that he loves his wife better than all else in the world, let me appear the most ridiculous of husbands. Laugh with me, Laura! Why, my darling, you are crying!"

Something at that moment affected my sight; but I have no doubt that what my master said was literally true. An instant later, Mr. John Thomas opened the door to announce the return of Mrs. Toovey, but the lady herself entered before he had time to pronounce her name. She appeared both surprised and disgusted to see that pretty little picture of domestic felicity.

"What!" she exclaimed; "are you not gone?"

"No; I am going to sup at home," replied my master.

"When all the rest are gone?" cried Mrs. Toovey. "Ridiculous!"

"Good heavens!" he cried, bursting into laughter; "there's no being in agreement with you, Mrs. Toovey. Half an hour ago you quarrelled with me for proposing to *go;* now you quarrel with me for *not* going."

"But *your* husband, dear?" inquired my mistress.

"Gone, my love! Gone, in spite of all I could do or say to prevent him, after flying into the most dreadful passion, and terrifying me almost to death. I can't understand it at all. It's as if he had suddenly become quite another man—a lion, my love."

And Mrs. Toovey threatened to go instantaneously into hysterics, in proof of the terrible change that had come over her hitherto submissive "lord and master."

It required a great deal of persuasion on the part of my mistress to get her to give up the idea of the hysterics in the first place, and in the next, of going to Cremorne to confront her peccant husband, "in the shockingest hansom I can find," as she said.

As to my master's suggestion, that in dealing with the wild beasts called husbands, wives may, in some cases, find coaxing do better than coercion, she emphatically pooh-poohed it, even after a second help of the lemon-pudding at supper—nay, even after more than one glass of cold punch.

I will only say in conclusion, that's my story. If the hearthrug could have told it better, why didn't she tell it?

The great secrets of navigation are contained in a small compass.

SONG.

I.

A BREEZE met my love by the way,
And kissed her beautiful eyes;
But before the close of the day
It had spent its being in sighs.

II.

She trode in the fields of May,
On a violet of morning sweet,
And it breathed its life away,
To follow her beautiful feet.

III.

Am I not fonder than they?
And you ask me why I pine:
Would you have me live for a day,
If I may not call her mine?

A. W. B.

A NIGHT ON THE ORTLER SPITZ.

THE following narrative of a perilous adventure on the Tyrolean mountains will be perused with interest by our readers.

Having determined to attempt the ascent of the Ortler Spitz, we at once made inquiries for guides, and, after a lengthened search, we discovered two men, Joseph Schäff and Anton Ortler, with whom we arranged to undertake the difficult enterprise next day. We spent the evening in making preparations for the ascent, laying in a stock of provisions, testing the ropes with which we were to be tied together, obtaining veils and spectacles to preserve our eyes from the dazzling glare of the sun's rays on the snow, and attending to the various other things which are requisite in an attempt of this kind. A considerable amount of interest was excited amongst the visitors at the hotel, and an English lady most obligingly offered her services to us as interpreter. We were roused at one o'clock next morning, having had but a brief period for repose; and after a hurried breakfast we started at 2.30. The guide, Schäff, preceded us with a lantern, to direct our steps through the darkness which prevailed at that hour. Our path lay at first through meadows and then stretched up through tall gloomy pine woods, frequented by bears in winter. Shortly after three o'clock we reached a small chapel, where three jets of icy cold water pour from the bosoms of three saints, sculptured in stone. The little place looked weird enough by the light of our lantern, as we entered it to obtain a draught of the water. Daylight appeared shortly after, and about five o'clock we quitted the woods and mounted a long and wearisome slope, covered with loose stones, which brought us to the foot of the first snow slope. Here we had our crampons fastened on, and though we found them awkward enough on the rocks, they were very useful on ice or hardened snow. We were now fairly on the snows of the Giant Ortler Spitz, the highest mountain in the Tyrol, where English foot had never trod, and we felt some little pleasure in being the first from our land to explore these wild and barely accessible heights.

