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# BELFORD'S MONTHLY MAGAZINE.

JANUARY, 1878.



SOLOMON ISAACS : \*

A Christmas Story :

BY B. L. FARJEON,

AUTHOR OF 'BLADE O'-GRASS,' 'GRIF,'  
'BREAD AND-CHEESE AND KISSES,'  
'SHADOWS ON THE SNOW,' ETC.

INTRODUCTION.

It is as certain that a number of persons will consider it an anomaly that a Jewess should be the heroine of a Christmas Story as that they are to be commiserated for their limited comprehension of the universal love and charity which animate the Divine Heart. The most beautiful lesson taught by civilization is the lesson of Humanity ; it stands aloof from creeds and dogmas, and far above them ; it sheds a sweet and tender light upon the web of



our social and religious life ; it leads to the performance of deeds which with glad hearts angels record. Such a deed, without reference to missionaries, did Rachel Levy perform. On a cold and bitter Christmas night she took to her bosom an infant whose mother died when the snow was falling. The child was a child of shame, and had but one relation whose protection it could claim—the Poor-House. The mother was a Christian ; Rachel Levy was a Jewess. But Charity, thank God ! is a heavenly, not a theological, crown.

‘What will become of my child?’ murmured the dying mother.

‘I will take care of her,’ said Rachel.

‘God bless you!’ were the woman’s last words. ‘God bless and reward you!’

She died with that prayer on her lips, in the light of the falling snow, and while the Christmas bells were ringing.

It is for this reason I have made Rachel Levy the heroine of my Christmas story.

## CHAPTER I.

INTRODUCES MOSES LEVY AND HIS DAUGHTER RACHEL.



MOSES LEVY’S arm-chair was drawn close to the table, and Moses Levy himself was bending over a large and much dog-eared book, of ancient date, as its yellow leaves and antique binding sufficiently testified. Although the old man’s thoughts were not often fixed upon the ancient volume, he turned its leaves with care and reverence, and as he leant forward in the loose coat which he had worn for half a generation, his appearance was both picturesque and patriarchal. The furrows in his forehead were deep and strongly marked, his eye was clear, his face

benignant, and a long white beard flowed over his breast. Opposite, in strong contrast, sat Rachel Levy, his daughter, in a modern dress, and with a nineteenth century air upon her. It was in its outward aspect a singular association. For notwithstanding that Moses Levy’s coat was cut and sewn about a dozen years ago, it hung about his form in such old-time waves and folds that, observing them, your thoughts must insensibly have wandered into the centuries when his ancestors walked the marts in long gabardines, trading in money, after the fashion of his race ; and perchance to the days when the world was young, even to the time when Jacob tended Laban’s sheep, and tricked the simple ewes with ringstraked rods. Whereas Rachel was in every respect as to the manner born in this year of grace 1877—a modern miss, pure and

simple-minded, with just as many vanities and weaknesses and homely virtues as are necessary to constitute a human, lovable, and loving being. And despite his patriarchal appearance, Moses Levy, as well as Rachel, was English born, and sojourned not in Canaan or Padan-Aram, but on British soil in Spitalfields.

In that locality reside a mixed community of human beings, composed chiefly of English, Irish, and aliens from Holland, Germany and Poland. The land of the Inquisition, also, is well-represented, and dark-eyed descendants of old Spanish families, still bearing the lofty names of their forefathers, hob-a-nob with ragged representatives of Erin, some of whom, no doubt, are as proud of their lineage as their stately and subtler neighbours. No stranger conjunction of civilized races can be found than this, where a Mendoza lives next door to an O'Flanagan, and where Sara, a black-ringed damsel, with rich olive blood in her veins, stands in equal social position with barelegged Biddy O'Toole. They have a very healthy contempt for one another, the Irishman regarding the Jew as something worse than the scum of the earth, and the Jew looking upon the Irishman as an ignorant being of the lowest order. But Spitalfields is fortunate in the possession of one grand virtue, which infuses outward harmony into the discordant elements. Its community is an industrious one, and Jew and Christian alike work hard from sunrise until after sunset. Some rising early in the morning for the markets, go far afield to seek their livelihood, with bags and barrows and baskets, and among these bread-winners are women who trudge the streets with heavy baskets of common glassware on their arms; others stay at home, plodding and stitching through the daylight hours, and often through the night; the click of the sewing machine is a familiar sound, and may be heard in many a house from garret to basement; and what with the coming and going, the early rising and the late retiring, and the continual bustling about, the grass is not allowed to grow under the feet of the busy bees of Spitalfields. They take their pleasures too, in a rational way, and the pits and galleries of the theatres are well-patronized by them, especially on Saturday nights, when the Jewish Sabbath is at an end. As everybody knows, Spitalfields has the reputation of being a common neighbourhood; but poor people must live somewhere—and must certainly have room to die, claiming thereby their inalienable death-right of six feet of land: in which heritage, quality, whether the soil is in St. Giles's or St. James's, is of no consideration to the inhabitant. And Spitalfields, if it chooses, can hold up its head in a worldly way, for there is an astonishing secret connected with it which shall now be disclosed. Poor as it has the reputation of being, it contains persons who keep accounts at the Bank of England, and who, if they died to-morrow, would leave thousands of pounds behind them. This class is composed almost entirely of Jews, who moving in the sphere best suited to them, pass their days in comfort until, urged by their own swelling importance, or by the ambition of their wives and daughters, they plunge into more fashionable quarters and become miserable; making room for others, who in the course of time, will tread in their footsteps, and do likewise. There is something of mathematical precision in the manner in which these fortunate ones ascend the golden ladder. Chance plays no part in the achievement, and their prosperity is solely due to the wise application of intellectual forces. Step by step, they slowly and



surely mount. It would almost appear as though they were impregnated with the qualities possessed by loadstone for iron and steel, for truly their natures are goldenly magnetic.

Moses Levy and his daughter did not belong to this magnetic club, and were far from rich in the world's goods. But although they were as poor as synagogue mice, it would be difficult to have found in all London two happier persons. The rooms in which they lived in Spital-fields were on the second floor, and the armchair in which of an evening Moses Levy read and dozed and enjoyed his well-earned ease had been picked up at auction for a song—as indeed was the case with pretty well all the other furniture in the apartment. Everything in the place was second-hand, and looked it.

Rachel was a waistcoat-maker, and Moses Levy was a dealer in old clothes.

Regularly every morning, at a little past eight o'clock—so as to catch any stray worm of a servant who had a master's old clothes to dispose of—did Moses Levy commence his business with his warehouse on his back, going forth like a tortoise, which with his curved back and slow gait, he somewhat resembled indeed. His hour for rising was seven, and after he washed he bound his forehead and arm with leathern straps, the knobs of which contained a parchment scroll on which was written a quotation from the sacred books of the Law, and said his prayers, with his face to the east, swaying his body gently backwards and forwards, and softly beating his breast, the while he repeated the morning service in a low, sing-song voice. Never once in his life had he neglected the performance of this sacred duty, and had he commenced the business of the day without saying the prayer, 'Hear, O Israel!' he would have expected a curse to fall upon him. Then he kissed his daughter, who, while he was at his prayers, had prepared the morning meal, and sat down with her to breakfast, first dipping for her and for himself two small pieces of dry bread in salt, with which, with the customary grace for the fruits of the earth, the meals were invariably commenced. The breakfast seldom ever consisted of anything but coffee and bread and butter, except on Saturday morning, when, in honour of the Sabbath there was fried fish, or perhaps a bit of fish stewed in white or brown gravy, with onions cunningly cooked and made deliciously tasty with lemon, and emitting so wondrous an odour that, in anticipation of the sweet and savoury meal, Moses Levy's eyes would glisten like diamonds. Rachel's face, at that sign of satisfaction from her father, was worth seeing; to give him pleasure in such simple ways was a great delight to her. These were the Sabbath breakfasts; but occasionally, even on week-days, Rachel would gladden the old man with a herring or a Dutch cucumber pickled in brine, which, with a full appreciation of the good things of earth and sea, he would eat with a grateful heart. Thus refreshed and strengthened, and with two or three slices of bread-and-butter, or of meat and dry bread, wrapped in paper for his midday meal, Moses Levy would embrace his daughter, and issue forth with his warehouse on his back and his mind occupied with the serious business of the day.

Be sure that from the moment he went out to the moment he returned, his mind was never so fully occupied that the image of his Rachel was absent from it. A very pure and faithful love existed between these two.

Of course you understand that by his warehouse, I mean his rusty black bag, in which he deposited such articles of clothing as he was fortunate enough to purchase during the day. This bag had been the depository of his worldly hopes and fears for at least a generation, being older in his service than Rachel was in his love; and when he began his day's wanderings it was empty, and hung disconsolately flat over his shoulder. It was often empty when, heart-sore and foot-sore, he returned to his home in the evening, and then his face would be sad and his mind filled with misgivings for the future. For he lived so literally from hand to mouth, that to pass two or three days without making profits was a serious affair for the old man. But there were evenings when he returned with his bag quite filled, and wearing perhaps a hat or two in addition to his own. Many

persons laughed at the nervous, excited figure of this modern patriarch, and at the pyramid of hats on his head, and saluted him disrespectfully as he shambled along; but he cared not a whit for their light looks and words. He had grown accustomed to them. Time was when their jeers, directed always against his religion, used to sting him, and cause his nerves to quiver with anguish; and during his early manhood he had inwardly rebelled at the persecution. He was wiser now, and the softest breeze affected him more than such revilings. Nay, he would sometimes receive them with pleasant nods, which expressed, 'Oh, yes, you are right, quite right, and I am really pleased to hear you speak in that manner!' Thus did he rob these arrows of their sting, and, when his bag was filled would trudge back to Spitalfields with an exultant heart and with smiles upon his lips. 'They don't know,' he would think, 'they don't know that my Rachel is waiting at home for me;' and he would hug himself at this triumph over his enemies, and shamble along the faster. His usual walk was along certain streets in the west end of London, where he and

his monotonous cry of 'Clo', old clo'!' were as well-known as the beggar-woman from the slums of Westminster, whose harsh, croaking voice has been heard any time these last ten years, singing, 'Bonny Mary of Argyll,' with a perennial baby in her arms, doomed by an amazing and inexorable law never to reach the age of twelve months. It was doubtless a deep and harrowing affliction that caused this woman's face to be perpetually blotched and pimply, and her eyes to stare almost out of her head, and that induced her never to appear in the west-



end streets unless it blew a hurricane, or rained 'heavens hard,' as the saying is. Then would she shiver and sigh, and, despite her blotches and pimples, presented so pitiable a spectacle as to draw practical relief from a host of tender hearts. Many a compassionate look and many a copper were given to this woman, but seldom was a kind thought bestowed upon the stooping figure of the old clo' buyer. It did not trouble him. He did his work to the best of his ability, driving a good bargain when he could, and, when he was more than usually harassed, thought of his dear daughter Rachel waiting at home for him, and thanked God for all things.

And now on this evening they were sitting together as described at the commencement of the chapter. Tea was over, and cleared away, and father and daughter had been silent for perhaps a quarter-of-an-hour. Moses Levy's thoughts belonged entirely to the lower earth; Rachel's were spiritual, and tinged with heavenly colour. The old man was engaged in nothing more elevating than a studious calculation of the value of certain old trousers and waistcoats he had purchased that day. He had given so much for them; he would sell them for so much—for not a penny less, no, not a penny. He reckoned up his profits on his day's purchases at not less than nine or ten shillings, and he was happy in the contemplation. Rachel's musings were of a different character; the sun was shining brightly on her young life, and the sweetly-pensive light in her eyes indicated that her thoughts were fixed on some loved object, the contemplation of which brought joy to her heart. Her needle worked blithely, and now and then a happy sigh escaped her breast. Presently she arrested the current of her musings by a little neighbourly news.

'We've had such an excitement in the neighbourhood, father!'

'Ah, my dear,' said the old man, looking up from his book, which was in a language few can understand.

'Everybody's been talking of it all day long.'

'Nothing bad, I hope, Rachel?'

'Oh no. It is about Mrs. Lilienthal. Didn't you hear as you came home?'

'No, my dear; no one told me anything. I was too much in a hurry, to stop and gossip. Go on Rachel. Mrs. Lilienthal?'

'Two things happened to her to-day, father.'

'Two things! Well, now!' In a tone which implied that, without further explanation, news of the first importance had already been disclosed.

'One, a good thing—the other, a thing you will be sorry to hear, though it turned out well. Quite sudden and unexpected, Mrs. Lilienthal's old father, Moshé, arrived here from Jerusalem this morning.'

Moses Levy murmured under his breath a few words in Hebrew referring to the ancient city, which being translated, run, 'May it soon be rebuilt and established!' A singular fiction attaches to this and some other devout aspirations indulged in by the children of Israel at stated times in their prayers, especially during their festivals. It represents them as being animated by a burning desire to become the repossessors of the Holy City, so that, without a day's delay, they may fly thither from all quarters of the earth, and there take up their abode. Whereas nothing could possibly be more repugnant to their wishes than the fulfil-

ment of these sentimental aspirations. They would account it the greatest misfortune of their lives to be compelled to escape from the captivity in which they are languishing, and not unfrequently a sly smile plays about their lips as the devout words are uttered in the synagogues. They joke about it, too, and merrily say to each other, as they fold their garments of fringes and lay aside their prayer-books, 'Oh, yes, we'll all go back—on donkeys! As for me, I am dying to go back! Are not you?' But except in the way of making light of a prayer—if that is worth mentioning—these unmeaning sighings for a heaven they would strive hard to avoid do little harm: they certainly serve the purpose of amusing the worshippers, and that is something, in church or synagogue.

'Old Moshé!' said Moses Levy, aloud. 'Well, well! That is an astonishing thing. Simkha Lilienthal has often talked to me about him.'

'Such an old, old man, father! Ninety odd, they say, and almost bent double. He has come over to live with Mrs. Lilienthal, and he never told her he was coming.'

'Now, what made him do that, Rachel?'

'He had an idea that Mrs. Lilienthal was very rich, and that she lived in a beautiful house, because she sent him a little money now and then.'

'Yes, yes; she's a good soul is Simkha.'

'Old Moshé can't speak a word of English, and he had Mrs. Lilienthal's name and address written on a piece of parchment. He showed this to people as he walked along, but the name was in Hebrew, and the address was almost rubbed out, so that they couldn't make anything of it. At last a soldier stopped him, and looked at the paper and brought Moshé as far as Houndsditch. Mrs. Pinto says the soldier must be a Jew, or he wouldn't have understood that it was Hebrew on the parchment. It was kind of him to help the old man.'

Moses Levy stroked his beard contemplatively.

'It was a good action, my dear; but I never heard of a Jewish soldier in England. I didn't think there was such a thing.'

'Oh, yes. Why, there was young Capua that ran away and enlisted twelve years ago; and Joshua Emanuel that went to fight in India. But I mustn't forget Moshé. When the soldier left him in Houndsditch, he got plenty of people to direct him, and he kept walking and walking till he found himself in Bevis Marks, by the Spanish synagogue. There he saw Sholem the beggar—'

'Rachel,' interrupted Moses Levy, with an air of vexation, 'whenever I hear Sholem's name mentioned, it makes me ashamed of myself. I don't believe that man has ever done a day's work in his life. He does nothing but hang about public-houses and drink rum. I think he must drink a pint a day.'

'Well, he brought old Moshé to Spitalfields, but couldn't show him where Mrs. Lilienthal lives. Before he went away he asked Moshé for money; but Moshé didn't understand him, and he gave Sholem a blessing instead.' (This picture caused Moses Levy to laugh for full five minutes, and when he had recovered and wiped his eyes Rachel proceeded with her story.) 'Then old Moshé walked about calling "Simkha! Simkha!" That made people walk after him, and there was quite a crowd till he got to Mrs. Simon's shop. She thought of



Simkha Lilienthal at once, and she took the old man to the house ; he went up stairs crying as loud as he could " Simkha ! Simkha ! " Mrs. Lilienthal thought it was his spirit calling out to her, and when he came into the room she fainted away. No wonder, poor thing ; her hands are full of trouble. Mr. Lilienthal had been ill for a month, and not able to work, and three of the children are down with the whooping-cough. ' You've been there, Rachel. '

' Yes ; there's no fear of my catching it, for I've had whooping-cough, you remember. Since the children have been ill, I run in every morning for an hour, and help Mrs. Lilienthal to tidy up her room. Old Moshé could not have come at a worse time, for Mrs. Lilienthal was behindhand with her rent, and the brokers had just been put in. When he was made to understand that something was wrong, Moshé took the man in possession into a corner, and gave him a long blessing, thinking that would make it all right, and then the man would go away satisfied ; but of course he didn't. '

' I didn't know, ' said Moses Levy gravely, ' that Simkha Lilienthal was so badly off. '

' Nobody knew. She's a quiet woman when she's in trouble, and keeps everything to herself. But when she fell down in a faint, and the children began to scream, Mrs. Cohen and Mrs. Simons ran into the room and brought her to, and then they discovered what distress she was in. They went out at once and made a collection for Mrs. Lilienthal, Mrs. Cohen taking old Moshé with her. And what do you think ? In less than two hours they collected two pounds seven—enough to pay

the rent, and something over. While they were gone, Mrs. Abrahams cooked some sausage and cabbage; and when I left Mrs. Lienthal's this afternoon, all the family were eating their dinner, old Moshé sitting at the top of the table, as happy as king and queens.'

'Good—good—good!' murmured Moses Levy, rubbing his hands in satisfaction at this pleasant termination to the story.

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## CHAPTER II.

### A COLD BRIGHT NIGHT.

RACHEL, looking at the clock, put her work aside, and saying, 'I sha'n't be long, father,' went out of the room.

It was a cold, bright, starlit night, Christmas being but a few days off. With brisk steps Rachel walked to a baker's shop in an adjacent street, and bought two fresh twopenny loaves. There were not many persons about, and certainly not one with a lighter heart than this young girl, who appeared to find in the cold sweet air cause for grateful feeling. Her cheeks hardened, and a brighter colour came into them. She did not say, but thought, how beautiful the night was. The stars seemed to smile upon her, the air to kiss her, the night to enfold her with happiness. She counted the strokes of the hour proclaimed by Spitalfields Church. It was seven o'clock.

'Leon will not be home till eight,' she whispered to herself, and smiled back on the stars, and kissed the wind, and breathed happiness into the night. Wooed by the sweetness of the time, she prolonged her walk, and her steps fell with a cheerful sound on the pavement. On her way round Bishopsgate and Threadneedle Streets and the Royal Exchange in the street of Gracechurch, by which road she returned to Spitalfields, she met but three persons who diverted her thoughts from the happy current in which they were moving. The first of these was a very little spare old man, who from Sunday till Friday obtained a scant living by selling watercresses in spring and periwinkles in winter; from sunset on Friday until Saturday evening he attended to the fires and candles of a few Jews in the neighbourhood of Spitalfields, who were too poor to keep servants, and who were not allowed by the laws of their religion to touch fire even with their breath on the Sabbath. Barney—which is, singularly enough, a name common to Irishman and Israelite—was a favourite in Spitalfields, and the penny he earned from each of the twelve or fourteen households he attended on the Jewish Sabbath was cheerfully paid and contentedly received. A busy time he had of it going his rounds on Friday nights to snuff the candles and poke the fires of his Jewish patrons, among whom Moses Levy was the one he honoured most. For Rachel's sake. She had been kind to the old watercress-seller in times of trouble, and had attended him in sickness, and indeed had so won Barney's heart by her sweet ways that had she been inclined to proselytise (a luxury forbidden by her race) he would have been the first to fall into the theological trap. Rachel met Barney in Bishopsgate Street. He had his basket of periwinkles on his arm, and the cry of his wares was piercing the air with its long shrill sound.

She gave him a nod and a smile, which caused his eyes to twinkle and, it is to be hoped, imparted something of music to his voice. Further on, in the shade of Threadneedle Street, close to the great money magazines which line that wonderful thoroughfare, Rachel saw Solomon Isaacs. He was slouching slowly along, so deep in thought that he did not observe the young girl, who did not care to disturb his musings. It was in Bishopsgate also, opposite the little church with its pretty bit of garden for the people to sit in, and its miniature fountain to light the fire of fancy in the minds of those who had never travelled out of London streets, that Rachel's attention was attracted to a figure which she thought of many times before it crossed her line of life again—the figure of a woman, young and plain-looking, walking very slowly in the gutter, singing in a vacant and apparently aimless way some lines about Jacob's Ladder. It was in truth a Christmas carol, but it was not that, nor any suspicion of melody in the woman's voice, nor even the frequent reference to a name so familiar to her, that drew Rachel after the singer. What touched her heart and made her sad with pity and compassion was the woebegone manner of the woman, who crawled along as though she had no hope of meeting with sympathy from human being. Something also in the woman's face—a look of want, of dumb despair, of fear of the morrow, and at the same time of recklessness of what the morrow might bring to her desolate soul. Ever and again she raised her face to the light, and seeing no one pause to listen, her eyes sought the earth again as she sighed forth the carol of Christmas. She was a common woman commonly dressed, with no kind of beauty about her to attract those whose sympathies are drawn through their artistic sense. But that she was in want was apparent to Rachel, whose heart was never unmoved at the sight of suffering. She placed her hand on the woman's shoulder; the woman turned, wearily, wonderingly, and then Rachel saw more clearly the pinched look in her face that told the tale of hunger and distress.

'You are hungry,' said Rachel.

'Yes, miss.'

She spoke with a country accent.

'You are not a Londoner, then?'

'No, miss; I am from Worcester.'

'Have you no home?'

'None—nowhere.'

'Here is bread for you.'

The woman snatched it from Rachel's hand, and began to eat; but hungry as she was, she spat the first mouthful into the road.