We pursued our way up the steep slope, which was so soft that no step-cutting was needed to any extent—the axes being only occasionally brought into requisition. About eight o'clock we reached some rocks commanding a grand view of the snowy valleys, glaciers, and heights around, and halted for about an hour, while the guides went forward and cut steps up the ascent of ice which formed the upper portion of the vast *couloir*, up which our difficult path lay. Unfortunately for us, it was quite denuded of fresh or soft snow, and we were obliged to keep as near as possible to some rocks on our right, after leaving which we had rather a trying time. The cliff of ice was awfully steep, so that it appeared nearly perpendicular, and whenever we ventured to take to the rocks, enormous masses of the friable limestone, of which the mountain is composed came away almost at a touch, thundering down with fearful velocity. At one or two places we were obliged to swing ourselves round projecting crags of rock, holding on tightly with our fingers to the narrow ledges which were, however, really safer than the larger rocks, although more difficult to climb on. Of course we were all well roped together, and took every step with great anxiety, since one false one might prove so dangerous. The icy *couloir* formed a sort of frozen wave at the side, so that what I may compare to a chimney was made between it and the rocks up which we had to climb. The strata being very much curved, at one point there was nothing intervening between the slippery ice and a tremendous precipice beneath but a layer of loose stones about two feet wide. This appeared to me the worst place I ever was in yet, as the moment we set our feet on the stones they rattled away beneath our tread—now down the ice cliff on one side of us, now down the precipice at the other, according as our feet gave them direction. We had, as it were, to screw our nerves in a vice so as to give way to no weakness or shrinking.

After two hours of this difficult work we reached a little plain, and after clambering up another stony cliff, we commenced the ascent of some mighty domes of frozen snow and ice, apparently of endless extent and height, split by occasional crevasses, which we crossed carefully without much difficulty. The day was extremely hot, and the labour very great; we had been able to eat or drink very little (feeling for my own part unable to touch anything), and we sometimes despaired of achieving the task we had undertaken. The guides had told us that we should reach the summit at midday, but the great *couloir* being in such a bad state they were quite put out in their calculations. At last, after two hours and a half more of great exertion we stood upon the summit of the Ortler Spitz at 2.30 P.M., just twelve hours after leaving the inn at Trafoi. We had now reached the desired spot, and from the top of this giant of the Tyrol, 13,000 feet above the sea level, we had a panoramic view of the Swiss and Tyrolean mountains in all their glory, which transcended anything I had ever before seen. The day was magnificent, and the peaks and icy valleys around glistened bright as gems in the blazing sunlight.

The top of the Ortler Spitz is a large dome, at the end of which appears a little projection of ice which seemed to us higher than the spot where we stood, although the guides said that the latter was the actual summit. This projection, or tooth of ice, was surrounded by the huge jaws of a yawning chasm, and from its crown to its base ran an overhanging cornice of ice which must be traversed if we should attempt it. It appeared sheer madness to venture at this late hour of the day upon the undertaking, with the prospect of a long downward journey before us, and we decided not to try it.

We now began to descend, although we most reluctantly turned our eyes from the stupendous view before us. We passed readily over the crevasses and the domes until we were on its last slope, when J. slipped and I was dragged along with him; but we were soon pulled back by the stout arms of the guides. The sensation of slipping in such a position was horrible, although only for a moment. The day now began to change, a black cloud appeared in the north, and the Swiss mountains stood out with a portentous clearness that warned us that a storm approached. We now arrived where the descent of the first half of the great ice-cliff commenced, and certainly it was a terrifying place to be in. I led the way while Schäff held the rope round my waist, J. following, fastened in like manner to Ortler. At the brink of the precipice two ravens flew up from the glen beneath, and perched on the rocks close by, maliciously croaking there, and refusing to be driven away—by no means raising our spirits by their appearance.