'I am fairly in want, miss; but I need something more than bread.'

'What?'

'Something to drink, for the Lord's sake!'

Rachel had in her purse a shilling and a few coppers. She gave the silver piece to the woman.

'This will buy you what you want, and get you a bed for a night or two. I hope a happier time will come to you.'

The tender voice, the sweet compassionate face, more than the money, filled the woman's eyes with tears.

'God bless you, miss! What is your name, that I may never forget it?'

‘ Rachel Levy.’

The woman recoiled a step.

‘ A Jewess ! ’ she cried, in a scornful tone.

‘ Yes.’

‘ And you’re the only one that’s took pity on me in all this big city ! Rachel Levy—oh, I’ll never forget your name ! I’d give you your money back if I dared. So I must thank you, I suppose, and stomach it the best way I can.’

With these words, and with a motion of her hand denoting that she did not desire further companionship, the woman walked away—on the pavement this time, as having the right now with money in her possession.

Rachel not knowing what reply to make and having other matters in her mind, sped homewards to Spitalfields, stopping only at a baker’s to buy a fresh loaf. Moses Levy was still poring over his book. She told him the adventure, softening the woman’s last words ; and he approved, and said, ‘ You did right.’ Then there was silence in the room. Rachel proceeded with her work, but her mind was wandering from it evidently. She paused frequently, and her needle was often idle, as she listened for an expected sound. Presently there was a quick step upon the stairs, so quick and eager that Rachel made two or three false stitches—which perhaps was the cause of the blood rushing to her face. They are somewhat awkward, these sudden interruptions to one’s work. Old Moses Levy, also, heard the steps upon the stairs, and the sound brought a slight fluttering of pleasure to his heart. The door opened, after the most unceremonious of taps, and Leon Isaacs made his appearance. Rachel, who had started to her feet, smiled an affectionate welcome, and when Leon took her hand in his he did not let it go.

These two young persons were lovers.

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### CHAPTER III.

#### A LEARNED CONVERSATION ON THE PROPER MODE OF FRYING FISH.

RACHEL and Leon stood in silence, looking into each other’s eyes.

‘ Ah, ah ! ’ chuckled Moses Levy slyly, to himself ; ‘ Old Moses Levy is nobody now—nobody now ! ’

But he did not seem pained by the reflection, for he said aloud—the old hypocrite !—in his most cordial tone,

‘ Glad to see you, Leon, glad to see you ! ’

‘ Thank you, Mr. Levy,’ said Leon Isaacs, not casting a glance in the direction of the old man, and quite forgetting to relinquish Rachel’s hand.

‘ All well at home, Leon ? ’ asked Moses Levy.

‘ Quite well, thank you,’ replied Leon, in an absent-minded way.

‘ Things right at the shop, Leon ? ’ continued Moses Levy, deeming it necessary to make a show of conversation.

‘ Yes, Mr. Levy.’ And then suddenly remembering himself, ‘ How’s business with you, Mr. Levy ? ’

‘ Nothing to complain of, thank God.’

‘ Leon, have you had tea ? ’ asked Rachel.



‘No ; I came home only five minutes ago, and I ran here at once.’

Rachel’s eyes sparkled at this proof of eagerness on the part of her lover, and, without another word, she released her fingers, and taking a cloth from a drawer, spread it over a corner of the table. Leon’s eyes followed her swift and clever movements with admiration.

‘If we had known,’ said Moses Levy, his loving heart stirred to deeper gratitude by Rachel’s happy manner, ‘we would have waited tea for you.’

‘I am glad you did not put yourself out for me, Mr. Levy.’

The kettle was nearly boiling by the side of the fire, and within five minutes Leon was sitting down to tea, with Rachel sitting very close to him. Rachel’s hand cut the fresh loaf she had bought—it was evident now for whom—and Rachel’s hand poured out the tea for him ; and Moses Levy laughed silently as he saw Leon cutting, with great satisfaction, into a fine fried sole : he and Rachel having had plain bread and butter for tea. Rachel, after placing the fried sole on the table, had, in passing to the cupboard, rested her hand lightly on her father’s shoulder, and had given him an affectionate apologetic glance ; and he, in response, had pressed his old brown palm on her small white hand, in loving approval. It was a slight action, but it was well understood between them.

Leon was the only son of Solomon Isaacs, whose name supplies the title to this story, and was employed in a fancy warehouse in Houndsditch. Commencing as an errand-boy, he had gradually risen to the position of salesman, and expected soon to be engaged as one of the commercial travellers of the firm, in which capacity he hoped to be able to save, in twelve months, sufficient money to furnish the nest which Rachel was to adorn. He was a handsome young fellow, with good manners and a good address. Here is his portrait in brief : Short forehead, slightly projecting below ; dark-brown eyes, neither small nor large, full of fire and vivacity ; compressed eyebrows, clearly defined, near to the eyes ; well-formed nose, with wide nostrils, breathing sensibility ; large mouth, with well-proportioned lips, showing power ; shapely teeth ; firmly-moulded chin. Certainly a well-looking man. All the marriageable females in Spitalfields said Rachel was a lucky girl. Rachel thought so too.

Leon was also to be envied for having won the love of such a girl as Rachel Levy. She is not presented to you as a heroine, in the way that word is generally understood, or as a being possessing exceptional virtues. Nor is it desired that you should look upon Leon as a hero. It was his good fortune to be fitted for the sphere in which he was born, and to be able to adapt himself to any reasonable level to which he might raise himself ; and if, in his career, he is guilty of an act of meanness, you must not judge him too harshly, remembering how liable human nature is to err ; and if he commit himself to an act of unselfish generosity, or even something higher, you must not lift him out of the ordinary scale of human beings. The commonest among us is equal to an act of nobility, should occasion call for it ; the highest among us is equal to an act of baseness, should temptation assail him. To strive to keep in the right path—that is the duty of all ; and those who best succeed, in the face of the miserable promptings and cravings of the spirit, are best entitled to our esteem. As for Rachel, she was simply an ordi-

nary girl, pretty, good, and virtuous. I declare, upon my honour, in the teeth of the spreading heresy that folly, fashion, and frippery are making havoc in the character of the modern woman, that I believe such girls as Rachel abound, and move within the circle of every man's acquaintance. Vanities of course they have, and I don't envy the man who desires a woman without them. Heaven keep me from such a lump of perfection! To be mated with a woman without whims and whams, without vanities and weaknesses, without human hankerings after this and that, without even a little bit of temper of her own, would render my life a misery. No perfect saint for me. Give me a woman, sweet and loving often, and sometimes wayward; a woman the sunshine of whose face is on a just occasion clouded; a woman with a woman's heart in all its mortal imperfection. When my soul wends its way to another and, let us hope, a better world, I will put up with an angel. But down here, such a girl as Rachel is good enough—for me or any man. She was amiable and loving, and was fond of a new ribbon and a new dress; she liked amusement, and was proud of her white even teeth and of her white soft hands—she took infinite pains to keep them so, despite her work, and who shall blame her? She had a trick of smiling softly to herself when she was pleased—which was natural; and as she displayed her teeth when she smiled, she had a trick of being pleased at the opportunity of showing how beautiful they were—which was natural also. She was pretty, and she knew it, and was glad of it; and the gladness that caused her heart to throb, and stirred her mind with innocent vanity, had so much of the quality of natural gratitude in it, that it was almost as good as a prayer.

With Rachel sitting close to him, and her little hand pleading for the shelter of his, Leon's meal was the sweetest he had ever tasted. And how the moments flew! Tick—tick—tick! went the clock, and seemed to say, 'Be happy, young people, be happy. Time flies. Be happy and true to each other.' Happiness was theirs, and no thought to dim the bright shield of truth and constancy disturbed their minds. There was no discord in their souls or their surroundings. Love made everything harmonious: the tick of the old clock, the humble room, the cat lying at full length on the faded hearthrug, blinking her eyes in solemn and sleepy approval, the sounds of the people in the streets calling out to each other—nothing was out of place or out of season. That such an old rabbi as Moses Levy looked, in his loose coat and long white beard, should know anything of the ins and outs of billing and cooing, and should so sympathise with such doings as to derive infinite delight from them, appeared inconceivable. But it was not, and sly Moses Levy knew perfectly well that the lovers' hands were locked in close embrace beneath the tablecloth, and his beaming face proclaimed that the proceeding met with his entire approval.

'Rachel fried that fish, Leon,' said the old man, without attempting to lead up to the subject.

Artful old fellow! Cunning old patriarch! To so try to enhance the value of his one fair daughter in the eyes of her lover! But the Jews were ever an artful race.

'I know she did,' said Leon.

Rachel looked up at him. She had not told him.

'I know by the taste,' he said, with a fond pressure of his girl's hand.

‘Of course you do, Leon—of course you do,’ rejoined Moses Levy, ready to agree to anything.

‘When you get familiar with anyone’s frying,’ said Leon, speaking with an air of authority, ‘you can never mistake it. It is like a voice or a footstep one is in the habit of hearing. The moment I put a piece into my mouth, I say to myself, “Ah, that is So-and-so’s frying, or So-and-so’s.” But I needn’t wait to taste it. I know it by its very look.’

‘That is quite true, Leon,’ acquiesced Moses Levy; ‘it can be known so. I’ve remarked it myself.’

‘There are so many different ways of frying,’ continued Leon. ‘Some women are born with a genius for it, while others could never learn. You can put a finer flavour into the fish, or take all the flavour out of it, even in the way you turn it in the pan.’

‘It’s the way the batter is mixed,’ said Moses Levy, entering with zest into the subject. ‘And the eggs! there mustn’t be any suspicion about the eggs! One musty egg will spoil a whole frying.’

‘Everything must be done perfectly. The very cloth in which the fish is dried before it is put in the pan must be newly washed and aired. It gives sweetness to the fish.’

‘You are quite right, Leon. Rachel is very particular about these things.’

‘Then you can’t be too careful how you dip the slices in the batter, not to leave too much or too little on the skin. Then the proper way to lay it in the pan—it should be done gently, and even with delicacy.’

‘Bravo, Leon, bravo!’

‘Then the hands that do all this,’ said Leon, toying with Rachel’s fingers, with a positive conviction that for the magical frying of fish, or for any other magical operation, there were no fingers in the world to compare with hers—they must be dainty hands, light, and soft, and nimble. There is a kind of spiritual influence in some finger-tips that can accomplish wonders.’

‘And above all,’ said Moses Levy, with enthusiasm, ‘the oil! That is the grand secret of frying—the oil!’

‘But everything would be wasted without the right hands and the right spirit. One must really take pleasure in it to do it well, and to turn out the fish at last with the skin just enough browned, and not lying too close to the flesh. I do believe,’ added Leon, with a light laugh, ‘that the fish know when they are properly handled, and are grateful when they are served up in a handsome way: as they deserve to be, for nothing in the world is sweeter than sweet fish sweetly cooked.’

His laugh was echoed by Moses Levy. Rachel took no part in the conversation, but had it been of a vital character she could not have listened with deeper gravity and attention.

‘I don’t know,’ said Leon, with satisfied nods, ‘whose frying I like best, Rachel’s or mother’s. My mother, you know, Mr. Levy, is a famous cook.’

‘Rachel’s mother,’ said Moses Levy, with a sigh, ‘God rest her soul!—’

‘God rest her soul!’ murmured Leon; and Rachel also breathed a benediction.

‘—Was the best cook in the world,’ continued Moses Levy. ‘That was admitted by everybody; she took a pride in it. And Rachel learnt

from her. There were some things she did that couldn't be approached, and she used to say, "My little Rachel's going to beat her mother when she gets to be a woman."—Rachel, I think Leon has never tasted your sweet and sour French beans.'

Leon answered for Rachel. 'No, Mr. Levy, I haven't.'

'It's wonderful—wonderful! There's nothing in the world to compare with it. Leon, your mother couldn't beat Rachel in that!'

Moses Levy smacked his lips, and his nostrils quivered. He had had a sufficient tea, but he was fond of good eating and drinking, and he would have dearly liked the dish he spoke of for supper.

'Father doesn't care for sweet and sour French beans,' said Leon, 'and mother never makes a dish that he doesn't like. I am very fond of it.'

'We'll have it for dinner next Sunday, and you must come. Don't forget, Rachel.'

'No, father.'

'There are no cooks like Jewish cooks,' observed Leon.

'That's true,' acquiesced Moses Levy.

'There isn't a Christian woman in England,' pursued Leon, whose share in this dialogue proved that he also was fond of the good things of the table—as, indeed, all Jews are—'who knows how to treat fish as it ought to be treated. It is really sinful, the way they ill-use it. I tell you what, Rachel. There are two dishes I am very fond of that mother will teach you how to make—meat and boiled chestnuts, and meat cooked with raisins—a raisin stew. What do you say to that, Mr. Levy?'

'A lovely dish!' exclaimed Moses Levy, with an enthusiastic sniff; 'a lovely dish! Rachel will be able to cook them beautifully. She only wants telling, Leon.'

Rachel smiled, and made mental notes. It was her way. Then, after quietly learning her lesson, she would make use of it, and, for reward, be satisfied with an affectionate look or word.

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## CHAPTER IV.

WHILE RACHEL AND LEON ARE LOVEMAKING, MOSES LEVY DREAMS.

LEON having finished his meal, the tea-things were cleared away, and the lovers fell to whispering, while Moses Levy reclined in his old arm-chair, and closed his eyes. As he lay thus, with the soft murmurs of the lovers' voices falling on his ears, his thoughts wandered back to his own courting-days, when, after the morning service on the Sabbath-day, he would wait within the Synagogue's gates in Duke's Place, to press the hand of his Rebecca, and to walk home with her. Dressed most carefully in his best was he on those occasions; and his Rebecca, on her side performed her part of looking her brightest as well as he, raising her eyes shyly from her prayer-book, as she sat in the gallery of the Great Synagogue, to see if Moses Levy were in his place. It may really be said that part of their courting was carried on in the Synagogue; for although they paid attention to their prayers and did not miss a response, they were tremulously sensible of each



other's presence, and, sitting on opposite sides, she above and he below, gazed at each other at intervals during the entire service. They were but boy and girl at that time, and they married while they were still

young and poor. Poor they always remained, and young—in their hearts—and their life was a life of love and content, with many crosses and many joys, and many troubles and much happiness. As Moses Levy sat and dreamed, all the most familiar reminiscences connected with his wife and daughter came to his mind in harmonious order. There was his old mother, Sool, who was not English born, and whose unsuccessful attempts to master the English language were the theme of continual merriment in the home-circle; and by the side of his mother stood his father, Jacob, a painfully-orthodox Dutchman, wise in many unworldly ways, and learned in Rabbinical lore. A source of just pride had it ever been with Moses Levy that his mother was a woman for whom every one had a good word, and that his father was an upright man, honest in his dealings, and owing never a debt that he was unable to pay. How well he remembered the long evenings of his childhood, when, with patience and affection, his father taught him Hebrew, in such a way as to make it a living language to the lad, explaining the meaning of this and that, expounding with superabundant earnestness as they progressed, and throwing new light on old traditions with an air which said, ‘My son, get these precepts and these disquisitions well into your noddle, and all the world is open to you;’ which was really the simple Dutchman’s firm conviction. That he had not done over-well in the world with such armour—that is so far as the amassing of money was concerned—was no proof to him that his son, armed in like manner, would not become a great commander. Then, when the lesson was ended, and the books laid aside, the father would tell stories of *his* boyish days, when he and Sool were in love with each other in their native land, and unable to marry because of their poverty; of their parting in tears and sadness, with vows of faithfulness, and with an unspoken fear in their hearts that they might never meet again; of their coming together in the strangest way in England, and marrying when the summer of their lives was past; of their happy married days, and of their joy when Moses was born to them. And the while these sober particulars were being narrated, Sool, work in hand, sat and listened with tearful eyes, testifying with emphatic nods to the truth of every word uttered by her husband. ‘God has been very good to us,’ was the constant refrain of this poor and faithful couple; ‘praise be to His name for ever and ever.’ Moses Levy was born into a happy home, and his boyhood’s days were strewn with forget-me-nots. With sad memories also, from which no man’s life is free. With what vividness can he recall the last illness of his mother, her last words to him, her last kiss, and the week’s mourning in sack-cloth and ashes which followed her death! The memorable and never-to-be-forgotten day on which his mother was buried opens out to him as he lies back in his chair. The rain is falling, and he and his father and the coffin, and seven or eight hired mourners to insure the necessary and sacred ten for prayers, are all squeezed and tightly packed together in one poor coach, which jolts rheumatically to the burial-ground, groaning as it toils onwards, at the weight of melancholy humanity within. A sad, sad journey! His father says never a word, but pats his knee softly and intermittently, and never for a moment removes his eyes from the coffin in which his beloved rests in peace. The other occupants of the coach are for the most part old men from Holland and Poland, all poor, all

shabby, and all with ragged beards and bleared eyes. Melancholy specimens of humanity, indeed, they appear, as, bending towards each other, they talk, with mournful vivacity, of the deceased, of her good qualities, of her hospitality and kindly ways; and this one woman gone brings up the memory of other women gone who were connected in other lands with the bright and sunny days of these shabby, bear-eyed, ragged-bearded old aliens. Stars of love shine in the heaven of the past, as the coach, with its burden of sorrow, creaks onwards to the grave. Sool, though she had no money to bequeath, had left a legacy of sweet memories behind her. She had done as much good in her days as lay in her power; her heart was large and tender, and if ever mortal deserved a numerous following to the grave, she did; but such a tribute is rarely given unless the coffin is of polished oak—and then there is a solid reason for it. How clearly does Moses Levy see with his mind's eye every small incident of that memorable day! The knot of dirty, unruly boys and girls assembled outside the rusty gate of the burial-ground, curious to see as much as they are permitted of a Jewish funeral; the mingled awe and aversion with which the children regard the ragged-bearded, harmless old men; their muttered remarks and pointed fingers, their looks of contempt and fear; the lifting of the coffin from the coach, and the slow carrying of it to the cold bare-walled room, in which prayers for the dead are said; and the strange feeling which steals upon him during the prayers, that the world has suddenly come to a stand-still, and that nothing can ever again be the same as it was in the past; the mournful procession over the wet and tangled grass, beneath which restless human passions and yearnings, now for ever stilled, have found their grave—over the tangled grass, winding round old mounds of earth and past ancient tombstones, from the crumbling walls of one of which a bird moodily watches them, and meditates on the vanity of life in bird and mortal—slowly, slowly on until the corner is reached where Sool is to be laid; the momentary dizziness—as though heaven and earth were merging into one—which seizes him as the coffin is gently lowered, and the shudder which passes through him when the grating of the rope, as it is pulled from beneath the coffin, falls upon his ears; the trembling hands with which he throws the orthodox three shovelfuls of earth into the grave; the sobs of the old Dutchman as he is led away from the spot; the cutting of his waistcoat, which, while it expresses nothing of the despair and grief which caused the Jewish mourners of old to rend their garments, still bears a solemn significance; the melancholy ride home, with his father's arm tenderly embracing him; and the arrival at the house made desolate for a time by his mother's removal, where he and his father sit in slippers, on low stools, in the darkened parlour. How changed is everything! How gloomy and mournful! How bright was the past! How dreary will be the future! But as he sits and mourns, comes the crowning feature of the day, which all these reminiscences lead up and are subservient to—the beautiful star shining through the sad clouds. He sees, for the first time Rebecca—she who is to become his wife and the mother of his Rachel. Rebecca and her parents have but lately arrived in the neighbourhood, and a motherly woman, knowing that the old Dutchman and his son have commenced their days of mourning, and have no female about them to attend to their wants, has pressed Rebecca Magnus into her service, and together they come to help

the bereaved ones in their trouble. Among poor people, Jews and Christians alike, such good and timely services are freely rendered and gratefully accepted, the receivers being always ready in their turn, to repay the kindly debt. To young Moses Levy, sitting in the darkened parlour, oppressed with sad thoughts arising from the melancholy duties of the day, the entrance of Rebecca is like a beautiful sunrise. He follows every movement, every graceful turn of her form, with eyes entranced. Her presence soothes him, and sweetens his grief. To his youthful mind she is a revelation of all that is most lovely and sacred in the world. She brings comfort even to the widowed man in his affliction, and before she leaves he kisses her as he would a daughter of his own. 'That is a good girl,' the old Dutchman says to his son, 'a good girl—a good girl;' and when she comes again the following morning, he also follows her movements with a melancholy pleasure. Deep in the lad's heart is imprinted the picture of her fair face, never to be blurred or blotted; and though she is now in her grave, and he is an old man with white beard, waiting for his turn, he, as he reclines in his chair, muses upon the days so far back that they might almost be said to belong to another life, and recalls from memory's depths the colour and pattern of young Rebecca's dress when she first appeared to him, the little bit of ribbon she had about her neck, the fashion of her hair, from which a stray lock has fallen, and beholds her moving here and there, performing this and that necessary duty with exact, unerring faithfulness. He won her, and married her, and worked for her, and she for him; their life and ways were simple, and few were happier than they in their humble home.

In the midst of his dreams he is aroused by a slight touch upon his arm. His heart beats more quickly, and his trembling hands are raised in agitation produced by the momentary fancy that it is his pretty young wife he sees standing by his side.

'Father!'

And he brushes the fancy aside, and knows that it is Rachel, the daughter of his love, who has spoken.

Bright sparkles are in her eyes, a flush is on her face, and Leon Isaacs, calm and smiling, and with much tenderness in his manner, holds her hand and looks with confident pleading at the old man. Rachel beuds her head, and whispers a few tremulous words into her father's ear, not raising her face when she has finished; and then Moses Levy learns that, while he has been dozing, Leon has spoken to Rachel the words which girls who have lost their hearts are yearning to hear.

'One moment, Leon, one moment,' murmurs the old man, with a sudden revulsion of feeling at the prospect of losing his Rachel; and he hides his eyes upon her neck. But a feeling so selfish cannot long abide with him, and he turns his eyes once more upon the young man who has won his child.

'Rachel loves me,' says Leon modestly, and with manliness, 'and I love her. What do you say, Mr. Levy?'

Moses Levy rises, trembling and eager. His face is very pale, and large tears have gathered in his eyes.

'Have you well considered, Leon?' he says. 'Are you sure you know your heart? Nay, Rachel, let Leon speak for himself.'

'If there is truth in the world,' replies Leon, deeply touched by the



solemn tenderness of the old man's manner, 'I know my heart. It beats for Rachel, and for Rachel only.'

'Rachel has nothing, Leon—not a penny.'

Leon gazes with pride upon his girl. 'She is to me, sir, richer than the richest lady in the world. She is Rachel. I want nothing with her, I want only her.'

'And you, Rachel?'

Her arms embrace him with a tenderer pressure: an eloquent answer. He places her by the side of her lover, and joins their hands, clasping them in his own.

'The Lord God of Israel bless and prosper you, my children,' he says tremulously. 'You will make my Rachel a good husband, Leon, and my daughter will be a true and faithful wife to you. Love each other all your lives, and your days will be days of peace and happiness. I can go down to my grave now with an untroubled heart.'

He covers his head; the lovers incline towards him; and placing a hand on the head of each, he slowly and solemnly, in the ancient language, breathes a prayer over them. Then, in true patriarchal fashion, he kisses Rachel's forehead.

'When you touched my arm, Rachel,' he says, looking into the girl's eyes, with his hands on her shoulders, 'I was dreaming of your mother. I thought for a moment she stood before me. You are as she was, my dear, when she was young.'

Rachel gazes wistfully at the old man, and whispers,

'It will make no difference between us, father.'

'Surely not, Rachel. It is right—it is good. Be happy, my child.'

'Yes, yes,' she says, with a tender contradiction to herself, 'it *will* make a difference. I shall love you all the more.'

He resumes his chair, and the lovers enjoy a blissful silence. Moses Levy softly turns the leaves of the Hebrew book, but has no understanding of it now; the characters swim before him. Once again he is roused by his daughter's light touch.

'We are going to take a walk, Rachel and I,' says Leon; 'we shall not be gone long.'

'Very well, Leon, very well,' replied Moses Levy.

'I daresay, while we are away, father will come in for his game of cards.'

'Does he know, Leon?'

'If he doesn't, he ought to, Mr. Levy. I think it has been pretty plain to everybody. I told mother before I came out that it might happen to-night.'

'Yes, yes, Leon; and what did she say?'

'That if it did, I was to bring Rachel round at once. We are going to her now.'

'It is right—go, go at once.'

But although he appears eager that they should leave him, Moses Levy's arm, which is round Rachel's waist, rather tightens in its clasp than otherwise.

'Mother will be very glad, Mr. Levy.'

'That is good—that is good! Your mother's a good creature.'

'She has been a good mother to me.'

'Well said, Leon. Honour thy father and thy mother, that thy days may be long in the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee?'

One hand being disengaged, he holds it out to Leon, who presses it with affection and respect. Leon has a proper appreciation of the character of the good old man.

'Mr. Levy.'

'Yes, Leon.'

'There is no need to keep it secret.'

'Surely not, surely not! There is nothing to keep secret.'

'I shall tell everybody.'

'That is as it should be, Leon. Let everybody know.'

Leon lingers a little, till Rachel says,

'I will be with you presently, Leon.'

He goes out of the room, leaving Rachel with her father, and stands on the dark staircase, waiting for her. In a few minutes she joins him. Her face is wet with tears.

'You are all my own, now,' he whispers, drawing her close to him.

'Are you happy?'

'Very happy.'

'I shall always love you, Rachel.'

'And I shall you, Leon.'

'I shall be able to work with a stouter heart, now that I have you to work for. Rachel, your father mustn't lead a lonely life. He would feel it too much; he has only us. A corner of our fireside shall always be his.'

'It is one of my dearest wishes.'

'And perhaps one day—who knows?—I may grow rich. Then he need not go out any more.'

She listens with heartfelt gratitude to the expressions of those loving thoughts. They walk slowly down the dark stairs, he clasping her waist, and pressing her close to him. To Rachel there is no man in the world to compare with her hero, and her heart pulses with infinite love for him as he kisses her lips and dewy eyelashes.

Such a convenient staircase! Not a soul about!

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## CHAPTER V.

### SOLOMON ISAACS DECLARES THAT THERE IS NOTHING LIKE MONEY.

THE sound of Solomon Isaacs' heavy tread on the stairs aroused Moses Levy from the reverie into which he had fallen upon the departure of Rachel and Leon. He counted his old friend's footsteps with impatience, and it seemed to him that Solomon Isaacs tarried an unconscionable time on the wrong side of the door. But Solomon Isaacs was generally slow and wary in his movements, as became a man on the look-out for snares.

Full of the important event which had just taken place, Moses Levy peered eagerly into the hard-featured face of his visitor, who, scarcely looking at his host, gave a careless nod as he entered, and removing from his head a hat which, if it had ever seen better days, was by this

time lost to shame, took from it an exceedingly snuffy bandanna pocket-handkerchief, and dabbed his forehead. He then applied his handkerchief to his nose, which he blew so loudly that a little ornament with bells which stood on the mantel-shelf played music to the sound, and jingled in sympathy. Carefully returning the handkerchief to its shelter, he replaced the hat on his head, and drew from his pocket a large yellow wooden snuff-box, and stuffed an enormous pinch of brown rappee up his nose, closing the box with a loud snap. Having successfully gone through this programme of performance, Solomon Isaacs drew a chair to his accustomed place at the table, and mechanically stretched forth his hand, in the expectation of meeting familiar objects.

'Where's the cards, Mo?' he demanded.

'Eh?' exclaimed Moses Levy, with a bewildered air. Cards were the last thing in his mind at that moment.

'The cards, Mo,' repeated Solomon Isaacs, impatiently drumming on the table; 'where's the cards?'

His voice was like the voice of a crow, or like a lock imperfectly oiled. Either simile, however, scarcely holds good, for his voice had not the merit of consistency. One spoken syllable out of every four or five was fairly smooth—which made its general rustiness more conspicuous.

Moses Levy, recalled to himself by the harsh tones, rose hurriedly, and went to the cupboard.

'I beg you a thousand pardons, Ikey,' he said apologetically; 'I was almost forgetting.'

In this familiar style—Mo and Ikey—were they accustomed to address each other.

Solomon Isaacs did not reply, and Moses Levy produced from the cupboard a cribbage-board which had borne the brunt of a thousand fights, and a greasy pack of cards by which many a battle had been won and lost. These he placed on the table. Solomon Isaacs' fingers immediately closed upon the cards, and he commenced to shuffle them, with the air of a man whose thoughts were far away. For a moment or two, Moses Levy, who had returned to the cupboard, stood by the open door discussing some important point with himself, which he soon settled by taking from a shelf two odd decanters, one, cracked, containing rum, the other, chipped, containing shrub; supplementing them with two odd glasses, one long and narrow, 'with lean and hungry looks,' the other pot-bellied like an alderman. So engrossed in thought was Solomon Isaacs, that when his host placed the decanters and glasses close to his elbow he did not observe them; but he never ceased from shuffling the cards, mechanically recognising, with a curious kind of satisfaction, old friends, by marks on their backs.

It was the custom of these old men, two nights in every week, to meet in Moses Levy's rooms, and play cribbage for a penny a game. Many a friendly wrangle had they had over these contests, and often, when luck went against Solomon Isaacs, had he quitted the room in anger, vowing that he would never set foot in it again; but he invariably returned to win back the pennies he had left behind him. For twenty years had this been going on, until cribbage had become like meat and drink to them.

The shadow of Moses Levy, who settled himself opposite the absent-

mindful man, aroused Solomon Isaacs from his abstraction. Taking up the cribbage-board, he cried testily,

'No pegs, Mo? You're losing your 'ead. What's the matter with you to-night? Is there anything a-going wrong? Where's the pegs? Ah, ah! what's this?'

A pleasanter expression came into his face as his eyes lighted on the decanters of spirits.

'I thought you would like a drop,' said Moses Levy, who had hastily commenced to fashion four pegs for the cribbage-board out of as many wooden matches. 'It'll warm you, Ikey; let me fill your glass.'



With a shrewd eye for the main chance, Solomon Isaacs seized the pot-bellied glass, which was twice as large as the narrow one, and held it out to Moses Levy, who filled it to the brim, and filled his own afterwards. Then the two old men drank, Moses Levy, as he held his glass to his lips, saying in Hebrew, 'Peace be unto you,' and Solomon Isaacs

responding with, 'Unto you be peace.' Solomon Isaacs smacked his lips with keen enjoyment. He dearly loved a glass of cheap liquor.

'That's good,' said Solomon Isaacs amiably, holding out his glass, which Moses Levy refilled; 'It goes right through one. Where do you buy your liquor, Mo? At Raphael's?'

Moses Levy nodded.

'It's the best place,' remarked Solomon Isaacs; 'Raphael must make a fortune every year out of Kosher rum.'

Moses Levy nodded again, and having finished cutting the pegs, signified that he was ready to commence the game.

'Cut for crib,' said Solomon Isaacs. 'Nine.'

'Ace,' said Moses Levy.

'Your crib. You're always in luck, Mo, always in luck!'

Moses Levy put down a bright penny, and proceeded to deal the cards. Solomon Isaacs, watching his adversary carefully the while, to see that he was dealing fairly, extracted from his pocket all the coppers it contained, and selecting an old halfpenny which had been beaten out so as to look like a penny, carefully deposited his stake beneath Moses Levy's. To the secret delight of his friend, Moses Levy played with less than his usual skill, and the game proceeded in silence, until Solomon Isaacs cried triumphantly,

'Six!'

Moses Levy put down a four. 'Ten.'

Solomon Isaacs slapped down a five. 'Fifteen two, and a run's five. My game, Mo, my game!'

'So it is,' said Moses Levy, with a light laugh.

It pleased him that Solomon Isaacs was winning. He would have liked him to win every game.

Solomon Isaacs drew Moses Levy's bright penny from the stakes, and pocketed it, leaving his own doubtful one on the table. He gloated in secret over his cleverness, and the wrinkles in the corners of his eyes came out conspicuously.

'Leon's getting along well at his shop,' remarked Moses Levy, nervously approaching his subject.

'Orfice, Mo, orfice,' said Solomon Isaacs in correction.

'It's all the same, Ikey—shop or office.'

'It ain't all the same,' contended Solomon Isaacs viciously.

'Well, it was when we were boys.'

'What was when we was boys,' said Solomon Isaacs, with a positive shake of his head, 'ain't now. Things is altered. When we was boys, we 'ad to go into the streets to get a living. Leon didn't 'ave to do nothing of the sort. He went to school. When we was boys, it was shop—now, it's orfice. Yes, he's getting on well, is Leon. If he behaves 'isself—'

But he suddenly paused, and left the sentence uncompleted.

'You ought to be proud of Leon, Ikey; he's quite a gentleman.'

'I've done my best for 'im, and I 'ope he'll remember it. He'll be proud of me one of these days. You'll live to see it, Mo. Yes, yes—one of these days, one of these days!'

Moses Levy looked into the face of his friend for an explanation of these enigmatical utterances, but none was given.

'Leon's been here to-night,' said Moses Levy, in the middle of the second game. 'Three, four, five, of a flush. Six.'

'You've taken seven!' cried Solomon Isaacs.

'So I have. I didn't see it, Ikey, I give you my word.'

'You're an artful one, Mo; you want looking arter. Leon's been 'ere, you said.'

'Yes; he's gone with Rachel to see Mrs. Isaacs,' said Moses Levy, scarcely knowing what cards he was playing, as he plunged desperately into the subject he wished to broach. 'Ikey, what's the very best thing in the world?'

'What a question, Mo! The very best thing in the world? Money, of course, money!'

'No, no, Ikey!' exclaimed Moses Levy, in an imploring tone.

'Yes, yes, Mo,' persisted Solomon Isaacs. 'Money. Another game to me.' (Pocketing another of Moses Levy's good pennies, and ready by this time, in case of dispute, to swear that the beaten-out halfpenny had been staked by his opponent.) 'There's nothing like it, nothing! Money makes the mare to go. I wish you 'ad a bagful——'

'I wish I had,' murmured Moses Levy.

'—And that you couldn't move from your chair till you gave me 'arf! What do you mean by your No, no?' cried Solomon Isaacs, putting down his cards in his excitement. 'What do people bow down to? Money. What do people worship? Money. What are we trying all our lives to make? Money. What was the temple made of? Money. What'll buy fine 'ouses, fine clothes, fine diamonds? Money—money—money! There's nothing like money.'

Moses Levy sighed. 'There's love, Ikey.'

'Eh, eh? There's what?'

'Love, Ikey.'

Solomon Isaacs pushed his hat to the back of his head in astonishment.

'Love better than mouney, Mo?'

'Yes, Ikey.'

'Rubbish, Mo, rubbish! You'll be saying next that kisses is better. All right. You take all the love and all the kisses; I give 'em to you—there! I'll take all the money. Why, where's your sense? Will love fill your belly? Can you eat kisses? Can you drink 'em? Will they lend you anything on 'em at the pawnbroker's? If I go to people, and say, "'Ere's some love for you; 'ere's some kisses for you," will they bow down to me for 'em?—will they wipe my shoes for 'em? Not them! They'd laugh in my face, and say, "Solly Ikey's gone mad—he's gone mad!" And they wouldn't be far wrong. But if I go to 'em and say, "'Ere's some money for you," they'd bow down to me for it, and love me for it, and wipe my shoes for it. Then they'd say, "Oh, what a good man Solly Ikey is—oh, what a good man!" If you come to my 'ouse, and I give you some love, and nothing else, will you ever want to come agin? Not likely—unless you're a fool! But if you come, and I give you chocolate and cakes, you'll come agin as often as I want you. I should be tired of you before you'd be tired of me.'

Moses Levy sat in silence, with his hands nervously clasped, and both men for a time forgot their game of cribbage. It must have been the thirst created by his eloquent championship of money that caused Solo-

mon Isaacs to empty the decanter of rum into his pot-bellied glass, and to drain it to the last drop before he resumed the subject. What followed proved that his appetite had only been whetted by the words he had already uttered.

'Money, Mo, 'll buy everything—'ouse, 'orses, carriages, servants, bows, shakes of the 'and—everything. What was he without money? A beast! What is he with money? A beautiful man—a beautiful man! You remember 'im, don't you, when he travelled and sold steel pens—who'd speak to 'im then? Who 'ad a good word to say for 'im then? Not a soul in the world. His own relations would'nt look at 'im would'nt own 'im; he was like a bit o' dirt. It must be eighteen year since you and me and 'im played klobberyoss together one night. What did you say when he went away? That you didn't care if you never set eyes on 'im agin. And that was the way with everybody; he was 'ated like pizen. But when he goes on the Stock Exchange, and speky-lates, and makes a 'eap of money, and buys a grand 'ouse in Hyde Park, and comes to shool in a set of dimond studs in 'is shirt that's worth five 'undred guineas if they're worth a penny, everybody bows and scrapes to 'im, and says, "'Ow do you do, Mr. Cohen? 'Ow do you do, Mr. Cohen?" And when 'is back's turned, it ain't "Good riddance to bad rubbish!" it's "What a nice man Sam Cohen is? What a good man! Did you see 'is lovely studs? 'ow they blaze! And 'is big gold watch? 'ow it shines! He puts on a clean shirt every day! And he's a good-looking man, too!" That's the way they speak of 'im now. As for 'is relations, they worship the ground he treads on, since he's growd rich; when people say, "That's Sam Cohen's cousin—that's Sam Cohen's brother-in-lore," it makes 'em proud to 'ear it. Once, if Cohen 'appened to come late at prayers, all the nobs used to look at 'im with frowns, and say, "It's too bad of that Cohen; he's got no sense of decency; he must be spoke to." The very beadle used to look black at 'im. Now, when he comes late, they listen quite affable to the creaking of 'is boots as he walks to 'is seat, and the beadle pushes people on one side to make way for 'im. I never *did* 'ear boots creak like 'isn since he's got rich! Why, I've seen Baron Lionel speak to 'im. Ain't that a honour? If he 'ad 'is pockets full of love, would all this 'appen! No, Mo, no! But he's got 'is pockets full of money, and they bow down to 'im, and don't remember the time when they used to say, "Sam Cohen's a beast!" He ain't a beast now—oh, no; he's a long way off from a beast now!

Solomon Isaacs dabbed his forehead with his bandanna, being somewhat heated by this outburst; after which, all the rum and shrub being gone, he refreshed himself with another pinch of snuff, and set the bells of the little ornament on the mantelshelf, ringing vigorously again.

'I passed his house last week,' said Moses Levy, sadly; 'it is a great house truly.'

'It's a grand 'ouse—a grand 'ouse!' exclaimed Solomon Isaacs.

'It's almost as high as the Tower of Babel. I couldn't help wondering what he did with all the rooms in it. There's only himself and Mrs. Cohen and his daughter Bella—and there must be, ah, fifty rooms in the house. He can't sit in more than one room at a time.'

'But he knows all the other rooms are there if he wants 'em. Then there's the servants—they've got to be accomydated; and he gives a good many parties, and likes to make a show. He's got pillars with

ornaments on 'em outside the 'ouse, and inside there's picters and stat-choos, and carved chimbley-pieces, and every step of the grand staircase is made of white marble—of beautiful white marble.'

'Yes, it's well known,' said Moses Levy. 'But what will it matter to Sam Cohen, when he's dead, whether he's carried out of the house to the grave down a narrow flight of wooden steps or a white marble staircase?'

'It'll matter a lot,' replied Solomon Isaacs, warmly; 'if I was as lucky as Sam Cohen, and had sich a fine 'ouse, I should know when I was dead, God forbid!—'

'We've all got to die, Ikey.'

'I daresay—I daresay,' said Solomon Isaacs angrily, as though he did not see the necessity of it. 'Well, I should know that I was being carried down a grand marble staircase, and I'd feel proud in my coffin. It's something to work for—something to grow rich for. There'd be a crowd of people outside my door to see me brought out, and 'eaps of 'em 'd follow me to the ground; and there'd be carriages, and a regular procession—wouldn't that be a honour? Would they stop to look at a poor man's coffin—would they send their carriages to follow it? Not them! And do you think the minister don't know when he's saying prayers over a poor man and a rich man? It's gabble, gabble, gabble over a poor man; it's slow, and choky, and looking up between every word over a rich man. Do you think it don't make a difference in—in another place—do you think it don't make a difference *there*, the way that prayers is said over your coffin? I tell you, Mo, there's nothing like money—nothing like money!'

So excited had Solomon Isaacs become that there is no telling what more he would have said, had not Moses Levy's eyes, which had been fixed upon him in sorrow and wonder, caused him to pull himself up suddenly. Thus brought to a standstill, he cast a startled look around, with much the appearance of a man who has incautiously betrayed a precious and dangerous secret.

'Well, well,' said Moses Levy, after a long pause, during which Solomon Isaacs won another game of cribbage, and pocketed another of his host's good pennies, 'money's a good thing in its way; it would be foolish to deny it.'

He spoke in a melancholy tone; a dark cloud seemed to have fallen upon him.

'You're coming to your senses,' growled Solomon Isaacs, with a contemptuous laugh. 'If you *did* deny it you'd be fit for Bedlam. A good thing! The best thing!'

'I should like,' said Moses Levy pensively, thinking of Rachel and Leon, 'to have a heap of it on the table before me.'

Solomon Isaacs looked greedily at the table, and made an involuntary clutch at an imaginary pile.

'Of course you do,' he said; 'and so would any man with a grain of sense. By my life, you'd know what to do with it!'

'Rachel should have it, every penny. For myself, I have enough. I am satisfied to die as I have lived.'

'That's because,' remarked Solomon Isaacs, with a furtive look under his eyebrows, as though his words were intended to convey a deeper meaning than they expressed, 'you ain't rich.'



‘Rich! No, indeed; I am as poor as yourself, Ikey.’

A little flash came into Solomon Isaac’s eyes, and his nostrils quivered with secret pride.

‘You’d be of a different mind, Mo, if you ’ad a lot of money.’

‘One can be happy with very little. It’s my belief that love’s a better thing than money.’

Solomon Isaacs shrugged his shoulders. It was evidently a waste of time to argue with such a man.

‘Now,’ said Moses Levy, throwing out two cards for crib that completely spoiled his hand, ‘there’s Leon and Rachel——’

‘What!’ cried Solomon Isaacs.

‘I was speaking of Leon and Rachel. You heard me say that Leon’s been here to-night.’

‘There’s nothing in that,’ said Solomon Isaacs, in his harshest tones: ‘it’s not the first time Leon’s been ’ere.’

‘No; you are quite right. I was about to say that he and Rachel have love on their side, and I hope by-and-by they’ll have money.’

Solomon Isaacs spilled his cards on the floor, and while he was picking them up Moses Levy continued,

‘It’s all settled between Leon and Rachel——’

‘What’s all settled?’

‘They are engaged. Next Sunday they will sit for joy.’

To judge from the way he behaved, the chair upon which Solomon Isaacs sat might have been stuffed with pins and needles.

‘Leon ought to have spoke to me,’ he muttered, ‘before he spoke to Rachel.’

‘Perhaps so, Ikey; but no one could help knowing what was going on. There’s scarcely a day that they haven’t been together. You must have seen it. Surely,’ said Moses Levy very gravely—he had paused between the sentences, to allow his companion an opportunity of speaking, but Solomon Isaacs had not opened his lips—‘surely you have nothing to say against it!’