Sunset now drew near, and the mountains presented an astonishing scene. A huge black curtain of cloud appeared to be drawn across the upper part of the heavens, below which the myriad peaks around literally glowed like spires of lurid flame rising out of a sea of gold. The scene was awful in the extreme, and pen or

pencil could never adequately represent the strange and exciting spectacle which displayed itself to our gaze. It seemed to us more like some weird vision of another world than anything we had ever expected tr see upon this earth of ours. It was near 7 P. M. before we had descended the first half of the *couloir*, and we drew breath more freely when we reached the rocks which I mentioned before as having formed a resting-place during our ascent. The storm now slowly but surely approached, and we hurried on to descend the lower half of the *couloir*. The guides had chosen another way, which was the cause of our being plunged into unforeseen difficulties.

The horrors of the upper passage were renewed, and as the darkness of the coming storm fast closed upon us, it became very difficult to plant our footsteps securely. We were lowered from rock to ice, and clambered from ice to rock, until we thought that the way could not be worse; yet still we could see no sign of the end, and it soon became certain that we must spend the night upon the Ortler Spitz. This was an appalling prospect, unprepared as we were for such an emergency; and well might the boldest heart feel a shudder at encountering the terrors of such a night as we now feared must be before us.

We had come to the worst spot in the descent, where we had to be lowered over a smooth jutting piece of rock, with nothing to hold on by, down to the glassy *couloir*, from whence we had to climb to a little hollow on the side of the mountain. I took one look at the gulf below me, and went down, keeping my self-command with difficulty. It was soon over, however, and I crept round to a ledge overhung by rocks. We were scarcely settled here, when the thunder came crashing around us, and the rain fell heavily. Schäff pointed, for our comfort, to another black chasm into which we had to be lowered, and said he feared there was no chance of our reaching Trafoi that night, in which we all agreed. It would have been certain destruction to have proceeded at that hour, yet the horrors of having to remain on the ledge for the night, almost overpowered us. This ledge or rather sloping shelf of loose stones, was divided into two little hollows, and was covered by the overhanging rock above us, from which, unfortunately, there was a constant dropping of water, so that there was not a dry spot to be found. We could not move forward lest we should fall over the precipice which lay beneath; we could not sleep, for there was no place to lie down in; and we dared not sleep leaning against the rock, as it involved the danger of tumbling over also. We could not walk backwards and forwards, so as to keep ourselves warm with exercise, because the shelf we were on sloped so much, and the loose stones under our feet rolled down the height at every step. We had no food, no drink, no light, and our clothes were saturated with wet by the constant dropping from the rock over us. We were altogether in a most unenviable condition.

The storm now came on in earnest; the thunder rolled like ten thousand pieces of artillery, and the echoes reverberated through the mountains as if they never would end. The lightning was intense—flashing through the dark clouds; now in bright, white zigzags, and then in red streams of flame that lit up the peaks and snow-fields, as though they were on fire, while the great ice-cliff near us glowed as if it had been transmuted into one sheet of lava.

The scene was too awful for one to be able to look at with composure, and I strove to keep my eyes closed, but in vain,—each flash compelled me to open them, and gaze on the brilliant spectacle around. The storm ceased after two hours' duration, and the moon shone out peacefully over the mountains, forming a striking contrast to the preceding scene. We were now shivering with cold in our wet clothes, but providentially there was no wind, otherwise I know not what we should have done. Ten o'clock arrived, and we had been here about two-and-a-half hours. I endeavoured to obtain some sleep leaning on a stone, while Schäff and I kept as close as we could together, in order to get a little warmth into our frames; the other guide had retired into a nook by himself. Eleven o'clock, twelve o'clock came. Oh! how slowly the weary night wore on! Many hours appeared to pass by, and yet when I looked at my watch by the moonlight, frequently not half-an-hour had really elapsed. We felt, however, we must try and win through, as it would never do to give way to despair.