His serious tone awed Solomon Isaacs.

‘What could I ’ave to say agin it?’ he asked sullenly.

‘That’s what makes me wonder. I asked Leon if you knew, and he said if you didn’t you ought to have done. They’ve gone together to your house to break the happy news to your wife. She’ll be ready to jump out of her skin for joy. She loves Rachel like a daughter.’

‘Rachel’s a good girl, certainly,’ said Solomon Isaacs, feeling it imperative to say something; but his manner was not gracious; ‘I’ve never ’eerd a word agin her.’

The blood rushed into Moses Levy’s cheeks, and his blue eyes glittered.

‘The tongue that should utter such a word should be cut out! But, there! Forgive me, Ikey. I’m letting my temper get the better of me.’ He held out his hand, and Solomon Isaacs was compelled to take it. ‘I love my child so, you see. There isn’t a better in all the wide world. She has been a good daughter to me, and a good daughter makes a good wife. The Lord bless and prosper them! Our children and our children’s children will bring joy to all of us!’

In this way the matter was understood between the two men, and before they had time for further converse, Milly Isaacs, Solomon’s wife,

rushed into the room, panting with intense excitement. Mrs. Isaacs, a short podgy creature was fat and scant of breath, and she had run through the streets and up the stairs so quickly, that the moment she entered Moses Levy's room she sank into a chair, into a state of utter exhaustion. But nevertheless her eyes were beaming, and in every gasp that escaped her she strove not unsuccessfully to express her delight. A comical picture she presented, as she sat holding her sides, her lips



twitching convulsively, her bosom panting, her fat shoulders rising and falling, and her head wagging this way and that in good humoured distress. Moses Levy had jumped to his feet when she entered, but she kept him off with a fluttering motion of her hand, gasping, 'Let me alone a minute, Mr. Levy, till I ketch my breath!' Leon and Rachel

had started with Mrs. Isaacs from her house, and the moment they were in the street she left them, laughingly desiring them not to hurry. 'You come along slow,' she said to them, with a sly look; 'I can't wait a minute. I must run to Mr. Levy, and give him a 'ug.' And then she hurried away in her slippers, her feet pit-patting on the pavement as she chuckled at her wit in leaving the lovers to themselves.

So now, when she had sufficiently recovered from her panting condition, she threw her arms round Moses Levy's neck, and pressed him to her capacious bosom, and kissed him more than once.

'I wish you joy, Mr. Levy,' she said; 'this is the 'appiest day of my life. There's a grandfather you'll make.'

'I wish *you* joy, Mrs. Isaacs,' responded Moses Levy, all his sadness dispelled by her cordiality: 'you do my heart good. You are really glad?'

'Glad!' exclaimed Mrs. Isaacs. 'I'm ready to go out of my mind with 'appiness. You won't find a 'andsomer couple in all Spitalfields! "What are you running along in that way for?" cried Mrs. Simmons, who was standing at 'er door as I runs by, and she puts 'er 'and on me. "Don't stop me!" I screams; "don't stop me! My Leon and Rachel Levy's engaged!" "Leon and Rachel engaged!" she cries; "I wish you joy, Mrs. Isaacs!" And then I 'ears her calling out to Mrs. Wolf, who was looking out of window on the other side of the way, "Mrs. Wolf! Leon Isaacs and Rachel Levy's engaged!" "I'm glad to 'ear it," screams Mrs. Wolf. As sure as I'm alive, it's all over Spitalfields by this time. Well, this is a happy day. Ha, ha, ha! Ha, ha, ha!'

And once more fairly overcome with excitement, Mrs. Isaacs glided from a paroxysm of hysterical sobbing, and working her way back again, was only brought to by a glass of cold water, administered by the grateful hands of Moses Levy.

At this juncture, Rachel and Leon made their appearance. They were radiant with joy, and there was a proud look in Leon's eyes, which expressed, 'I have won the best treasure earth can give me.' To Rachel, a new beauty seemed to have come; she had never in her life looked so pretty. At the sight of the young people, Mrs. Isaacs was on the point of going into another paroxysm, but was checked by Solomon Isaacs exclaiming gruffly,

'Don't be a fool, Milly! You'll have a fit if you go on like that. Well, Leon?'

'Well, father?' said Leon

'You might 'ave told me, I think, Leon.'

'Why, father, couldn't you see? You're generally pretty wide awake.'

'Of course he could see,' interrupted Mrs. Isaacs. 'Don't you mind him, Rachel!' For Rachel's happiness was suddenly damped by Solomon Isaacs' cold bearing. 'It's only 'is joking way. There now, give him a kiss, Rachel. He used to like 'em when I was as young and pretty as you. And I was once, Rachel; but I've got that fat now that I can hardly abear myself!'

Rachel obeyed the worthy creature, and held up her pretty face to Solomon Isaacs. He touched her soft cheek carelessly with his lips, and received Rachel's kiss without enthusiasm.

'Just to think,' said Mrs. Isaacs, affectionately patting Rachel's hand with her fat and podgy fingers, 'ow things comes about! When Leon

was no higher than my knee, he comes to me with a apple in 'is 'and, and ses, "Mother, see what Rachel Levy's give me," and ses, as he takes a bite, "When I'm big enough I'm going to marry Rachel." And now he *is* big enough, and it's a-going to be !'

While Mrs. Isaacs, laughing and shaking, and wiping tears of pleasure from her eyes, was rattling on with suchlike reminiscences, of which she had apparently an inexhaustible store, Moses Levy seized the opportunity of slipping out of the room; returning soon with a bottle under one arm, and a paper packet under the other. Understanding upon what errand he had gone, Rachel laid the table for supper, and unfolding the paper disclosed a few slices of smoked salmon—whereat Solomon Isaacs' lips commenced to overlap one another. The bottle also contained something good, and presently all in the room were plying their knives and forks, the lovers negligently, Moses Levy pensively, Milly Isaacs tearfully, and Solomon Isaacs greedily. After supper, this being a night which might fairly be devoted to dissipation, the two old men, each with a glass of hot brandy by his side, resumed their battle of cribbage. The lovers sat in a corner of the fireside, softly conversing, while Mrs. Isaacs, from the opposite corner, regarded them with motherly affection. Solomon Isaacs won no fewer than seven consecutive games of cribbage, and this triumph, with the ample supper he had eaten—you may be sure that the richest slices of salmon were put on his plate—and the hot brandy-and-water that followed, put him in good-humour. Pocketing the last won penny, he allowed his own flattened halfpenny to remain for a moment on the table, and then, as though his attention was just directed to it, he took it between his fingers, and examined it with an air of frowning curiosity.

'I wouldn't 'ave believed it of you, Mo,' he said, pushing the coin towards Moses Levy; 'I wouldn't 'ave believed it of you. See what you've been trying to pass off on me for a penny. A flattened halfpenny!'

'Did I put it down, Ikey?' asked Moses Levy, examining the coin.

'Did you put it down?' echoed Solomon Isaacs, in an injured tone. 'Who else did, I'd like to know? Would you suspect *me* of doing sich a thing?'

'No, no,' said Moses Levy hurriedly; 'it was me, of course! But I didn't see it, Ikey, I pledge you my word. I beg you a thousand pardons.'

His giving Solomon Isaacs a good penny in its stead was the crown ing point of that sharp old fellow's triumph. It was by this time past midnight, and Mrs. Isaacs was beginning to nod.

'Wake up, Milly,' said Solomon Isaacs. 'Are you coming, Leon?'

'I'll be home as soon as you are, father,' said Leon.

He was not as good as his word, for which he may be excused, having so good an excuse as Rachel to tempt him to break it. It was nearly one o'clock before he returned home. His mother was sitting up for him, to give him a kiss before he went to bed. Solomon Isaacs was already fast asleep, dreaming that there was nothing like money—nothing like money.

## CHAPTER VI.

## SITTING FOR JOY.

THIS was the most important event that had yet occurred in Rachel's life, and she looked forward to it with pleasure and trepidation. 'I sha'n't know whether to laugh or cry,' she said to Leon, 'when the peo-



ple come in.' Sunday was the day fixed for the friendly ceremonial, when all who knew and took an interest in the young couple were expected to visit them and wish them joy. It would be a good omen if everything passed off well; and to assist in this desirable consummation the inner man had to be provided for, in the shape of chocolate and cakes and a glass of wine for the guests. Then, some few of the privileged ones would stop to supper in the evening. Moses Levy gave Rachel as much money as he could scrape together, and she did wonders with it, having a natural gift in the way of spending money to advantage. She stocked the cupboard, and made the prettiest dress in the world for herself, the colours of the material being a combination of the new browns which were all the rage. She knew that Leon liked her to look well, and she took a proper pride in her personal adornment. Modesty was so dominant a quality in her nature, that it was impossible

for her to commit absurdities in the way of dress; then, she had an eye for the harmony of colour; and altogether she was a girl in whom any man would have taken a just pride.

For Leon's sake Rachel wished the gathering of their friends to be large—as large, for instance, as that of her friend, Lizzie Davis, when she went through the same ordeal. It was certainly nothing more than an outward sign of respect, but it meant much to Rachel. She hoped that certain girls of her acquaintance would not keep away, vexed with her because Leon had preferred her to any other. These things agitated her a great deal during the week, but the result proved that she might have spared herself anxiety on the subject, for pretty well every one in Spitalfields with whom she and her father were on speaking terms visited Moses Levy's humble dwelling on the Sunday to offer their congratulations to the young people.

The room had quite a holiday appearance, being sweet and clean, and prettily decorated with every little nicknack Rachel could lay hands on. Extra chairs had been borrowed from friends, and a table in a corner of the room was set with decanters and glasses and plates filled with spiced cakes. That the glasses were odd in shape and pattern did not in the slightest dim the splendour of the hospitality. Rachel looked bright and fresh, and when she kissed her father in the early morning there was a glistening moisture in her eyes, like dew upon flowers. The ceremony through which she had to pass on this day bore to her a solemn as well as a beautiful significance; it was a seal, a ratification, an assurance that nothing could occur to disturb the harmonious current of their happiness.

'Ah, ah, Leon,' said Moses Levy, as the young man made his appearance, 'what an elegant suit of clothes! You look really handsome in them. Where did you buy them? At Moses's or Hyams's?'

'Hyams made them for me,' replied Leon.

'Why,' said Moses Levy, feeling the texture, and examining them critically, 'they must have cost three pounds at least.'

'More than that, Mr. Levy. Do you like them, Rachel?'

'They are beautiful,' said Rachel.

'What do you think of Rachel's dress, Leon?' asked Moses Levy. 'And how do you think she looks in it? She made it every bit herself. Not another soul put a stitch in it.'

Leon nodded in affectionate approval. His arm was round Rachel's waist, and she was nestling close to him, in the very face of a third party. It seemed natural that she should cling to him. He was her rock, her shelter; her life was bound up in his. There certainly was no need for Moses Levy to call attention to her dress, for Leon's eyes had taken in every detail of it the moment he entered the room, and he noticed with thrills of satisfaction that the little bits of ribbon she wore were of the colour and shade he was in the habit of praising. These delicate and heart-moving ways belonged to Rachel's nature, and if they served to make her dearer and more precious to Leon, all the better for both of them.

Taking from his pocket a small article wrapped in silver tissue-paper, Leon, with a smile and a kiss, handed it to his betrothed. Rachel's heart beat high; it was the engagement-ring. There were three stones in it, two small diamonds and a torquoise in the centre.

'Ought I to put it on your finger, Rachel?' asked Leon.

He placed it on the finger she held out—she knew which was the proper one, the puss!—and kissed the hand that bore it.

'May it bring you good fortune, my dear!' he said tenderly.

'It will be sure to do that,' she replied. 'Leon, I am so happy that I am almost afraid.'

Moses Levy watched all this dimly; his cup of happiness was so full that it brimmed over in his eyes.

Warned by a sound outside that a visitor was coming up stairs, Rachel and Leon flew to two chairs placed at the furthest end of the room, where they seated themselves side by side; but they jumped up again immediately at the familiar sound of hard breathing without which heralded Mrs. Isaacs. She entered, her bosom panting, and holding her sides as usual.

'Them stairs 'll be the death of me, Mr. Levy?' she gasped. 'I wish there was pulleys in 'ouses to 'oist a body up.'

'There's so much of you, mother,' said Leon merrily.

'Don't you make game of your mother, Leon; you don't know what you may come to yourself. When fat takes 'old of a body, there's no keeping it down. It keeps on coming and coming, till it's enough to drive a woman out of 'er mind! I was as slim as Rachel once; you remember me, Mr. Levy, when I was only a slip of a girl.'

'That I do, Mrs. Isaacs. I never would have believed you would have grown so fat.'

'It can't be 'elped,' said Mrs. Isaacs, with smiles, more reconciled to life now that she had recovered her breath; 'we've got to put up with things—though I *do* often ketch myself wishing that I could sell 'arf of me at so much a pound!'

Mrs. Isaacs was dressed in a light silk gown, with such enormous dark bars in it broadways and longways, that she looked as if she were in prison. Her gray hair was pasted close to her head in bands, and in honour of the occasion she wore a pair of cleaned lavender gloves very much too large for her. But her good-humoured face amply atoned for any want of taste she displayed in her costume.

'There's some one coming!' she cried excitedly. 'You mustn't be caught standing up. Run to your chairs!'

Leon and Rachel dropped upon their chairs with a celerity which suggested that they might have received an electric shock, Leon with a half smile (seeing some humour in the situation), and Rachel with a serious face and a quick-beating heart. Their visitors were Mrs. Lilienthal and her father, old Moshé.

'I wish you joy, Rachel; I wish you joy, Leon,' said Mrs. Lilienthal; 'all the children send their love to you.'

'You shall take them some cakes, Mrs. Lilienthal,' said Rachel, and at once put a few in paper for her young friends.

Old Moshé nodded his head a hundred times to every one in the room, and made up for his ignorance of the English language by long mumbling speeches in the Hebrew tongue, chuckling to himself at his felicitous remarks and witticisms, of which no one but Moses Levy and the speaker had the slightest understanding. Rachel's bright face, the hospitable display of cakes and wine on the table in the corner, and the general happiness of all, gave the old fellow unbounded satisfaction. After

his seventy and odd years in Jerusalem, Spitalfields was like fairyland to him ; and as he stood in the centre of the room, with his long white beard, dressed in the clothes in which he travelled from the holy city, saying a prayer over a glass of wine and a piece of cake which Moses Levy had handed to him, he made a striking figure in the scene.

Following him came Solomon Isaacs, hot and inflamed from a contest over the disposal of some goods to a shopkeeper in Cutler-street, in which he had been 'bested,' as he expressed it.

'I sold 'em at so much a piece,' he said, appealing now to one, now to another—'seven coats, nine westcuts, and five pairs of trousers, at three and tenpence a piece—dirt cheap ! There was a blue welwet westcut among 'em as was worth three 'arf crowns for the welwet alone. Jo 'Arris and Mike Myers both wanted 'em, but I sold 'em to Mike. "I wouldn't sell to no one but you, Mike," I ses, as I puts the money in my pocket, "to no one but you." There they was, all of a 'eap on the floor, and Mike a-looking of 'em over. All at once, "Hallo ! wot's this ?" he ses, a-feeling of a westcut. I snatches it out of 'is 'and, and he snatches it from me agin, and it drops on the floor, and I 'ears a ring. "By my life, it's money !" cries Mike ; and he rips up a seam, and fishes out a sovering as was sewed up in the back. "It's mine," I ses ; "give it to me, Mike !" Would you believe it ? He puts 'is finger to 'is nose, and ses, "I've bought the westcut, and paid for it ; and if it was lined with dimonds they'd belong to me." I tried to argey with 'im ; I told 'im it was a thieving thing to do ; I ofered to go arves with 'im ; but he only laughs at me, and ses, "The sovering's mine, and I mean to stick to it." And he *does* stick to it ! It's scandalous—scandalous ! If he shows 'is face in this room to-day, I leave it—mind that, Mo—I leave it ! The thief ! I wouldn't bemean myself by speaking to 'im.'

Solomon Isaacs, as he narrated this grievance, fumed with rage and vexation.

Now the company began to arrive in earnest. As they entered, they shook hands first with Moses Levy, who stood on the threshold to receive them, and then walked to where the lovers were sitting demurely side by side, and said, with a hand-shake, 'I wish you joy, Leon ;' 'I wish you joy, Rachel.' The ceremonious part of the visit was concluded by the guests shaking hands with Solomon Isaacs and his wife, with the same formalities. Moses Levy received his guests with beaming face and untired spirit—he could have stood there for twenty-four hours without feeling fatigue ; Rachel and Leon behaved well, considering the embarrassment of the situation ; Mrs. Isaacs, though often 'ready to drop,' as she whispered, more than once, to Rachel, never flagged for a moment, but came up smiling at the approach of every new friend ; while Solomon Isaacs, after a flabby hand-shake, regarded the visitors with a generally distrustful eye. It was fortunate for the harmony of the day that Mr. Mike Myers did not make his appearance. Leon's happiness was not without its cloud. He particularly wished his father to appear in an amiable mood on this day, and it vexed him to observe that Solomon Isaacs took no pains to make himself agreeable to their friends.

'I don't know what has come over father lately,' Leon said privately to his mother.

'Men are like the moon,' Mrs. Isaacs remarked sagely ; 'they're always a-changing. Your father's worried about business. Don't take



no notice of him ; it's the best way. Bless my 'eart ! ain't you got enough to think of now you're engaged, without bothering your 'ead about us ?'

She spoke in a hearty, pleasant tone, but when Leon was not observing her she went into another room and had a good cry to herself. Perhaps it was Leon's affectionate manner towards her, which on this day, more than on any other, set her nerves quivering with tender love for her boy.

In all other respects the day was a complete and gratifying success. There was a continual stream of persons coming and going, and throughout the whole time Moses Levy stood at the door with a face glowing with pride and pleasure, shaking hands with everybody with unremitting vigour. Many came who were not expected—Leon's schoolmaster, for instance ; and Julian Emanuel, who had won honours for a prize essay, and who was expected to make a name for himself one of these days ; and Marcus Benjamin, the furniture broker, who kept his own horse and dog-cart ; and Leon's rich employer, who, from a poor boy selling matches in the streets for a living, had risen to be a great exporter of fancy goods to the colonies ; so that it was plain that Moses Levy was really respected. Some snuffy old foreigners presented themselves, who earned a miserable living as hired mourners and watchers of the dead. Very poor and very shabby were they, but it did not matter to Moses Levy ; they were welcome, and a glass of wine or a cup of chocolate and a piece of cake were offered to all alike. You may be sure that every one of Rachel's particular female friends was there, to see how she looked on the occasion, and that a great many jokes and much pleasant badinage passed to and fro. Rachel's own bosom friend and companion, Phœbe Lemon, could not come until late in the afternoon. A saucy-looking girl was Phœbe, with black ringlets nearly down to her waist, eyes like sloes, and cheeks the colour of a red rose.

'I wish you joy, Rachel,' said Phœbe, 'and I shall be glad when my turn comes.'

'Well, there's Mark Samuel,' said Leon, laughing ; 'you know, Phœbe, he's dying of love for you. There he is now, staring this way ; he can't take his eyes off you.'

'Oh, I daresay,' was Phœbe's reply to Leon ; 'if he's dying of love, why doesn't he say so ?'

'I'll go and tell him what you say,' said Leon merrily, rising from his chair.

'If you do,' cried Phœbe, 'I'll never speak another word to you. Call him back, Rachel ! The idea ! As if I meant it !'

This kind of thing had been going on from the time the visitors began to arrive. All day long there was a pleasant ripple of laughter and conversation in the room. A happy evening followed the exciting day, so full of bright promises to Leon and Rachel. Candles were lighted, and the table was spread with what Solomon Isaacs declared was a 'handsome meal.' And when ample justice was done to it, the company sat down to cards and general conviviality. Solomon Isaacs was in high feather. Perhaps it was the extra glass of wine he drank, or the absence of Mr. Mike Myers ; or because he won at cards. His gracious manner produced a powerful effect upon the company. All unpleasantness was forgotten, and even those who lost at loo bore their losses with resignation.

As Solomon Isaacs walked home with his wife, he surprised her by asking how she would like to be a lady. His voice was thick, and his gait unsteady.

'A lady, Milly,' he said, nudging his wife. 'Ow should you like to be a lady—a real lady?'

'What nonsense you *do* talk!' exclaimed Mrs. Isaacs. 'Ow could I be a lady without a 'eap of money?'

'That's it, that's it!' concurred Solomon Isaacs, shaking his head wisely at the lamp-post; 'that's what makes ladies and gentlemen; money, money. There's nothing like it. Milly, it's my belief as 'ow Mo Levy is a artful old cuss!'

Milly Isaacs stared at her lord and master.

'You've taken a glass too much, Ikey.'

'Have I? Well, it didn't cost *me* nothing, that's one comfort. A artful old cuss, that's what Mo Levy is! He's a artful old cuss!'

'What on earth is your 'ead a-running on?' asked Mrs. Isaacs, to whose own heavy burden of flesh was added the form of her inebriated husband, who leaned heavily against her.

'He's artful, artful!' repeated Solomon Isaacs. 'He's got money put by, Milly—he's got money 'id somewhere.'

'What makes you think so?' Mrs. Isaacs was not unwilling to be convinced, but was extremely sceptical, notwithstanding.

'What makes me think so? Because he says he's poor—because he's always saying he's poor. If he said he was rich, I know he'd be telling a lie, and I wouldn't believe 'im, if he stood on 'is 'ead. He thinks I want to borrow money of 'im, the old cuss!—'

'O Ikey!'

'What do you mean with your "O Ikey?" violently demanded Solomon Isaacs, who, when he was under the influence of liquor—which was but seldom; Mrs. Isaacs could reckon up on her fingers the number of times—was prone to be especially unamiable. 'I tell you he's an old cuss! If I did want to borrow money of 'im I'd pay 'im back, I suppose. If there's one thing I abominate more than another, it's meanness, and Mo's a mean, artful old cuss!'

'Do come along, Ikey!' implored Mrs. Isaacs, the perspiration trickling from her face. 'Don't glare about like that! Come along 'ome and git to bed.'

Solomon Isaacs here gave a lurch, and fell his full length upon the kerb, where he lay for a moment or two, gazing at a muddy reflection of himself in the gutter. It was not without difficulty that he was raised to his feet again, and supported home; and all the time he never ceased from reiterating his conviction that Moses Levy had a secret hoard of money, adding that it would be worse for him if such was not the case. Mrs. Isaacs had no idea of the meaning of these mutterings. Solomon Isaacs had said so many strange things lately that she had given up all hope of understanding him, and at times she was haunted by a fear that the man was going out of his mind. She was frightened to confide in any one, for her husband enjoined the strictest secrecy upon her, hinting darkly that if a soul in the world suspected anything, it would be the ruin of him—a declaration which threw no light upon the mystery, and only added to her uneasiness. From all this it may be

inferred that Solomon Isaacs had a secret which he deemed it wise to keep to himself. What that secret was will presently be revealed.

In the meantime, the courtship of Rachel and Leon progressed famously, and it appeared as if, for once, the proverb that the course of true love never did run smooth was about to be falsified. The young people went out and visited together, and Leon's every spare hour was spent in Rachel's company. He began to save for the modest home; such a thing as a house was out of the question; they would commence their married life in lodgings in Spitalfields, where Rachel's father and his own parents could come and spend comfortable evenings with their children. In this way, gladdened by such hopes, a few happy weeks passed, until a rumour began to be circulated in connection with Solomon Isaacs which made all his acquaintances excitedly interested in him, and the verification of which caused the good boat True Love to drift into troubled waters.

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## CHAPTER VII.

### HOW SOLOMON ISAACS GREW RICH.

THE rumour which so excited Solomon Isaacs' neighbours and acquaintances was that he had made his fortune.

It was a fact. Solomon Isaacs was a rich man.

He was an old-clo' man, as Moses Levy was, but he had driven shrewder bargains, and, by so doing, had, little by little, saved a small sum of money. It was hard work at first—desperately hard work. In such circumstances it behooves one to be careful and secret. If your poor friends know you have a little money put by, they will be sure to want to borrow of you. Solomon Isaacs had no desire to be worried, and the first five-pound note he saved he sewed up in the band of his trousers. In course of time a second was added, and a third, as he plodded through the streets on cold days, the knowledge that he was a walking money-box kept him warm. So he went on from year to year, until one day, with fear and trembling, he invested his savings in a foreign stock which he believed had reached its lowest ebb. He suffered tortures for months, during which the stock still further decreased in value, and he could not realize, even at a loss, the money he had invested; but he waited and suffered, and bided his time, continuing his old-clo' pursuit steadily all the while until a turn in the market took place, and the shares began to rise. He watched them rising higher and higher, and when they were quoted at three times the price he had paid for them he sold them. He was an eccentric man, but having an enormous organ of secretiveness, he concealed his eccentricities from human eyes, and with the money in his hand he went to his bedroom, while Mrs. Isaacs was out marketing, and spreading it upon the bed, actually danced and capered before it, waving his arms, and snapping his fingers in defiance of the world. It was his fetish; he bowed before it, and his eyes sparkled, and his features worked triumphantly, and he jumped about the room till he was tired and sobered down. His wild fit at an end he pocketed the money, buttoning his pocket tightly, and walked about Spitalfields in humbleness,



complaining of the hardness of the times. Within a week he re-invested his money in another concern of which he had reason to think well. The result of his second venture was almost as fortunate as that of his first, and old Solomon Isaacs, who it must be confessed, did not know the letter A from a bull's foot, saw spread before him a clear avenue to fortune. But not even to his wife did he whisper a word of his good luck. Not a soul should know it till the proper time, not a soul. Like many another gambler he was superstitious, and he feared that,

if he confided in any one, things would go wrong with him. He ventured again, and again he won. Success made him bolder, and he began to lend money to tradesmen and others, secretly. When he launched into this new phase of speculation he grew more cautious than ever, and more humble in his demeanour, always complaining to Moses Levy of the hard times, saying that the clothes business was going to the dogs, and that he did not know what things were coming to. In this way he put everybody off the scent. And good luck pursued him. Opportunity threw in his way an affair which, requiring more than ordinary prudence and shrewdness, led Solomon Isaacs into the very lap of Fortune. It is not necessary to give particulars of this business; it was no worse than many another, the transactors of which, having full purses, are held in honour by the world; and, like many another, a second person was concerned in it, who at a sudden and critical time was conveniently not to be found. There was some hubbub about it—not in anyway affecting Solomon Isaacs, who plodded through the streets with the meek cry of 'Old clo'!' on his lips. He was the last man in the world whom suspicion could fall upon. A number of individuals happened to be interested in this person who had so suddenly disappeared, and they traced him to a ship which only a week before had sailed for the Bermudas. They immediately set the law in motion, and took steps to have him 'interviewed' (best put it politely) on his arrival at his destination.

Now how was it that this proceeding reached Solomon Isaacs' ears, and why did it have such an effect upon him that he shut himself up in his bedroom, and wept and tore at the small quantity of hair on his head of which time had not yet robbed him? In the quietude of his chamber he did this, and when he mourned in sackcloth and ashes, the walls were the only witnesses of the pitiable spectacle. With his friends and acquaintances he was more humble than ever; he abased himself, as it were, before them, and in his game of cribbage with Moses Levy, resorted to no small tricks for the purpose of winning an additional penny. Truly, he was born under a lucky star. On one red-letter day in his life he heard news of a wreck which caused the loss of a score of lives. Among those whose names were printed in the papers as being drowned was the person already referred to, whose bones were now lying peacefully at the bottom of the sea. Solomon Isaacs could hardly believe his ears, and he convinced himself by bribing a newsboy to read an account of the wreck and the names of those who were washed overboard. He and the newsboy stood together in a little courtyard, away from the whirl of the city's busy life, the boy spelling out the words slowly and painfully, and Solomon Isaacs, with his old-clo' bag across his shoulders, bending over him, enthralled. Convinced that there was no deception, Solomon Isaacs hastened to Spitalfields, and running to his bedroom again, plumped himself upon a chair in the excitement of his joy. As he entered the room he touched with his fingers the little tablet of tin attached to the portal—the little tablet which contained an inspiration in Hebrew to prevent the entrance of evil spirits. He kissed his fingers and muttered in the ancient tongue a few grateful words; for he was a devout man, and went to synagogue regularly every Sabbath, and mumbled through a form of prayers of the meaning of which he had as much knowledge as the Man in the Moon.

He knew most of these prayers by heart, and was convinced of their efficacy in cases of wrong-doing. Not a few persons use prayer as a convenient purifier. Then he rubbed his hands, and reflected with pious gratitude that now no one could discover anything—that no one knew anything of the affair but himself and the little fishes.

'No one but me and the little fishes!' he chuckled to himself with a powerful sense of humour; 'and they can't speak the poor little innocents! they're only good for frying, or stewing with balls, the poor little things!'

In this way did old Solomon Isaacs comport himself in the solitude of his bedchamber in Spitalfields, and mingle thanksgivings to his Creator with self-congratulations on his good fortune.

## CHAPTER VIII.

### AN EXCITEMENT IN SPITALFIELDS.

SOON after this he settled his plans. He would not for a little while make it apparent to his friends, that he need no longer work for his living. He went out as usual every morning with his bag, and experienced immense delight by trifling, as it were, with the old-clo' business. When he was called into a house, he played with those who wished to dispose of their cast aside garments, as a cat with a full stomach plays with a mouse. He laughed in his sleeve as he offered a quarter of what the articles were worth, and took his departure with inward chuckles at them for the time they had wasted.

'On such and such a day,' said he to himself, 'I will go out for the last time with my bag. Arter that, I'll set up as a gentleman.'

Then would the grub cast its skin, and be transformed to a butterfly.

The day arrived.

'How should you like to be a lady, Milly?' he said to his wife for the twentieth time before he left the house; 'a fine lady—a grand lady?'

She made no reply. She had abandoned all hope of understanding the meaning of his strange remarks. He looked at her in silence for a moment or two, with a sly leer in his eye, and took from his pocket two sovereigns.

'Go and buy yourself a dress,' he said, giving her the money; 'a grand dress!—a yaller silk, with flowers in it. Something as 'll make a show, and make you look like a lady?'

A new wonder to Mrs. Isaacs. Since their courting days, he had not done the like.

'Are you sure you can afford it?' she asked. 'Business 'as been so bad with you lately, you know.'

He was so tickled with this, that he had to sit in a chair and enjoy it.

'Never mind if I can afford it,' he replied; 'you pocket the money or I might take it back. Solomon Isaacs knows what he's about. Mind! a showy dress, as 'll make people stare!'

And he left her, murmuring softly to himself,

'Clo'! Old clo'! Ha! ha! Clo! Old clo'! What a game it is! Clo'! Old clo'!'

Had any curious person followed his movements on that day, he would have been considerably astonished, for Solomon Isaacs walked through his usual streets with a swagger, and his cry of 'Clo'! Old clo'!' had an exultant ring in it. He cast inquiring glances at the fine houses he passed, as though calculating how much a year he would have to pay for them. When he returned in the evening, after a most enjoyable day, his bag had not a single article of clothing in it, and as he entered the dirty street in Spitalfields, in which he had resided for so many years, he turned up his nose at it—although truth compels the declaration that his nose was not that way inclined. Then he shouted for the last time, 'Clo'! Old clo'!' and was about to cast his bag into the road, in a fit of reckless enthusiasm, when he was arrested by the thought that it might 'fetch' something [at the rag-shop next to his house; the rag-shop that was kept by an Irishman with red eyes and no eyelashes, and in the windows of which was the filthiest conglomeration of rags, and fat, and rusty locks, and blue-mouldy bits of copper and brass, that it is possible to imagine. Into the shop of this red-eyed Irishman, who was popularly known as the Vampire, did Solomon Isaacs betake himself, and there and then offered his old clo' bag for sale as rags, asking so much a pound for it. The two men commenced to haggle. What passed is not known, but presently Solomon Isaacs came out of the shop with a flaming face, clasping his old-clo' bag in trembling hands, muttering, 'I'll keep it, the Irish thief! I wouldn't sell it 'im if he went down on 'is knees to me.'

And some other words to the effect, that the Vampire, after driving a hard bargain for the bag, after beating him down to the last farthing, had tried to pass a bad halfpenny upon him. The Vampire, following Solomon Isaacs to the door of his shop, attacked him with such violence that a crowd assembled, who listened with delight to the compliments exchanged between the two. Bad language was used, the record of which can be dispensed with, and Solomon Isaacs retired to his Englishman's castle in a fit of great indignation.

When he declared that he would keep his old-clo' bag he spoke the truth. He made no further attempt to dispose of it. Throwing it to his wife, he desired her to burn it, or do anything else she liked with it.

Before two minutes had elapsed, the whole neighbourhood rang with the news that Solly Ikey and the Vampire had had a desperate row, and, as it was the breathing-time of day, the residents were prepared to enjoy the excitement. Mrs. Simons, Mrs. Jacobs, Mrs. Cohen, Mrs. Lilienthal, and a number of other intimates, rushed from their houses into the street, and discussed it with animated gestures and eager tongues, while the Vampire raged and stamped in front of his shop, uttering dreadful imprecations, and challenging Solomon Isaacs to come on and have it out like a man. If his allusions had been confined to the object of his wrath, the neighbours would have listened to them with enjoyment and satisfaction; but as they affected the general body of the Hebrew community, it was not long before the Vampire found himself pitted against a score or two of indignant neighbours, whose nerves were quivering at the insults hurled against their religion by the irate Milesian. This suited him exactly; he was in his element; and very soon all Spitalfields was in a ferment. Never was a call to arms more eagerly responded to. Girls and boys swarmed, as though by magic, in

immense numbers ; men ran from their rooms with their shirt-sleeves tucked up ; women joined the throng with their needles in their hands ; the click of the sewing-machine was suddenly suspended ; barrows were left to take care of themselves ; the policeman, for whom such excitements had no joys, strolled pensively from the battle-field to enjoy the sweets of repose ; first and second floor windows were thrown up, necks were craned to their utmost tension, and verbal defiance flung in every direction. It was a curious feature in this ebullition of feeling that it was the direct means of stirring up personal animosities which had long been peacefully slumbering, and which had nothing whatever to do with the particular point at issue. You may imagine the scene ; the perfect Babel of sound ; everybody quarrelling with everybody ; the red faces, the furious gesticulation ; the running from one to another ; the unintelligible and deeply interesting explanations ; and at its proper stage (all the fuel being burned) the gradual cooling down of the volcano, the shutting of the first and second floor windows, the dropping off of the exhausted combatants to look after their household affairs, the melting away of the boys and girls, the return of the policeman, the excited exit of the Vampire into his shop, and the small group of neighbours left standing in the middle of the road, still endeavouring, with pertinacious curiosity, to arrive at some understanding of the matter.

One fact this small and devoted band did elicit—that the quarrel arose during the negotiation of a bargain between Solomon Isaacs and the Vampire, in the course of which the Vampire had attempted to pass a bad half-penny upon the old-clo' dealer. But what was Solly Ikey trying to sell to the Vampire ? they asked of one another. His Bag, answered one, wiser than his fellows. Thereupon a silence pervaded the assembly, for the circumstance of a person in Solomon Isaacs' position wishing to get rid of his old-clo' bag was too astonishing for words. Had he attempted to sell his shadow, it would have excited scarcely less surprise. During the silence, Mike Myers made his appearance, to whom the incident was related by a dozen voices, in a dozen different keys. What did it all mean ? they inquired of Mike Myers, as of an oracle.

'Why, don't you know ?' he exclaimed.

'Know ! Know what ?' they demanded, crowding round him.

'Why, that Solly Ikey's made his fortune !' he cried.

'What !' they screamed.

'It's true,' said Mike ; 'he's got no more use for his old-clo' bag, my dears. He could buy up all Spitalfields.'

No one questioned the veracity of the statement, and the news ran through the assembly with the suddenness and certainty of electricity.

'That accounts for it,' said Mrs. Simons. 'Mrs. Isaacs bought a new dress this morning—a yaller silk. She showed it me. Solly give her the money before he went out this morning.'

Confirmation this, strong as proof in Holy Writ. Yes, there was no room for doubt. Solomon Isaacs had made his fortune. The astonishing news was freely commented on and discussed, the women gossips retiring one by one to retail the wonderful news to their friends. In the course of the evening all sorts of theories were started as to how he had made his money, and the door of his house was eagerly watched, in the hope that he would issue therefrom, and converse with his neighbours upon



the subject. In this hope they were disappointed. Solomon Isaacs did not appear among them, and they were left to wonder and speculate and to multiply the amount he had amassed, until it reached a perfectly fabulous sum.

Could they have witnessed the scene that was taking place in Solomon Isaacs' sanctum sanctorum, they would have been much edified. The door was locked and bolted, and even the keyhole had been carefully stuffed by Solomon Isaacs' cautious fingers, so that no prying eyes or ears should get an inkling of what was going on within. Solomon Isaacs and his wife were sitting at the table, very close together. In front of Mrs. Isaacs were a torn piece of smudged paper, and a broken egg-cup containing some very thick and muddy ink; in her hand was an old quill pen. In front of Solomon Isaacs was a large greasy pocket-book, from which he extracted a number of dirty bank-notes. He thumbed them carefully over, wetting his thumb with his tongue, and occasionally held a note up to the light, to make sure that two were not sticking together. His face was very red. Mrs. Isaacs' face was very pale, and her knees trembled. Making a little pile of a portion of the notes, Solomon Isaacs placed them on one side, with something heavy upon them, to prevent them from fluttering away.

'Put down a eight,' said he.

It was no easy matter to put down an eight, to judge from Mrs. Isaacs' manner. It occupied her a minute to fix the pen properly in her fingers, and her features underwent unconceivable contortions in the process. Her movements, however, were sufficiently rapid for her husband, whose calculations were of so abstruse a character that he was compelled to dictate slowly and laboriously. When the task was finished, the paper was covered with figures, which he studied with exultation. They were not elegantly formed, for Mrs. Isaacs was 'no scholar,' as she often declared; but it did not detract from their value and importance that this figure appeared to be afflicted with cramp, and that with gout, and that they were swollen or attenuated, and twisted out of all proper proportion. Miserable and mis-shapen as they were, they represented money—solid substantial gold, to which all men bent the knee.

'There, Milly,' exclaimed Solomon Isaacs, pacing the room in a glow. 'You wouldn't 'ave believed it of me, would you? Every penny of it is mine, every penny!'

'But why did you keep it so close, Ikey?' asked Mrs. Isaacs, in a bewildered tone. 'Why couldn't you 'ave told me before? Didn't I deserve to be told?'

'I wanted to surprise you,' replied Solomon Isaacs; 'I wanted to surprise everybody. Even Leon don't know. When I put by the first five-pound note I was afeard to say anything to anybody! It might 'ave changed my luck. I wouldn't run the risk—no, I wouldn't run the risk. If you're playing cards, and winning, never change your seat. If you do, you'll begin to lose. When you're in a lucky seat, don't move, don't stir from it! Go on as you commence. That was the way with me—things 'd 'ave all gone wrong if I'd whispered a word to a soul.'

Mrs. Isaacs sighed as she thought of the many times she had been pinched for a few shillings, and how she had had to scrape and manage

to make both ends meet with the money her husband allowed her for housekeeping ; but she uttered no complaint. She was too dazed with the prospect before her ; she could not realize what it meant. With a strange regret she cast her eyes across the room in which she had lived during the best part of her married life. She had enjoyed much happiness within those common walls, and she had never felt till now how dear they were to her. The very piece of carpet upon which her feet rested seemed to appeal to her, faded and worn as it was. The room was filled with old familiar friends.

With a very different feeling did Solomon Isaacs contemplate the room ; it had never looked so shabby, so mean, so entirely undesirable. 'A beastly place !' he thought ; 'a beastly place ! I shall be glad when I turns my back on it.' And then his thoughts reverted to the quarre he had had with the Vampire. He related it to his wife, putting such colour into it as best suited his view of the incident.

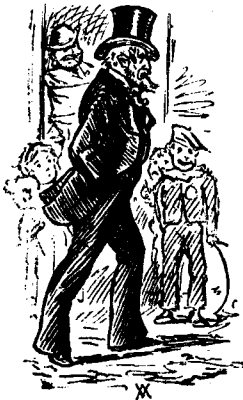
'Don't keep the quarrel up with him, Ikey,' implored Mrs. Isaacs. 'He's the spitefullest creature in the street.'

'He's a foul-mouthed thief !' cried Solomon Isaacs. 'I wash my 'ands of him !'

Which, looking at the colour of his hands, was undoubtedly a good resolve, if there was likely to be anything cleansing in the operation.

## CHAPTER IX.

### SOLOMON ISAACS IS DISGUSTED WITH HIS NAME.



THE following morning Solomon Isaacs commenced to live a new life. No longer was he compelled to jump out of bed early in the morning, summer and winter, hail, rain, snow, or blow, and prepare for his weary wanderings to earn his bread-and-butter. He could lie abed as long as he pleased, and laugh at the weather. No more trudging on foot all day, looking hungrily this way and that for beckoning fingers at door and window ; no more pulling off his hat in dark passages, trying to curry favour with the servants by agreeable words and by promises of reward if he made a good bargain with the master and mistress ; no more usherings in to the breakfast or sitting room, where would-be fine ladies and fashionable gentlemen haggled and chattered and inflicted torments upon him by the prices they asked for frayed waist-coats, brimless hats, buttonless trousers, and white-seamed and white-elbowed coats : no more being called 'a disgusting old wretch,' 'a thundering old villain,' 'an old thief of a Jew,' and he the while standing meekly by, with bended head, as if engaged in prayer, or as if these revellings were fairly his due ; no more being turned out of the room with insolent vituperation, and being called in again, with insulting sneers ; no more being asked if he would like a nice piece

of roast pork before he went away? All this was at an end. He was as good as the best of them. He was a rich man.

As he stood at his door, a halo, created by the power of money, seemed to descend from the clouds—surely the angels were on his side!—and shed a glory around him. He felt its warm influence, and already began to reap the benefit of his new importance. The signs were unmistakable. A dog, who had been in the habit of rubbing against him when he left and returned to Spitalfields, approached him now with timidity in his manner, and being rolled into the gutter by a touch of Solomon Isaacs' foot, rose and slunk sneakingly away, with his tail between his legs; many of his old acquaintances, who had been wont to speak to him in tones of the commonest familiarity, passed him by with a humble nod; little boys and girls gazed at him from a distance, with looks of awe, and with their dirty fingers in their dirty mouths, silently set him up as a kind of example whom, when they became men and women, they would wish to emulate; a man with whom he had had bitter quarrels, and who, only two or three days ago, had called him names which a pen would be ashamed to write, crossed to the other side of the street, abashed and chapfallen in the presence of money, and had not a word to say for himself. What could be plainer? Solomon Isaacs' head gradually rose and rose, and his neck lengthened and stiffened, until they were the exact counterparts of other necks and heads attached to the bodies of wealthy magnates whom in his career he had observed and envied. 'They've 'eerd of it,' he thought, with becoming pride. 'I don't belong any longer to their common set. They knew better than to take the liberty of speaking to me.' But there was a bitter drop in his cup. An old acquaintance, in passing, did take the liberty of speaking to him. 'Good morning, Ikey,' he said. Solomon Isaacs started as though he had been stung, and gave the man such a look of purse-proud indignation that he did not forget it for a month afterwards.