One o'clock, two o'clock passed, and our situation was becoming agonizing. My eyes would not keep open, and yet each moment I was awoke by a frightful forward movement, as if I were about to fall over the cliff. My brief doze appeared full of dreams, generally pleasant ones of home and repose. It was evidently now freezing, our teeth chattered with the cold, and we trembled from head to foot. Not a sound was to be heard save the bound of rocks or stones from the *couloir*, and the occasional roll of an avalanche. Sometimes the stones came tumbling over our heads, but we were well protected from them by the overhanging cliff. At three o'clock the moonlight began to fade away, and everything grew dim. Schäff had gone into the nook with the other guide, and J. and I stood together intently waching for the first glimmer of daybreak over the distant mountain tops. I scarcely moved my eyes now from the heights over which I knew the dawn would appear. At four o'clock we saw the welcome streaks of light, and at five o'clock I roused the guides, but to our horror one of them told us that he feared we could not reach Trafoi that day either. He said he was sick, and certainly looked worse after the night than any of us. The rain that had fallen the evening before had been frozen over the snow of the *couloir*, and had converted it into one smooth glassy surface, down every yard of which steps would have to be cut. As day advanced, Schäff revived, and sent Ortler to cut the steps, and at 7.30 we heard the welcome words, "Now you go forwards," and we braced up our nerves for the struggle, glad at any rate to leave the ledge where we had spent twelve such weary hours.

We had first to walk across the line of steps cut in the ice, until we reached the centre of the *couloir*, when we began to descend. We soon got to the end of these steps, and as fresh ones had to be cut as we descended our progress was slow, and the labour entailed on the leading guide very heavy. The rocks and stones came bounding down all this time,—the large ones with loud crashes, and the smaller ones with a sound like the whizz of a rifle bullet. Our guides were evidently afraid of them, and we hurried on as well as we could, but there was a certain sort of excitement, as they whirled past, probably like that felt by soldiers in action when the bullets are heard flying past them. Schäff got a severe blow in the leg from a stone, and I was struck by a small one in the back. Ortler being exhausted at step-cutting, we tried to walk on the *couloir* without steps, but we had no sooner attempted it than J. (who had lost one of his crampons) slipped on the ice and was sliding away; but happily I had my alpenstock well in at the time, and was enabled to hold him up.

After three hours' hard work we reached some rocks, where we rested, and then we got quickly down the soft snow of the lower slope, at the foot of which we bade adieu to the regions of ice and snow, our way lying now through a steep stony descent, where we met a man who had been despatched by our kind hostess with refreshments for us. The heat was very great by this time, and I could not take either meat or wine; my mouth and throat were literally dry as if they had been made of parchment, in consequence of the long abstinence.

About noon we reached the woods, where unfortunately no water was to be had, and my sufferings from thirst were so great that I could scarcely drag myself along. At two o'clock we reached the little chapel where the three fountains are, and I rushed into it and drank copiously of the delicious water—the first thing that I had tasted with the least benefit for the last thirty-six hours. I was at once restored; the sense of fatigue vanished, and we walked on rapidly to Trafoi, which we reached after an absence of thirty-six hours; twelve occupied in the ascent, five in descending to our night's resting-place, twelve on that awful ledge, and seven in the final descent. The inhabitants had nearly all given up for lost, and the report of it was brought away by some travellers leaving the place. Mr. H., one of the Alpine Club, who was staying at our hotel, felt confident, however, that we were safe. He and his wife had been watching us during the morning making our way on the *couloir*, like flies crawling down a wall, and on our arrival he came forward to greet us most cordially. After a light repast, we parted with our guides, having first proved our sense of their courage and careful attention by a suitable recognition of their services, and then retired to the rest we had so hardly earned. Next morning we awoke thoroughly refreshed, and found ourselves in no way the worse for all the hardships we had endured.