Solomon Isaacs had much to think of and much to do—engrossing business with reference to money—and during the entire day there recurred to him at intervals the memory of the disgustingly familiar 'Good-morning, Ikey.' It distressed and annoyed him in the most amazing manner. It was a pin with a very sharp point, and pricked him sorely. In the afternoon he told his wife that he was going to Moses & Son's to buy a new suit of clothes. In accordance with his wish, Mrs. Isaacs was dressed in her yellow silk—she had bought it ready made at a cheap costumer's—and she felt so grand in it that she was afraid to move.

'Very well, Ikey,' she said.

He went out of the house, fuming at nothing.

'Hallo!' whispered one young salesman to another in Moses & Son's establishment, as Solomon Isaacs entered the clothing department; 'there's old Solly Ikey! Wonder what *he* wants!'

What he wanted at that moment—his sharp ears having caught the disrespectful reference—was to wither into ashes with a glance of his eagle eye the young blackguard who dared to call him Solly Ikey. He took his revenge upon the salesman, who couldn't persuade *him* that this coat was a beautiful fit or that those trousers were just the thing—and drove the man into a state of desperation by trying on at least thirty pairs of trousers, with coats and waistcoats to match, before he pleased to be suited; and all the time he was pulling on and pulling off



the clothes, and surveying himself in the glass, the insulting 'Good-morning, Ikey,' and 'Hallo! here's old Solly Ikey!' rang in his ears. Never had such an affront been put upon him. With his old suit wrapped up in a bundle under his arm, he desired the salesman to make out and receipt his bill. 'And none of your impudence, young man,' he added, with a rich man's frown; 'if you don't write my name proper, I'll report you. Mr. Solomon Isaacs, Esquire, that's the way to put it down.'

The bill being duly made out and receipted, Solomon Isaacs walked into Whitechapel, arrayed in his new suit. And now a singular impression crept upon and impressed him. Everybody seemed to know him, seemed to be staring at him, seemed to be laughing at him. 'Didn't they never see a gentleman with new clothes on before?' he muttered, beginning to feel uncomfortable at his respectable appearance. It was the first time since his marriage that he had on an entirely new suit, and he was not easy in them. So strong grew his discomfort that he quickened his steps until they became a trot, the speed of which increased when he arrived at Spitalfields, where everybody stared at him harder than ever, and where the little boys and girls ran to have a good look at him. Rushing up-stairs, he stripped off his new suit, and whipped on his old, and all the while he ran, and all the while he dressed and undressed 'Good-morning, Ikey,' and 'Hallo! here's old Solly Ikey!' never ceased to worry him. Ikey! Ikey! What a disagreeable meaning it

conveyed! What a misfortune, what an injustice, it was for a rich man to be born with the name of Ikey!

Later on in the night he recovered his composure, and again arrayed himself in his new suit, for the enjoyment of Mrs. Isaacs. He did not venture out of doors. He and his wife sat together in their room, staring at each other for an hour and more. In the course of the entertainment he produced with much ceremony first a feather which he desired her to 'stick in 'er 'ead,' and then two pairs of lavender kid gloves, one for Mrs. Isaacs, the other for himself.

'Put 'em on, Milly,' he said.

They were sizes too large for her, and his, also were sufficiently roomy, but they completed the grandeur of their appearance. Mrs. Isaacs still wore her yellow silk, and once or twice her husband said,

'Git up, Milly, and walk about. I likes to 'ear it rustle!'

And as she walked round and round the table, he gave her lessons in deportment, and, bearing in mind what he had seen other ladies do, desired her to bend forward and stick out her back, and sway her body gently to and fro, and walk on the tips of her toes, encouraging and sustaining her—for she panted fearfully, and nearly came to grief once or twice—by clapping his hands and saying,

'Bravo, Milly, bravo! You look like a queen! By my life, Milly, you look like a queen!'

Of course the wonderful news that Solomon Isaacs had made his fortune reached the ears of Moses and Rachel Levy; but, although the whole neighbourhood was talking of it, very little was said upon the subject by either the old man or his daughter. During this excitement, Leon was absent from London. His hopes of promotion had been more than realized. His employer, noting his steadiness and general ability, had entrusted to him a delicate duty connected with a new manufacture of special fancy goods of which he had received early information. These goods were manufactured in Switzerland, and Leon had been selected to proceed there, and ascertain all particulars relating to them. He left England with a light heart, without the slightest suspicion of the astonishing change which was presently to take place in his father's fortunes.

Moses Levy was afraid to converse with Rachel on the subject which was agitating all Spitalfields. He knew well the mighty influence which such a change of circumstances makes in a man's nature, and he had reasons which he could not well have explained for mistrusting his old friend. Rachel, also, was full of fears, and could not banish from her mind the harrowing thought that now that Solomon Isaacs was rich, he would not be pleased that his son should marry a girl as poor as herself. Moses Levy heard of the quarrel between Solomon Isaacs and the Vampire on the night of its occurrence, and he related it to Rachel.

'They're saying all sorts of foolish things about Leon's father,' said Moses Levy, referring to the gossip of the neighbours; 'but I don't believe a word of it. Rachel, there's more mischief in one tongue than in fifty pair of hands.'

'Perhaps he will come up to-night,' said Rachel, bustling about with the tea-things, 'and tell us all about it.'

It was not one of Solomon Isaacs' regular nights for visiting Moses Levy, but, considering the close relations which existed between them,

the expectation that he would come and impart his good fortune to so old a friend was not unreasonable. It was what Moses Levy himself would have done, from the natural instinct of friendship. Solomon Isaacs, however, did not make his appearance, being, as we know, very busily employed in calculating his riches; and Moses Levy and Rachel sat sadly silent, he pretending to be busy with his Hebrew book, and she quietly employed in her waistcoat making. When she said 'Father, I think I will go to bed,' he rose without a word, and took his candlestick—for he slept in the inner room, and she in the sitting-room, where they had their meals. Placing his candlestick in his bedroom, Moses Levy returned to wish Rachel good-night. She inclined her modest head before him, and he placed his hands upon it and blessed her, as was his habit before retiring to rest, but more impressively on this night than he had done for many a month. There was a solemn tenderness in his manner which brought a dimness to her eyes. He uttered no word aloud, but the blessing he breathed over her was from his heart of hearts, and he sent a mute appeal to God that his child might be spared the cruel disappointment that saddens the lives of many poor girls. She understood him, and when he removed his hands from her head she raised her face to his, and kissed him. Her heart was too full to speak. It was only by keeping silence that she was able to repress her tears.

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## CHAPTER X.

MOSES LEVY PLAYS A GAME OF CRIBBAGE WITH HIMSELF FOR AN IMPORTANT STAKE.

TOWARDS the end of the week, as Moses Levy returned from his weary wanderings he met Solomon Isaacs face to face. The rich man would have been glad to avoid the meeting, but being absorbed in meditating upon the suitability of a fine house in a fashionable locality, the lease of which had that day been offered to him, he did not see Moses Levy until he came full plump upon him. It was an awkward moment for both, but more so for the rich man than for the poor man. Solomon Isaacs stammered and flushed up, and attempted to say a few words, but they came out of his mouth all of a tangle, and Moses Levy therefore did not understand them. But he understood the manner of his quondam friend, and would have expressed himself angrily had he not been restrained by thought of his daughter.

'How do you do, Ikey?' said Moses Levy, forcing himself into this mode of salutation. It cost him a pang to speak the words in a cordial tone; something whispered to him that he owed it to himself to be more dignified; but he was not thinking of himself. His salutation, however, in whatever words it had been expressed, could not have produced a worse effect upon Solomon Isaacs. Ikey! Ikey! It was a deliberate insult to be thus addressed; the more he thought of it, the more offensive the name was growing to him. He made a clumsy attempt to conceal his annoyance, and answered stiffly and ungraciously,

'Very well, very well, thankee, Mr. Levy.'

Mr. Levy! The 'Mr.' drove itself like a sharp blade into Moses Levy's heart, for he seemed to hear in it the knell of Rachel's happiness.

'Been out to-day?' asked Moses Levy, not knowing exactly what to say.

'No,' answered Solomon Isaacs, pompously inflating his chest. 'Aven't you 'eerd—'

'That you've got suddenly rich!' interrupted Moses Levy. 'Oh, yes. It is true, then?'

'Yes—yes—yes!' As though a redundancy of money required a redundancy of affirmation.

'I thought it likely you would have come and told us yourself,' observed Moses Levy.

'Been busy—busy! Had to look after things.'

'How did it all happen?'

'Spekylated—spekylated, Mo!' said Solomon Isaacs, becoming more familiar in the contemplation of his good fortune.

'Ah!' ejaculated Moses Levy, dwelling lengthily on the little word.

There was a meaning in it, as he uttered it, that was not pleasant in Solomon Isaacs' ears. It conveyed to him a doubt, a suspicion that his money had not been well come by, and he resented it by saying abruptly, 'Good-night, good-night,' and hurrying away.

Moses Levy gazed mournfully at the retreating figure of the rich man, and the old-clo' bag on his shoulders became as heavy as lead, notwithstanding that there was very little in it. He crept slowly to his house, and up his two flights of stairs, to the little room where Rachel was awaiting him. He did not speak to her of his interview with Leon's father, nor of the uneasiness he felt in consequence. He was more than usually tender towards her, and strove to cheer her by telling her that he had made a good day's work—which was not true. Then he related to her, in a comical way, a story he had heard in the course of the day, after which he washed himself, and said his prayers, and sat down with her to tea.

'I wonder what Leon is having for tea?' said Rachel during the meal.

'Not fried fish, you may depend,' replied Moses Levy. "He'd sooner be here than where he is—eh, Rachel?" with a wistful questioning of her pale face.

'He says just those words in a letter I got from him this morning.'

'A good letter, Rachel?'

'A beautiful letter.'

Moses Levy's spirits rose.

'Does he say anything about—about Mr. Isaacs?'

'No,' replied Rachel, with blushes; 'it's all about me.'

'Then it isn't likely Leon has heard the news, Rachel.'

'I should think not, father. He would have been certain to have mentioned it, if he had.'

Moses Levy's spirits fell to a desponding point again.

Rachel was not in the habit of showing Leon's letters to her father; she would select portions here and there, and read them to the old man; but this letter, in silence, she handed to him. Moses Levy read it carefully. It was in every respect a model lover's letter, and was undoubtedly calculated to promote confidence in the truth and honesty of the writer. But the impression left upon Moses Levy's mind by his recent interview with Solomon Isaacs was too powerful to allow such confidence

undisputed sway. Although himself an unworldly man, he was to some extent versed in the world's ways, and he murmured to himself, 'Leon does not know yet: he does not know.'

'What are you saying?' inquired Rachel, observing that her father's lips were moving.

'That it is a beautiful letter, my dear. Leon will be true to you, my dear—yes, yes——'

'Father!'

All the colour had died out of her face, and her hands were trembling. For a moment she looked upon her father as her enemy, and she took sides against him with Leon and Solomon Isaacs. How dare he whisper a doubt of Leon's truth! To hear it spoken distracted almost beyond endurance her already troubled mind. Her eyes sparkled with resentment against the father she so loved and honoured.

'Rachel, my blessing!' he cried imploringly. 'Forgive me—forgive me!'

She crept into his arms, and he pressed her to his breast, and soothed her with loving words.

'Mr. Isaacs has been too busy to come and see us this week,' said Rachel. 'We must not be unjust to him.'

'No, no, Rachel; you are right—yes, yes, there is no doubt you are right.'

'When you grow rich, father——'

'Yes, my blessing,' he said with a wan smile; 'when I grow rich——'

'You will be the same at first; you will have so much to do, so much to look after.'

'Of course, my dear, of course.'

'So because Mr. Isaacs has not been here yet, we must not blame Leon, or doubt Leon. Father, you and Leon are the two best men in the world; I think you could not do a bad thing, if you tried. And Mr. Isaacs is the next best.'

'Yes, Rachel,' replied Moses Levy, with a sinking heart; 'Solomon Isaacs is a good man, a good man.'

'There is no sacrifice you can think of,' continued Rachel, with a beautiful glow in her face, 'that I would not make for Leon's sake, and because his father has had the good fortune to grow rich—for I suppose it is true—I am not going to believe that this is a wicked cruel world. Why, it should make things brighter for us, instead of darker!'

'True, my dear. I am a heartless, unfeeling old man!'

'You are not—you are not,' she said, with a fond pressure, kissing his old fingers. 'Only you must never whisper a word against Leon—never, never!'

'You will never hear a word of that sort pass my lips, Rachel.'

'Nor against Mr. Isaacs. He's not to be blamed because he has grown rich. You wouldn't mind it yourself, father.'

'That I shouldn't, Rachel; there wouldn't be any trouble then, my dear.'

'And there's none now. You'll see! To-night is Mr. Isaacs' regular night for cribbage. When he's sitting at this table, playing with you, you'll be sorry for what you've said against him.'

She cleared the table briskly, and placed the greasy old pack of cards



and the war-worn cribbage-board before her father. Then she went into his bedroom, and washed her eyes with cold water, and kissed Leon's letter in the dark. Leon not true to her! Would there ever be light in heaven again?

Of the two nights in the week on which Solomon Isaacs made his appearance in Moses Levy's room to play cribbage, this, which was at the latter end of the week, was the more important—for the reason that Rachel used to provide a little bit of supper for the old friends. On this occasion there was something especially dainty in the cupboard, a favourite dish which Solomon Isaacs had often praised. For years Solomon Isaacs had not missed a night unless it was holiday time. Moses Levy felt that the breaking of the custom would be almost like the snapping of a vital cord in his body. Then, again, it was a test—absolutely a test of right-doing; if Solomon Isaacs came scatheless out of the fire, pure gold, indeed, would he prove himself to be.

Moses Levy awaited the result with fear and trembling. He sat at the table, and, in deep suspense, listened for the familiar sound of Solomon Isaacs' footfall. Rachel, as usual, took her work in her hand, and sat in her accustomed seat, where she could see the old friends, and exchange smiles with them. The time passed slowly and heavily, and every moment the silence became more impressive. Nothing was heard but the tick of the old clock, which seemed to beat 'He will soon come, he will not come, he will soon come, he will not come.' It is really true that to both Moses and Rachel Levy's ears, the tick of the clock conveyed the same meaning. Moses Levy had but little hope; Rachel had failed to convince him. As though it lay before him in a clear glass, had Solomon Isaacs' soul been revealed to him in their last interview, and when the clock marked half an hour beyond the rich man's usual time of arrival, it distinctly proclaimed to him that the old friendship had come to an end. Money had broken the tie between them. But for money, he and Solomon Isaacs might have gone on to the end of their days, enjoying each other's companionship in the good old way. But for money, no cloud would have darkened his dear daughter's happiness. Surely what could work so much ill, and bring so much unmerited suffering to tender hearts, could be nothing but a curse! Sadly and softly, so as not to attract Rachel's attention, Moses Levy took up the cards, and began to play a game of patience; but after losing a couple of games, he changed it to cribbage, dealing out the cards fairly and honestly to himself and an opponent 'shaped i' the air.' In the course of his sad amusement, Moses Levy made mute wagers with his invisible antagonist, out of his hopes and fears. As thus: 'If I win,' he whispered, shaping each word as distinctly as though an actual opponent were sitting opposite, 'if I win, Leon will be faithful to Rachel; if I lose, he will be false to her.' And he lost every game! It would be difficult to describe his grief and dismay at the uniformity of this result; if he had won once, he would have been comforted: it would have given him hope. It was with a heavy heart that he scored the game against himself on the cribbage-board. He cast furtive glances at Rachel, actually apprehensive that she knew that he was playing for her happiness, and was losing. He tried hard to win; at the commencement of each fresh game he whispered, 'This is the real-game,' trying to cheat himself into the belief that the last was not played in earnest,

and that he really had not meant to stake anything upon it. But his melancholy juggling met with its punishment ; not a game could he win, not a game. Ill luck clung close to him, and drove him almost out of his wits. At length he resolved, for the last time, to stake the entire issue on one concluding game. Having settled this definitely and determinedly, having pledged himself solemnly to abide by the result, he proceeded to cut for crib, and to deal the cards. He played well and carefully—never in his life had he played so well ; he did not throw away a single chance ; he played fairly too ; to win by trickery would be sure to bring misfortune. The game ran pretty close to the end, when at the last deal he found himself with the best chance of winning he had had during the night. His eyes brightened ; his heart grew lighter. It was his enemy's crib ; he himself wanted only one for game, and his enemy wanted two. He threw out for crib, having a sure two ; he cut the cards for his enemy with his right hand, and turned up the enemy's crib card with the left. It was a knave, and it placed his enemy's peg in the winning hole ! Moses Levy dropped his cards upon the table with a look of despair. He had worked himself into such a fever of nervous excitement as to positively believe that the turning up of that knave had irretrievably wrecked his daughter's happiness. It was sufficiently suggestive, Heaven knows ! in its application to the affairs of life. For how often are our dearest hopes blasted by the turning up of a knave !

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## CHAPTER XI.

### THE LESSON OF LOVE.

MORE than a month elapsed before Solomon Isaacs left Spitalfields, and during that time he did not visit Moses Levy. Having no desire to meet his old friend in the street, he was careful to avoid him, there was a matter in his mind which caused him great disturbance, and it was not until he had taken his departure from his old quarters that he resolved upon his course of action with reference to it. Leon was still absent from London. His mission had been entirely successful, and had led him to other discoveries in the shape of suitable new goods for his employers. Mentioning this in his correspondence, he was instructed to pursue his inquiries, and although he was anxious to get back to Rachel, his future career, as he believed, depended upon his compliance with the orders he received. He had no suspicion that his father had anything to do with his long absence—which was really the case—nor of the change that had taken place in Solomon Isaacs' fortune. Solomon Isaacs had strictly desired his wife not to mention the matter in her letters.

'I want—' said Solomon Isaacs ; 'I want to make 'im stare.'

Rachel Levy also had her reasons for keeping silence. Leon, she thought, must surely know that his father had grown rich, and it distressed her and caused her uneasiness that he made no reference to it. She would not, however, write a word on the subject ; it was his place to speak first. Solomon Isaacs was most particular in enjoining his wife not to visit Spitalfields until he gave her permission, and when she re-

monstrated, flew into a passion, and said he knew his own business best.

‘Do you want to ruin me?’ he cried.

She was compelled into obedience, and wept many bitter tears over the estrangement between herself and Rachel Levy.

‘But why don’t they come to see us?’ she asked.

‘You’ll drive me out of my mind!’ was the only reply he vouchsafed. ‘Can’t you wait? Ain’t we up to our ’eads and ears with things? You take my advice, Milly Isaacs!—let me manage my own business my own way!’

He was certainly busy night and day furnishing his new residence in the West end of London, and superintending certain alterations therein.

He was mighty particular about this and that, and endeavoured in his conversations with builders and house-agents to impress them with the notion that he had been used to grandeur all his life. It was a comical sight to see him attempt to act the gentleman, with the old Adam peeping out the moment he began to bargain with the tradesmen. Then it was that all his native shrewdness was displayed, and that, in his wrangles over the values of textures and materials, he baited down to the last shilling. When he was gone the tradesmen exchanged winks, and put their fingers to their noses; they knew all about old Solomon Isaacs, and they had many a good laugh at him behind his back. His bank-notes, however were as good as any other man’s. A nice thing it would be in this world if tradesmen were particular as to where the money they put into their tills came from!

Mrs. Isaacs was dazed and bewildered at this tremendous jump up the social ladder, and her heart sank as she walked through the grand rooms, and wondered what on earth they were going to do with them. She did not know whether to be pleased or sorry.

At length Solomon Isaacs, having come to a certain decision, set apart an evening for his visit to Moses Levy. Behold him, then, mounting the stairs in Spitalfields which led to his old friend’s apartments.

It had been his custom hitherto to enter the room without ceremony, but on this occasion, after stepping up-stairs—not with his old rapid shuffle, but slowly and in a stately manner—he rapped with his knuckles, and waited for permission to enter. He heard the voices of Rachel and her father in the room, and he put his ear to the door, to hear what they were saying. ‘They’re a-playing cribbage,’ he whispered to himself; ‘I didn’t think Rachel could play.’ He was correct in this conjecture; Rachel had learnt the game for the purpose of amusing her father, and to afford him some recompense for the loss of his old opponent. Solomon Isaacs waited a little, and then rapped again. It is not customary for persons in Moses Levy’s condition in life to say ‘Come in,’ in response to a knock at the door; they usually open the door for their visitor; and on this occasion Rachel rose, with her cards in her hands, and fell back with a little hysterical cry when she saw who the visitor was. This in itself was sufficient to cause some discomposure to Solomon Isaacs, and he lingered on the threshold, scarcely knowing whether to enter the room or go out of the house. Moses Levy, also, was discomposed by the sight of Solomon Isaacs; but he recovered himself quickly, and, actuated both by his anxiety for Rachel and the instinct of hospitality—a beautiful and strongly-marked feature in the Jewish character—he desired his visitor to take a seat, indicating, with a courteous motion of

his hand, the chair which Solomon Isaacs was to occupy. The unusual circumstance of Solomon Isaacs removing his hat from his head when he sat down may have been brought about by his desire to indicate by an outward sign that his present visit was not to be regarded in the same light as of old, or it may have been compelled by the singularly courteous manner of Moses Levy, whose calmness, considering the stake at issue, was wonderful to behold. The two old friends presented at this moment a notable contrast. Moses Levy's white beard, his benevolent expression, his blue eyes—somewhat of an uncommon attribute among Jews—his loosely-hanging old coat, the stoop of his shoulders, his shapely hands, formed a harmonious and pleasant picture. In his youth, he must have been remarkably handsome, and the goodness of his character and the simplicity of his heart imparted grace to his old age. In his face you could see the source of Rachel's beauty, and the likeness between them received a spiritual charm from the fact that in feeling and sentiment the one was the exact counterpart of the other. Moses Levy's face was almost fair, and the furrows in his forehead added to the benignancy of his appearance. Solomon Isaacs' forehead and face were also deeply furrowed, but the spirit of cunning lurked in the hard lines, and the pinched nostrils and the wrinkles in the corners of his lips were tell-tale witnesses of a life storm-tossed by greed and avarice. Moses Levy's voice was soft and silvery. Solomon Isaacs' voice, since he had become rich, had grown more than ever like the turning of a rusty key in a rusty lock.