The spot that we spent the night on was about 11,000 feet above the level of the sea, as well as we could calculate. We could scarcely have lived through the night if there had been any wind, unprovided as we were with suitable covering of any kind. We felt truly thankful to Providence for our escape from such imminent peril, and resoved never to risk our lives in a similar undertaking. Next morning we bid farewell to quiet little Trafoi, and walked down the valley to Prad, finding ourselves the objects of some curiosity to the inhabitants, who called us "the Ortler Herren," the news of the ascent having quickly been circulated through the neighbourhood. On our arrival at Prad, the curate and several of the townsfolk called to congratulate us on our escape, and we had to submit to a friendly catechizing on various points of interest connected with the ascent. They told us that telescopes had been brought to bear on us while we were on the mountain, from various places in the surrounding district, as far as Heiden in the upper valley of the Adige. We could not help being impressed by the simple kindly manners of the people in this portion of the Tyrol, unspoiled as they are by that great influx of tourists, which in other parts of the Continent has exercised such a prejudicial effect upon the character of the inhabitants.

"ALL RIGHT AT LAST."

I.

"MY dear," said Captain Smith, of H.M. revenue cutter *Dauntless*, to his wife, looking up from the damp sheet of the *Times*, that lay on the breakfast table beside his well-filled plate, "here it is again."

Pretty, daintly-attired Mrs. Smith, for she was still a comely woman, though her hair was thickly streaked with grey, rose from her seat behind the massive urn at the opposite end of the table, and leaned over her husband's broad shoulder, her eyes following his finger, as he pointed to the few words so strangely interesting to them both.

"God grant that it may be successful this time," she murmured, and then her tears fell fast, for the memory of a day gone by was heavy upon her, and her thoughts had travelled back to a darkened room, where a young mother had pressed her firstborn to her heart. Ah! the changes since.

"Come, come, Rosa," said the captain, "you will make yourself ill. A terrible trial it has been for us, but I almost thought we had learned to say, 'Thy will, not ours, be done.' Darling, it is best—it is best. Dry your tears, and let our trust be in Him who is not only a God at hand, but a God afar off." Then he kissed her very tenderly, for the shadow of the sad past was on him also.

When this petted son was about fourteen years of age, he ran away from home and went to sea, and the distressed parents had heard no tidings of him for years. They thought the pictures of sea-fights hanging in their library, and paintings of grand tempests on the old ocean, had first given their child a liking for the sea. This had

been the great sorrow of their life, but they never spoke of it to one another, unless it was called forth by some little circumstance, such as that which had occurred this morning.

Since the captain had belonged to the revenue service, his home had been at different sea-coast villages, and now he was in the neighbourhood of Estleigh, a narrow line of town running along the shore, and about thirty miles from Burton Cray, where their son was born.

Poor Mrs. Smith! this allusion to her long-lost child quite upset her, and burying her face on her husband's breast, she choked back her sobs, for she knew it distressed him to see her weep. Then, seeking to draw her from her sorrow, he strove to interest her by an account of the smuggling that, in spite of his watchfulness, was carried on at the very spot where he was now stationed. He told her of the fierce encounters which sometimes took place between the revenue men and these lawless beings. "There is a small vessel," he said, "expected to-night, from France. They will try to run her into Gavie's Creek with the tide. The night is moonless, and they think Old Starry, the coast-guard, will soon be overpowered; but I fancy we shall teach them another story. Some of the villains will find themselves elsewhere than drinking over their ill-gotten gains to-night; but we shall have a tussle for it. Well, I must be off, and see if I can get more information as to their whereabouts. Good-bye, Rosa, keep up a good heart;" and with another kiss he left her. And all through that day Mrs. Smith sat with the book open on her knee, fearing and praying for the rough old captain, and letting her thoughts dwell on that past that seemed more than ever present with her.

II.

Very inviting looked the snug room of Dennis Smith's tiny cottage; a bright fire crackled in the old-fashioned grate, and quivered along the floor, and flickered on the ceiling, wrapping in gold the pots of evergreens in the small window, and causing the brass birdcage, whose tenant was chirping to the blaze, to glow and sparkle all over. Nor was this all. That bounding flame was flashing on the glass doors of Jessie's cupboard, till the old china stored there sparkled and looked young again. It rested lovingly for a moment on Jessie's brown-golden hair; it lit up the broad, sunburnt brow of Dennis, as he lay back in the great wooden easy chair, in which nestled the soft cushions she had made for her husband.