Solomon Isaacs was dressed in a new suit of clothes, from the top of his head to the sole of his foot—a suit of clothes not bought ready-made, but cut and put together by a fashionable tailor. The cloth of his coat was superfine of the superfinest; his waistcoat was soft and velvety; his hat was glossy of the glossiest. His open coat displayed a massive gold chain, weighing four ounces at least, the device of which was formed by solid links of gold manacled to each other like galley-slaves; and he wore a great diamond pin in his black-satin cravat, and three great diamond rings on his fingers, outside his gloves—any of which articles of jewellery he would have been glad to sell you, at a profit, at a moment's notice. But with all his finery, if ever a man in this world presented a mean and disreputable appearance, Solomon Isaacs did so, as he sat in the presence of Moses and Rachel Levy. He was abashed by the modest beauty of Rachel and by the dignity of her father, and he did not feel at his ease.

He was rendered still more uncomfortable by Moses Levy's behaviour towards him. With a great deal of fuss and parade, he took from his waistcoat pocket a beautiful heavy gold watch, and, opening it, held it in his hand for a much longer time than was necessary for him or any man to ascertain the hour. He was compelled to turn his face towards the lamp upon the table, so that the hands might catch the light. Moses Levy's eyes wandered to the watch, Moses Levy smiled, but never a word in praise of the watch passed Moses Levy's lips. He fully expected Moses Levy to exclaim, 'Oh, what a lovely watch! How much did it cost?' and was prepared in an amicable spirit to go into the question of value. He closed the watch with a vicious click, and returning it to his pocket, smoothed his face with his hands in such a manner as to most conspicuously display the beauty and brilliancy of the diamonds on his

fingers. And Moses Levy's eyes wandered again, and his lips smiled, but never a word in praise of the rings did Moses Levy utter.

All this side-play did not take place in perfect silence. When Solomon Isaacs was seated, and the door closed, Moses Levy bade Rachel sit down, and said, without any further notice of his visitor,

'We will finish our game, my dear.'

It proceeded but slowly, and ten minutes elapsed before it was finished. Solomon Isaacs, despite the attention he lavished upon himself and his personal adornments, found time to watch the progress of the game, and thought, 'Ow badly Rachel Levy plays—ow badly she plays!' She did play badly; she hardly knew what she was doing. Her eyes were so dim that she could hardly tell hearts from diamonds—perhaps because hearts and diamonds was really the game that was being played in her life just then.

'You have lost, my dear,' says Moses Levy, with a sad significance in his tone.

He carefully picked up the cards, and placing them and the cribbage-board in the cupboard, resumed his seat, and waited for Solomon Isaacs to speak. He was determined not to be the first; and Solomon Isaacs, perceiving this, and that it placed him at a disadvantage, said to himself, 'I'll be even with 'im for it, the beast!—I'll be even with 'im!'

'Well, Mo,' he said aloud, clearing his throat after the awkward pause, 'and 'ow's business?'

It was undoubtedly a familiar way for a rich man like Solomon Isaacs to address so poor a person as Moses Levy, but Solomon Isaacs had a purpose to achieve, and was ready to make any sacrifice to succeed. But for that, he would surely have resented the affront offered to him in being compelled to wait like a servant until Rachel and her father had finished their game of cribbage.

'Well, Mo, and 'ow's business?'

'Pretty well the same as when you left it, Mr. Isaacs,' replied Moses Levy. 'I bought a good lot to-day.'

'Glad to 'ear it, Mo, glad to 'ear it,' said Solomon Isaacs, and then paused from not knowing how to proceed.

Moses Levy showed no disposition to assist him out of his dilemma, and every moment of continued silence added to his perplexity and annoyance. Rachel had taken up her work, and although her fingers were busy with the needle, and she never once raised her eyes to Solomon Isaacs' face, all her heart was in her ears.

During this pause, time is allowed for the contemplation of the picture of life presented in the humble room in Spitalfields, with all its mementos of homely love and suffering. The oddly assorted furniture, the worn carpet, the cheap ornaments; the simple tokens of affection, each of which has in the bygone days given pleasure to the giver and the receiver, the chair in which Rachel's mother used to sit and gaze with loving eyes upon the bright flower of her existence; her faded picture over the mantelshelf, and by its side the newer picture of Leon, fresh and smiling; the Hebrew device upon the eastern wall, worked in silk by Rachel's hands, towards which Moses Levy turns his eyes when he prays: all hallowed by the spirit of love which, in hours of peace and heartsease, sheds its sweet influence over the meanest things. Staring before him uneasily sits Solomon Isaacs, and near him Moses Levy, with

sad, benignant features, and the modest figure of Rachel bending over her work. Her face is hidden from the men, and its gentle grace and beauty are shadowed by fear and sorrow. The old clock marks the record which hastens all mankind to the common level of the grave, and its melancholy accents seem to proclaim a knowledge of the game that the living actors in the room are playing—seems to indicate a consciousness of the sickening battle which is being fought in the hearts of Rachel and her father. Truly the game resembles some game of cards. ‘I play hearts!’ whispers poor Rachel, with white and trembling lips. ‘I play diamonds!’ cries Solomon Isaacs, and a cold glitter of money darts from his eyes, like a poison fang, and strikes desolation into the young girl’s life. There are old, old lessons which played their parts thousands of years ago, and which are playing their parts to-day as though they are newly born, and imbued with the strength of a strong young life. The lesson of love is one of these. What was put into the earth thousands of years ago, of which no material atom shall be seen—what turned into dust thousands of years ago, and was used in after-days for Heaven knows what base purpose—once pulsed with such hopes and fears as Rachel’s heart is pulsing with now. Think of the dust of pure-souled, tender-hearted woman—be she lowly-born or highly-born, it matters not—and then of the passion, perhaps the fruition of love, which stirred the heart of that dust, when it was young and bright and imbued with life! The dawning of the love—the musings by day, the dreams by night—the tender fancies, the fond imaginings, the sweet hopes, the flushing of bright blood to the neck and face when her lover comes before her, not as he is, but as her great love makes him—the thrills of adoration, the shy glances, the tender hand-clasps, the joy hidden in the hero’s breast—what symbols them now? Dust. The heart that beat, the eye that brightened, the fingers in whose soft pressure Heaven-born hopes were wont to speak, the dewy eyelash, the tongue that uttered the loving thought:—a handful of dust is all that remains. It is the old, old story—the old, old lesson, to which men’s and women’s hearts have throbbled since the first man and the first woman drew breath in the Garden of Eden. Old as the hills, new as the sunrise. Glad am I to believe that some who read this simple tale of human passion must surely know that what these things are the symbol of shall never die if it be pure. Flesh shall turn to dust, and in its transformation shall play its allotted part in Nature’s wondrous scheme—shall strengthen the veins of tender blades of grass, shall ripen the juices of buttercup and daisy, shall make the air healthful for tree and flower—shall fade utterly away, and lose all form and likeness of itself; but love that is pure shall live for ever, untransformed!

And another old lesson! Mammon-worship—the lust for power born of money! What need to speak of the shame of it, when it lives apart from nobler attributes? But how we covet it—how we yearn for it—how we pray, lie, and sin for it! Here is a truism—new, it may be, though it is scarcely likely, for there are not many such, but not the less true whether it be old or new. Those are the most blessed who are not born to money. Sweet as the morning’s dew is money when it is honestly earned; sweeter than dew when it is well and worthily used. ‘I have more than enough for my wants—take you, my poor and strug-

gling brother, a portion of my superfluous store. With free hand and heart I give ; take—and let no one know.'

Here is another truism : Too much money makes a man drunk.

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## CHAPTER XII.

### SOLOMON ISAACS MAKES A PROPOSITION TO RACHEL.

FINDING that Moses Levy would not speak, Solomon Isaacs was compelled once more to break the silence. In an injured tone he asked.

'Ain't you pleased to see me. Mo ?'

Moses Levy returned a qualified answer.

'I am always pleased to see my friends.'

'I'd 'ave been 'ere before, but I couldn't find time. I've come now on a little bit of business. Business is always agreeable, eh, Mo ? Always agreeable !'

'I didn't suppose you came on a little bit of pleasure,' replied Moses Levy, pointedly waiving the agreeable aspect of the visit ; 'though you have been glad to do that, now and then, you remember.'

'Yes, yes,' said Solomon Isaacs, turning his largest diamond to the light, and admiring the brilliancy of the stones ; 'but times is changed now, times is changed !'

'They are, indeed,' responded Moses Levy.

'And we must go with 'em ; we've got to go with 'em—eh ?'

'You know best, Mr. Isaacs.'

'Of course I do, of course I do. I'm a rich man now'—and Solomon Isaacs would have proceeded to dilate upon his riches but that Moses Levy, mildly and firmly, arrested the arrogant current with,

'Never mind that, if you please.'

'Oh, as you like !' blustered Solomon Isaacs ; 'I don't want to force it on you.'

'Thank you. Will you be kind enough to let me know the little bit of business you've come upon ?'

Thus challenged, Solomon Isaacs turned to Rachel, and addressed her in a tone of whining familiarity.

'Rachel, I want to say something private to your father. 'Adn't you better leave the room, my dear ?'

Rachel raised her eyes pleadingly to her father's face, and said to him, without uttering a word—eyes can on occasions speak more eloquently than words—'He is going to speak about Leon. Do not send me away ; let me stay.'

'Yes, my child,' said Moses Levy, in answer to the silent appeal, 'you can stay. There is not the slightest occasion for you to go.'

'As a particular favour, Rachel !' said Solomon Isaacs ; 'I arks it as a particular favour !'

Rachel did not look at him ; her eyes were still directed towards her father, waiting for a fuller expression of his wish.

'Mr. Isaacs,' continued Moses Levy steadily, 'has been in the habit of coming here night after night, ever since you were born, Rachel ; he has been in this room hundreds of times, and never a word has passed

between us that I should be sorry to hear. What he has to say now he can say before you, if he is not ashamed.'

'Ashamed!' cried Solomon Isaacs.

'You must blame yourself for making me speak the word,' said Moses Levy, with a grave motion of his hands; 'if I have used it wrongly, I beg your pardon.'

'But, Mo!' still urged Solomon Isaacs.

'Call me Mr. Levy,' said Moses Levy, with a touch of pride; 'it will sound much better as things are. And as for Rachel, it is my desire that she shall not leave the room. So, as your time must be very precious now that you're a rich man, you had best come at once to your little bit of business.'

It was evident that delicacy of feeling was thrown away upon such an obstinate old man as Moses Levy, and Solomon Isaacs had no alternative but to speak in the presence of Rachel, who had quietly resumed her work.

'Well, then, Mo——'

'Mr. Levy, if you please,' again interrupted Moses Levy.

'Well, then, Mr. Levy,' cried Solomon Isaacs, firing up at Moses Levy's obstinacy, but cooling down immediately at the thought that if he spoke in anger he might not be able to accomplish his purpose. 'It's best to speak plain, ain't it?'

'Surely, surely!' said Moses Levy, with a significant glance at the rich man; 'plain and honest speaking, like plain and honest dealing, is the best.'

'Jist my motto! No 'umbug, you know; come to the point, you know! Since I've got rich—no offence in mentioning it, I 'ope!' and Solomon Isaacs broke off suddenly, thinking he had made a good hit.

'It's no offence to me, if it's none to you.'

'You're very good. I can't say 'ow much obliged to you I am.'

'Don't then.'

'Don't what?' exclaimed Solomon Isaacs, not knowing, from Moses Levy's impenetrable manner, whether his arrows were taking effect.

'Don't say how much obliged to me you are,' replied Moses Levy.

Solomon Isaacs felt as though he would like to throw something at Moses Levy's head. 'You exasperate me so,' he cried, 'that I don't know where I am! Where was I?'

'Since you grew rich,' prompted Moses Levy.

'Yes, yes, that's it. Since I've got rich, I've been thinking a good deal. When a—a gentleman ain't got no longer to go out with 'is bag for a living, he can't 'elp thinking of all sorts of things, can he?' A happy illustration occurred to him here. 'When a old suit of clothes is worn out, and you've got no more use for 'em, you throw 'em away or sell 'em you know.'

'And when old friends,' added Moses Levy, continuing the illustration, 'are, as you say, worn out and you have no further use for them, do you throw *them* away or sell them?'

'Ha, ha!' chuckled Solomon Isaacs; 'you will 'ave your joke, Mo, you will 'ave your joke.'

'My joke!' echoed Moses Levy sadly.

'Among other things,' said Solomon Isaacs, 'I've been thinking of Leon, and what's open to 'im now that he'll come into mouey.'



He watched Moses Levy's face narrowly, to see how this was received.

'Go on, Mr. Isaacs,' said Moses Levy quietly.

'Well, this is 'ow it is. There's a sort of a—a kind of a—you know what I mean—between Leon and Rachel.'

'I don't know what you mean,' said Moses Levy; his heart was bleeding in his daughter's cause, but he was at the same time obstinately bent upon compelling Solomon Isaacs to speak plainly. Another opportunity might not be afforded to him of ascertaining exactly how the ground lay. 'A kind of a—a sort of a—what, between Leon and Rachel?'

'You know, Mo—Mr. I mean—a sort of engagement.'

'I can't say that I exactly understand you,' said Moses Levy, his hands tightly clasped. 'There is no question as to the engagement between my daughter and your son. There is an absolute and not-to-be-disputed engagement—Rachel, my dear, you can leave the room, if you wish.'

'No, father,' said Rachel, in as steady a voice as she could command, 'I will stay, if you please.'

'Very good, my dear; go on with your work.'

He was fearful that if he watched her too closely, she might break down, and he therefore turned his attention to his visitor. He had a clear duty to perform towards his daughter. He was her champion, her defender, her only friend, and his eyes kindled as they fell upon the hard face of the man who sat opposite to him.

'There is, as I have said, an absolute and positive engagement between my child and yours. They sat for joy in this very room; you were present the whole of the day, and shook hands with every one who came to congratulate us upon what I hoped would prove the happiness of my child's life. You have no intention of denying this, I suppose?'

'I ain't a-going to deny it. I've come 'ere for your good, and Rachel's.'

'I hope so, Mr. Isaacs,' said Moses Levy more mildly.

'If you'll only listen to reason! You're old enough to know the ways of the world, but you talk like a babby,—as if you was born yesterday!' (So ill at ease was Solomon Isaacs as he administered this rebuke, that in his nervousness he plucked the button from one of the gloves—colour, invisible green—in which his large coarse hands were incased.) 'Can't you see 'ow it is yourself? When you was poor and I was poor, it was all very well; but now that I'm rich, things is different to what they was. Leon can look 'igher than Rachel, who is a good girl—oh, yes, a good girl! I'm not a-going to speak agin 'er, for I've always been fond of 'er, and she wouldn't stand in Leon's way. She knows 'er position, and—and——'

And here Solomon Isaacs' voice trailed off like a clock that had been over-wound, and had come to a gradual stop.

The colour had flushed into Moses Levy's face, and Rachel's head had drooped lower, lower over her work, upon which her tears were falling.

'Yes, Mr. Isaacs,' said Moses Levy, 'Rachel knows her position. You are quite right there. Has that anything to do with the business you have come upon?'

'Of course it 'as. Rachel's been properly brought up, and 'as feelings;



I've thought a good deal of that. Oh, yes—Rachel 'as feelings! Now, what will people say about Rachel when they know that she wants to marry Leon for 'is money—that she wants to marry 'im because he's rich? What will people say—eh? All sorts of nasty things—all sorts of nasty things! And Rachel's too proud a girl, I'm sure—ain't you, my dear?—to stand it.'

No sound came from Rachel's lips in response. Her tear-stained face was hidden both from the man who loved her more dearly than his own life, and the man who was conspiring against her happiness. Her fingers were idle now—indeed, she could not see her work, for her tears were blinding her—and they trembled so that, even if her eyes had been clear, she would have made but a clumsy job of her stitches.

Moses Levy leant forward to her, and with a firm, fond clasp of her hand, whispered,

'Keep up your courage, my dear—don't break down before him. I, your father, will speak for you.'

Then he said aloud,

'When Leon and Rachel were engaged, Mr. Isaacs, there was no question of money between them. It was known that I was a poor man, and I told Leon that Rachel had not a penny—not a penny. He was quite satisfied. He said he wanted nothing with my daughter—he wanted only her.'

'That was then,' said Solomon Isaacs testily, 'and then ain't now.'

'I believed—everybody believed—that Leon was quite as poor as Rachel is. If there was any advantage on either side—God forbid I should say there was!—but if calculating persons had at that time reckoned up what they might have considered advantages, the balance of good fortune would have fallen to Leon's share in having won the love of my daughter. It was not a question of money—it was a question of love.'

'Love!' sneered Solomon Isaacs. 'Rubbish—rubbish!'

'That is your creed—it is not mine. Anyhow, I did not welcome Leon here for anything but himself and his good qualities. I did not ask him to come—which does not mean that I was not glad to see him, and that I did not feel towards him as I would have felt towards a son of my own. He came after Rachel; Rachel did not go after him—although,' added Moses Levy, in the words a patriarch of old might have used, 'Rachel's heart went out to him, and she was ready to follow him, even as Rebecca followed Isaac.'

'I daresay, I daresay,' responded Solomon Isaacs, displaying infinite patience in his conduct of this delicate matter. 'But then it was water and water; now it's water and wine.'

'Which is the water, and which the wine, Mr. Isaacs?'

'What a question! Are you out of your mind? Water you can get for nothing; but you can't pump wine out of a well, and when it rains you know what goes into your water butt. I say agin—think of what people'll say when they know that Rachel wants to marry Leon for 'is money!'

'If they know anything of the sort, it will be a false knowledge, and as for what might fall from wicked tongues, under any circumstances—though, out of this room I've heard nothing as yet that Rachel would be sorry to hear—you know, Mr. Isaacs, that you can't keep people from saying ill-natured things. There's that man the Vampire, that you had the quarrel with when you tried to sell your bag. You'd be astonished to hear the nasty things he has said about you since you left Spital-fields.'

'The Irish thief!' cried Solomon Isaacs, in a fury; 'he tried to swindle me, he did! He may thank 'is stars I didn't 'ave the law of 'im. I could ruin 'im, the thief, I could!'

'Don't you think, therefore,' remarked Moses Levy, 'that we had best leave off talking of what people choose to say of us? Haven't we troubles enough already, without making another trouble of that! The best judge we can have is our conscience.'

'So it is, so it is. That is what I want Rachel to consider.'

'She will consider it; and now, as I suppose you have said all that you came here to say, let us wish each other good-night, and leave everything else to be settled when Leon returns from Germany.'

Moses Levy made this suggestion from his conviction that no good result would be achieved by continuing the interview, and in the belief

that Solomon Isaacs had really nothing more to say. He was soon undeceived.

'There you go,' exclaimed Solomon Isaacs; 'flying off again before I've commenced what I want to speak about!'

'Indeed! Had you not better come to the point at once, then?'

'To be sure—yes, yes—that's sensible. Well, Mrs. Isaacs and me 'as talked it over, and we've thought it best to make a proposition.'

'A proposition!' echoed Moses Levy, clutching the arms of his chair.

'Yes, a proposition—a sensible, business proposition. It stands to reason, don't it, Mo?—Mr., I mean—that as things is, Leon can't marry Rachel, and Rachel's too good a girl, too good and sensible a girl, to want to marry Leon now that nasty remarks 'll be sure to be thrown in 'er face. But right's right—oh, you'll find I mean to act straight and honest! Rachel 'll be a little disappointed at first, perhaps, at losing a chance. Not that there's not as good fish in the sea as ever came out of it. Rachel's a good-looking girl, and there's a 'undred young chaps as 'd be glad to 'ave 'er; and I'm going to make it up to 'er, 'andsome, Mo, 'andsome! I daresay she'll like a new silk dress, and a gold watch and chain, and a ring—and—and—the long and the short of it is that if you and Rachel 'll sign this paper, only jist put your name to it, I'll give you fifty pounds—there!—not a cheque, Mo, or bank-notes, but gold—fifty golden sovereigns 'ere this very minute, on this very table!'

Solomon Isaacs took from his breast pocket, very near his heart, a little chamois-leather bag, tightly strangled at the neck, filled with sovereigns, and plumped it upon the table, so that the full rich sound might convey its proper meaning to the ears of Rachel and her father. But though he danced it upon the table, and dandled it with as much pride and affection as he might have exhibited had it been his own flesh and blood, he kept a firm hold of the little bag, lest either Moses Levy or Rachel should snatch it from him, and run away with the precious treasure. In one hand he held the gold, close to him; in his other hand he held the paper, for the signing of which he was ready to pay so handsome a sum.

Strange to say, Moses Levy evinced no immediate anxiety to examine the document which Solomon Isaacs held towards him, and for a little while neither moved nor spoke.

'It is only fair to us,' he said presently, 'that we should know the exact truth.'