Dennis sat looking at the wife of six months with that gloomy, troubled expression of face which had lately made her so unhappy. In vain she chatted nicely of the little nothings which had made up her day: how the black hen was sitting on her eggs at last; how busy she had been in putting their little house to rights; what a famous stew she had prepared for his supper, and how Neighbour Jenkins had admired the handsome shawl he had given her, saying it was red lace, and marvellously good. At this last piece of information his brow clouded more deeply, and he said, snappishly, "Just like all you women. What business had you gossiping with the prying old thing? and what does she know about lace? If it is real, the man must have sold it in a mistake," and then Dennis looked more gloomy and sulky than ever.

Jessie said nothing, for she saw he was out of temper; she prepared the supper, and he came sullenly to the table, and sat there leaning his handsome head on his hand, and looking strangely different from the bright Dennis he sometimes was. All Jessie's brightness was gone too, and the choking sensation in her throat prevented her from eating. "Dennis was so queer sometimes."

When the semblance of a meal was concluded, and Jessie began to put away the supper-things, Dennis rose, and said, "Where's my comforter, Jess? I'm going out."

"But, Dennis," she cried, putting aside the window-curtains, "it begins to snow, don't go out to-night."

"I've business to do," he answered; "and when a fellow's got anything on hand, he can't sit staring at the fire. I shall be back in an hour or two; don't wait up for me;" and, without another word, he was gone.

And Jessie stood at the door shivering and watching him across the lonely common, which lay between the cottage and the town. Then she came in and cried very bitterly, as she wondered what had come over Dennis, and why he was so much away at night now, and she knelt in the light of that quivering fire, and prayed God to shield him from harm, and lead him in the right way; and the dancing flame brightened over her like a glory, and she rose from her knees calmer and stronger. Jessie had been piously brought up, and now the sound of the leaping blaze seemed to form itself into words, and say; "Be strong, and of good courage; fear not, for I am with thee!"

A corner of the black lace shawl, hanging from the drawer, attracted her attention, and as she went to lay it smoothly, she could not resist looking over the pretty things Dennis had given her lately, "but which he did not like her often to wear," he said. As soon as she had duly admired and replaced all her treasures, she seated herself in the great chair her husband had vacated, and soon was sleeping the sweet sleep of a child.

She slept calmly and soundly. On through the night the village clock ran out the hours unheeded, as she lay wrapped in her soft and girl-like slumber; and when she awoke, the cold, dull December morning was seven hours old.

Jessie started to her feet; something was wrong. Ah, yes! she remembered now. Dennis, her beloved, had not returned. Then came the sickening chill, the sinking of heart that one feels on waking to sorrowful life again. In a little while the cold, grey light began to shadow forth the objects in the room. The fire had long since gone out, the ground was covered with snow, and a fog hung in the air. "I must find him," she said to herself. "I will go and ask mother what to do;" but her thoughts were confused, and she could not form any determinate purpose. She hastily wrapped around her a thick shawl, and, locking the street-door behind her, set forth to cross the common. Very dreary it looked—snow everywhere, and the town shut out by the fog. What wonder that Jessie lost her way? She grew sadly frightened, and then she paused, and hearing voices, endeavoured to make her way towards them. She soon found herself at the extreme edge of the common, the rushing, foaming sea was beneath her, and looking down the steep cliff she dimly discerned men fighting. Poor Jessie! her heart stood still with fear; she seemed riveted to the spot.

At length the strife ceased, and the morning sunshine breaking through the fog, Jessie could see the town and the wrong direction she had taken. As she turned to leave the spot, a groan fell upon her ear; once and again she heard it, and looking intently down the cliff she espied a human figure, almost concealed by the bushes that covered the steep, lying about halfway down the declivity. One instant Jessie paused to take counsel with herself, and prayed for help; then she bravely started for the town to try and get some one to assist her. To some sailors loitering about, and to some workmen going forth to their daily toil, she told her tale, and descending the cliff with much difficulty, they brought up the man, who was bleeding copiously from the side. It was her husband, her own dear Dennis!

Now the secret of those dark looks flashed on Jessie. Her husband had been one in the strife between the men of the *Dauntless* and the smugglers. Now she knew how it was she had those sparkling brooches and glossy silks. Very bitterly had she arrived at the knowledge of the truth: but she kept her discovery to herself, and the men thought he had fallen from the cliff.

One of them took off his great coat, and made of it a sort of hammock, in which they placed the wounded man, and so they went on; his wife kept close to his side—at least, as near as she could, just outside the man who was carrying the hammock, and in this way they proceeded to the cottage. No fire was sparkling there now; but, dull and cold as it was, Jessie was glad to lay him on his own bed, and to hear him breathe a deep sigh.

"He lives! he lives!" she exclaimed. "Oh, my husband!" The doctor told her she must keep very calm, for that her husband was dangerously wounded. A severe illness came on, during which patient Jessie was his only nurse.

But revenue officers are not easily satisfied; they are impracticable sort of people, and no sooner did Captain Smith, of the *Dauntless*, hear that a sailor was ill at the lower end of the town, than he thought it would be no harm to try and get a sight of him. It was just possible it was some fellow who had been wounded in the fray by Gavie's Creek. These old captains are shrewd and sharp, and the instinct was not wrong which led him to Jessie's door. The poor thing was frightened to death at the idea of the captain of the revenue cutter, *Dauntless*, being within her doors, but she could not help herself. She told me afterwards she was as if struck senseless, and she let him walk up-stairs into her husband's chamber, without one word of remonstrance or prohibition. The captain's manner was so quiet, and his voice so gentle, that he did not wake the sick man, who was sleeping.

What was it that brought that look into the old man's eyes, and made his lips quiver, as he watched the sleeper? There was the short upper lip, and the well-formed Roman nose, most singularly ressembling the wayward boy he had lost so long ago; and with that sleep so tranquil, the innocent expression of boyhood had come back on Dennis's face.

As Captain Smith watched him gently breathing, he altogether forget the purpose for which he came; but when the sick man moved, and turned, and woke, the likeness seemed to melt away, and he remembered the object of his visit.

"I am not going to commit myself, captain." Dennis said, somewhat archly, and there was that in his voice which sent the blood rushing to the old man's heart.

Now, indeed, he made inquiries, without any purpose of discovering the young man's share in the fray. Who was he? How long was it since he had left home? A hundred persons might be called Smith, but what was his Christian name? "Dennis!" then there was no longer a doubt—the lost one was found, and father and son were soon clasped in each other's arms.

Jessie had been standing at the door all this time, and when Captain Smith said, "This my son was dead, and is alive again; was lost, and is found," she thought he had lost his senses, and fell to sobbing and crying from sheer terror.

The meeting between the mother and that long-lost child is too sacred for many words. It was a joy which found its sweetest expression in tears.

Dennis was very repentant. His father got him an appointment in the Customs, and he prospered more by his industry and patient work than he had ever done by his sin.

As for Jessie, she grew, through this re-union, better and happier than ever, and wiser, too. She could never be persuaded to wear any of her fine things again; and when she was in a handsome house with gilded lamps and flaring gas, she retained her modest simplicity of character, and loved her husband not one whit better than when he sat in the old wooden chair, whose cushions she had wrought for him in the little room, lighted by the quivering flame that sparkled on her gold-brown hair.

A Soldier's Con.—The late field-Marshal Lord Combermere, known in the Peninsular War as Sir Stapylton Cotton, was in command of the troops employed in the reduction of Bhurtpore in 1826. A general officer put the following riddle to his brother officers at mess the night before that famous fortress was stormed:—"Why is the Commander-in-Chief certain to carry Bhurtpore?—Because *Cotton* can never be *worsted*."

ELEGY OF TEARS.

F. SCHUBERT.

Andantino.

mf. Dolce.

pf

p

ff Dim. p Dolce

8va.

1st. 2nd.

f Dim. p