'That's what I want you to know,' replied Solomon Isaacs, congratulating himself upon the absence of passion in Moses Levy's voice.

'You think it would be wrong, notwithstanding what has passed between them, that Rachel should desire to marry Leon?'

'She wouldn't desire no such a thing. She's too proud a girl—too proud a girl.'

'Answer my question, if you please, Mr. Isaacs. You think it would be wrong?'

'You're as good as a lawyer, Mo. Yes, I think it would be wrong. It stands to reason.'

'Mrs. Isaacs also thinks so?'

'Of course she does?'

'She has said as much? One moment, please,' stopping the answer

he saw rising to Solomon Isaacs' lips. 'I might take it into my head to go to Mrs. Isaacs, and ask her the question myself, if I saw any reason to doubt.'

'Well, then,' said Solomon Isaacs, with prudent candour, 'she ain't said so exactly; but she thinks so—she can't think different.'

'Then it isn't quite true that you and Mrs. Isaacs have talked it over, as you said just now?'

'Well, not exactly talked it over, Mo; I ain't going to deceive you—but I ought to know my own wife by this time.'

'You ought to—yes.'

'It's what she would say, then, if we 'ad talked it over. There's no doubt of that.'

'You didn't show her the little bag of money you have there?'

'There was no call to show 'er,' said Solomon Isaacs, beginning to experience some slight annoyance at this string of questions.

'So that we know now exactly how the matter stands,' remarked Moses Levy, taking the paper which Solomon Isaacs wished them to sign.

It was a carefully-worded document, drawn up by Solomon Isaacs' lawyer, in which Rachel Levy, for the consideration of fifty pounds current coin of the realm, the receipt of which she acknowledged, released Leon Isaacs from his engagement with her.

'And this is your little bit of business?' said Moses Levy, after a silent perusal of the release.

'Yes, Mo, yes!' replied Solomon Isaacs, rubbing his hands in satisfaction.

Everything was right; there was no scene, no bullying. Moses Levy was, to all appearances, calm and composed, and no word escaped from Rachel's lips. Her bosom rose and fell tumultuously, but nothing could be more natural than such emotion, undoubtedly produced by the startling prospect of coming into so much money. There crept into Solomon Isaacs' mind, now that the matter was about to be satisfactorily settled, a feeling of remorse that he had offered so much. Fifty pounds! He was a fool—a fool! Why had he not offered twenty-five? It would have done the business quite as well as fifty. 'Mo Levy's a thief!' he thought, with a troubled heart; 'he's a thief! He's robbing me of twenty-five pound!'

'Are you sure,' said Moses Levy, 'that you have not given me the wrong paper?'

The chance shot took effect, for it happened that Solomon Isaacs had carried away from his lawyer's two documents, closely resembling each other in appearance, but entirely different in the nature of their contents.

'Let me see it!' he cried, in alarm, snatching the paper from Moses Levy's hands. 'No, no; it's the right un; I put a thumb mark in the corner 'ere, so that I should know it agin!'

The unmistakable mark of a broad and dirty thumb was there; but Solomon Isaacs, gazing at his sign-manual, was still haunted by a misgiving that he might have smudged the wrong document. The contents did not enlighten him, being as so much Greek in his eyes.

'Read it to Rachel,' said Moses Levy, with a pardonable touch of spiteful satire. 'But I forgot; you are not able to read. Rachel, my

dear, listen to me. This is a paper which Mr. Isaacs wishes you to sign, by which act you release Leon from his engagement with you, and leave him free to marry whom he pleases. For signing this release, Mr Isaacs is ready to give you fifty sovereigns—he has the money in the little bag he is dancing on the table. I see that Mr. Isaacs's lawyer has written R. L. with a pencil to show you where your name is to go ; and here is M. L. in pencil, in the place my name is to go. I am to witness your signature, my dear. Do you understand ?

‘Yes, father.’

‘Mr. Isaacs is anxious that the matter should be placed clearly before you, and that you should know the exact truth—are you not, Mr. Isaacs ?’

‘Certainly, Mo, certainly,’ replied Solomon Isaacs, with a wistful, hungry look at the bag of gold.

‘Therefore, Rachel, it is right I should tell you what Mr. Isaacs has forgotten to mention. He is afraid that you might bring an action for breach of promise against Leon.’

‘No, Mo, I give you my word !’ remonstrated Solomon Isaacs, raising his hands in astonishment at the suggestion.

‘And,’ continued Moses Levy, taking no notice of the interruption, ‘Mr. Isaacs does not relish the idea of going to law. Such ugly things come out when a man's in the witness-box ! Think carefully of everything, Rachel. Think of the effect it will have upon Leon when Mr. Isaacs tells him you have taken money to give him up ; and at the same time, my dear, don't forget the gold watch and chain, and the silk dress, and the other nice things you can buy for the money—for it will be yours, my dear, not mine. Take time, Rachel, before you decide.’

Not a muscle in Rachel Levy's face had stirred during the explanation. In a voice almost as calm as her father's, she said,

‘Does Leon know of this, father ?’

‘Does Leon know of this, Mr. Isaacs ?’ repeated Moses Levy.

‘Yes—no ! I won't tell a lie, Mo. Leon is away in Germany, you know.’

For the first time that evening, Rachel turned towards Solomon Isaacs, and looked him steadily in the face. His lips twitched as the pure light of her truthful eyes fell upon them, and he plucked the button off his other glove in his nervousness.

‘You are a rich man, sir,’ said Rachel, ‘and Leon's father ; but if I thought that Leon's heart was like yours, and that it could be so hard and cruel, I should be even more unhappy than you have made me.’

‘What do you mean ? What does she mean ?’ stammered Solomon Isaacs, confounded at this change in the aspect of affairs.

‘She means this, Solomon Isaacs,’ exclaimed Moses Levy ; ‘be silent, Rachel, my dear ; I will say the rest. She means this—that you're a contemptible, rascally !—But no, I will not say it, because of Leon and Rachel. I—I don't want to forget myself, so take yourself, and your new clothes, and your diamond rings, and your bag of money, out of my room at once ! Take them out, I say, and never show your face here again, unless it is, to beg pardon of my child !’

Solomon Isaacs grew scarlet in the face.

‘I wash my 'ands of you !’ he cried, as he rose, trembling with passion. ‘You—you beggar !’

'Yes, I am a beggar,' said Moses Levy, also rising, and speaking with dignity—he afterwards declared that he was astonished he had been able to keep himself cool; 'and you are a rich man. But I wouldn't change places with you, though your money were multiplied a thousand fold. I would like to be rich, not for my own sake, but for my child's—(his hand was resting on her head, as if in the act of blessing her)—but I would not care to grow so in the way you have done, if a tenth part of what I have heard is true. You and I are old men, and must soon die—but I think my death-bed will be happier than yours, poor as I am, rich as you are. You can't take your gold and your diamonds with you to the grave. Naked shall you stand before the Glory of God, and by your deeds you shall be judged!'

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## CHAPTER XIII.

### SOLOMON ISAACS CHANGES HIS NAME.

SOLOMON ISAACS strove to put the words addressed to him by Moses Levy entirely out of his mind. Upon his return home Mrs. Isaacs was in bed, and as the game had gone against him, no impulse came upon him to awake her, for the purpose of relating how it had been played. The next morning other matters occupied his attention, among them being the important announcement of Leon's early return. The young man's employers told Solomon Isaacs they expected him in a couple of days, and as Leon's first business was with them, Solomon Isaacs left his new address for his son, desiring him to come at once to the grand house in the West-end which was henceforth to be his home.

Two days afterwards Leon arrived. His train was late, and his interview with his employers delayed him until nearly midnight. As the son of a rich man, they received him at their private house, and before he left he was informed of the change that had taken place in his father's circumstances.

'But why has he been so secret about it?' inquired Leon. 'I have been away now nearly four months, and this is the first word I have heard.'

'Your father wished to surprise you,' they replied.

'He has surprised me,' was Leon's remark, as he wished his employers good night, in a somewhat bewildered mood.

Why had Rachel not written to him about it? What was the reason of all this mystery? These were the questions that perplexed the young man's mind. It was nearly midnight, and therefore too late to go to Spitalfields, so he had no option but to drive straight to his father's house.

His mother and father were waiting up for him. The door was opened by a solemn individual in silk stockings and a powdered wig, at whom Leon burst out laughing, as much from nervousness as from a sense of humour. His nerves were so highly strung that any trifle would have driven him either into a fit of crying or laughing.

'Where is my father?' asked Leon.

'Hup-stairs, sir,' replied the footman, not a muscle in his face moving.

Mrs. Isaacs wanted to run down when she heard Leon's ring at the door, but her husband bade her sit still.

'We must do the thing fashionable,' he said. 'We mustn't expose ourselves to the servants.'

So, when Leon entered the drawing-room, he beheld his parents sitting bolt upright in gilt chairs, from which they did not move until the servant shut the door upon them. In the passage, and alone, that functionary's proceedings were worth seeing. Gavarni or Leech would have been delighted at the study. His face broadened into laughing lines, his eyes twinkled with merriment, he rubbed his plush breeches, he twisted himself about in the most extraordinary way. Not a sound escaped him; he went through the impromptu programme in dead silence, and stepped into the pantry with a cat's step, shaking with laughter.

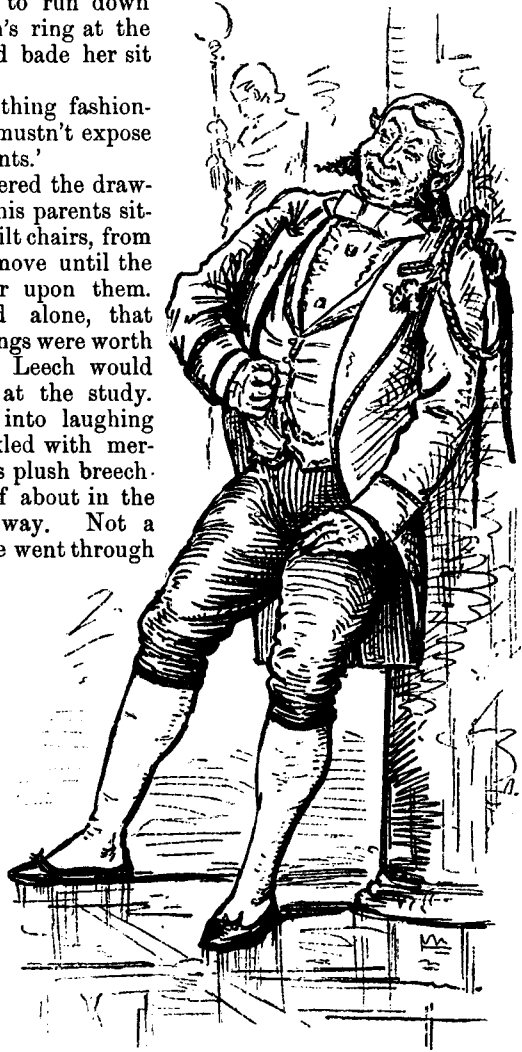
Leon's parents were dressed in their finest clothes; both wore gloves; his mother had a feather stuck in her hair; his father wore a fashionable dressing-gown, with gold tassels, and a smoking-cap perched on one side of his head. These small matters of detail were the invention

of Solomon Isaacs; he kept his eyes open in his new sphere of life, and knew the correct thing to do. He looked rakish and foolish; Mrs. Isaacs was trembling and agitated; her only desire was to throw her arms round her boy's neck, and clasp him to her bosom.

'Well, Leon,' said Solomon Isaacs, observing with satisfaction the expression of wonder on his son's face.

'Well, father,' said Leon—and would have said Heaven knows what in his bewilderment, had not a look of alarm on his father's lips arrested his words.

'Supper is served, sir,' said a voice behind him.





It was another footman, acting according to his instructions, but entering a minute sooner than he was expected by his master. Solomon Isaacs was afraid of his grand servants, and was apprehensive that Leon might say something that would compromise him in the eyes of his domestics.

'I don't want any supper,' said Leon, motioning the servant out of the room with an impatient wave of his hand. 'What is the meaning of all this, father?'

'Can't you see?' answered Solomon Isaacs. 'We're rich now, and moving in a different spear.'

'All right,' exclaimed Leon, shrugging his shoulders; 'you can tell me everything to-morrow. Mother, give me a kiss, and take that absurd feather out of your head. Good-night, father. I'm tired, and I'm going to bed. What are you ringing for?'

'For the servant to show you your room,' replied Solomon Isaacs, somewhat abashed.

'Mother will show it to me. Good-night.'

In the bedroom his mother told him a great deal; he listened patiently, and took advantage of a pause by inquiring after Rachel and Moses Levy.

'I'll tell you all about 'em to-morrow, Leon,' said Mrs. Isaacs. 'Go to sleep, now; there's your father a-calling of me.'

For the first time in her life she felt unhappy and uncomfortable in the presence of her son.

In the morning she was in his room before he was awake. When he opened his eyes, the sun was pouring in at the window, and his mother was sitting by his bedside.

'Why, mother,' said Leon, drawing her down to him, and kissing her, 'it must be late.'

'It's past eleven, Leon,' said Mrs. Isaacs. 'But don't 'urry up. You must be dreadful tired after your long journey. 'Ere's some letters for you. When you're dressed, get your breakfast—I've 'ad mine hours ago—and then come to us, and we'll 'ave a long, long talk.'

Leon was satisfied with this arrangement, and allowed his mother to leave the room without inquiring about Rachel. In a lazy mood he looked at the letters his mother had placed on the bed. An exclamation of gladness escaped him as on one of the envelopes he recognised Rachel's handwriting. He opened it eagerly, and read:

'My dear Leon,—Since I last saw you so many strange things have occurred that I scarcely know how to write to you. And yet I have a duty to perform which must be performed, notwithstanding the pain it gives me. When we were first engaged, our circumstances were equal, and we were both poor. Some time ago, however, we were all surprised to hear that your father had grown rich. I was a little bit afraid of the news, I must confess, for I knew the difference that money makes in people. It has made a great difference in your father. You know he used to come to our place twice a week to play cribbage with my dear father, but from the moment it was known that he was rich he never came near us until the night before last. I am sorry to have to tell you the purpose for which he came, but I am compelled to do so by truth and respect for myself and my own dear father. He said that now you were rich it would not be right for you to marry a poor girl like

me, and that he was sure that I would not stand in your way. I would not stand in your way, Leon, for worlds, although I believe if I was somehow to grow suddenly rich, and you remained poor, it would be my best pleasure to come to you and say, "Here, Leon, here is my money—it is yours, and I only hope it will make us happier than I am sure we should have been without it!" But, then, that is all fancy, and I only write it because it is in my thoughts, and because I think it right that you should know something of what is in my mind. Your father, after a good deal of hesitation, then asked me to sign a paper, releasing you from our engagement, and offered me fifty sovereigns if I would do it. Fifty sovereigns! Why, it would more than furnish the rooms we were to live in when we were married! But I was hurt and sorry that he should have made the offer; for he must have thought within himself that I could be bought for money—that I could sell my love for money. As if love was a thing that can be bought and sold! Well, now, Leon, you can guess the answer I gave him; you, who know me so well, can understand that I refused his money. And I am afraid that my dear father said some hard words to him. But they were true, hard as they were. All this occurred two days ago, and I have been thinking very seriously of what is the right thing for me to do. I have made up my mind. Now that you are rich I have no right to stand in your way; as your father says, you can look higher than me now. I do for love what I would not do for money; I release you from the engagement. There! it is written; and hard as it was to write, I feel more easy now. You must not think harshly of me; you must not think that I am changed; I am the same Rachel that you have always known, and I am doing what I believe to be right. So now, Leon, good-bye. I hope you will be happy and prosperous.

‘Yours affectionately,  
‘RACHEL LEVY.’

Leon read the letter three or four times. All was clear to him now, and he understood why his father had not informed him that he was no longer poor, and why his mother was so agitated when he mentioned Rachel's name. He was not long making up his mind as to the course he would pursue, and with as much coolness as he could bring to his aid he dressed himself, breakfasted, and then went to the room in which his mother and father were sitting. He found them looking admiringly at some visiting-cards, which had been delivered within the last five minutes. There were three small packages, and the names inscribed upon them were—

MR. SLOMAN IZARD.  
MRS. SLOMAN IZARD.  
MR. LEON IZARD.

Before Leon could utter a word his father thrust one of the packets into his hand, and said,

‘There, Leon, that's yours.’

Leon read the name aloud: ‘Mr. Leon Izard. Who is he?’

‘You, Leon, you!’ answered his father, with a triumphant air.

‘Me!’

‘And this is me: “Mr. Sloman Izard.” And this is mother: “Mrs. Sloman Izard.”’

'I don't understand it,' said Leon, very much mystified.

'Not understand it!' exclaimed Solomon Isaacs. 'It's as clear as mud. They all do it, every one of 'em—so the lawyer told me—directly they gets rich. He's done the business for lots of 'em 'isself. He put a *e* to Brown, and made him Brown-*e*; and he took the *i* out of Smith, and put in a *j*, so that no one could pronounce it—that was clever, Leon, very clever!—and he made a Marsh out of Moses; and put a *de* before Robinson, and made him De Robinson; and he took such a nasty lot of letters out of Izzy Jacob's name that his own father didn't know it! It costs money, Leon, it costs money; it's done by Act of Parleyment. I don't understand much about it, but the lawyer said it was all right.'

'Oh,' said Leon, a light breaking upon him, 'then you have altered your name?—'

'Our name, Leon, *our* name!' interrupted his father.

'And Izard stands for Isaacs, and Sloman for Solomon?'

'Yes, that's it, that's it. Mr. Sloman Izard! sounds grand, don't it? And the lawyer says I can be a baron if I like; he can do it for a 'undred pound. Baron Sloman Izard! 'Ow would that sound, eh? Baroness Sloman Izard! 'Ow do you like that Milly? If anybody calls me Solly Ikey now, I'll 'ave the lore of 'im! The lawyer says I can, and I will. So they'd better look out with their impudence.'

'I think the lawyer is mistaken,' said Leon dryly; and then, after a pause, 'What on earth made you do such a foolish thing?'

'Leon,' cried Solomon Isaacs, 'you're out of your mind. It's the fashionable thing! They all do it.'

'Solomon Isaacs: Sloman Izard,' said Leon, in a musing tone, holding out his hands, palms upward, and, as it were weighing the names. 'Isaac was a prince in Israel, and Solomon was our wisest king.'

'But they didn't call him King Solly!' interposed Solomon Isaacs eagerly. 'There's no wisdom in Solly. And as for Isaac—do you think 'is own wife dared to call him Ikey?'

'I don't know,' replied Leon; 'what I do know is that I am quite satisfied with my name. Leon Isaacs is good enough for me.'

'But there's the cards, Leon, there's the cards!' implored Solomon Isaacs. 'You won't waste the cards! Think of the expense! and see 'ow beautiful they look! You'll use the cards now they're printed—say you'll use the cards, like a good boy!'

'Not I, father. Izard! Izard! What in the world is the real meaning of Izard?' He ran out of the room, and returned with a dictionary in his hand. 'Why, father,' he said, 'do you know what an Izard is?'

'I'm one,' said Solomon Isaacs, a look of alarm spreading over his features.

'Then you're a goat—a foolish goat!'

'A goat! a foolish goat!' groaned Solomon Isaacs, falling back on his wife, and almost upsetting her.

'Yes, a foolish wild goat. Here it is in the dictionary.'

It stood in the dictionary, 'a wild goat.' Leon added 'foolish' out of malice; he was ashamed of his father's act.

For a moment or two Solomon Isaacs was speechless with indignation. Then he gasped, 'I'll 'ave the lore of 'im! he's swindled me! A goat! I'll ruin 'im! I'll—I'll—'

'It serves you right,' said Leon. 'You can do as you please, of

course ; I intend to stick to Isaacs. I'm not ashamed of the name, and I hope I shall never do anything to shame it. If anybody asks me for a person of the name of Izard, I shall declare I know nothing of him.'

'But what am I to do?' inquired Solomon Isaacs, with a helpless look. 'I can't be Izard and Isaacs too ; and the lawyer told me I'm Izard now, by Act of Parleyment!'

'All your letters will go wrong, father. There'll be a regular confusion.'

Solomon Isaacs groaned.

'You'll be summoned twice over if you dispute a debt,' said Leon, secretly enjoying his father's discomfiture, 'once in the name of Izard, and then in the name of Isaacs. I think you have made a mistake. You had best go to the lawyer, and consult him about it.'

Solomon Isaacs threw his hat on the back of his head, and was about to rush out of the room, when Leon stopped him.

'That business will wait, father. I have something here that must be attended to at once.'

'What is it, Leon?'

'I have received a letter from Rachel, and I want to talk to you about it.'

Solomon Isaacs cooled down immediately. This truly was important business, and must be attended to without delay.

'Shall I read the letter, father?'

'Yes, Leon, read it ; there's no 'arm in that.'

Leon read the letter carefully, and with feeling.

Mrs. Isaacs listened to it with tears in her eyes ; her heart bled for the poor girl. Solomon Isaacs listened to it with gloating satisfaction. His purpose was accomplished, and he had saved his fifty pounds.

'Keep that letter!' he cried ; 'keep that letter, Leon ! It's worth a thousand pound ! The girl's a fool !'

'Don't call Rachel hard names, father. I intend to keep the letter.'

'That's right, my boy, that's right. I went there for your good, Leon, to prevent a breach of promise case.'

'Was anything said about such a thing, then?' asked Leon.

'No ; but it would be sure to come. You're all right now. She can never bring an action agin you as long as you've got that paper ! Why, there's not another girl in London would write such a letter !'

'I don't believe there is, father. I wouldn't part with it for five hundred pounds.'

'Bravo, Leon, bravo !'

'I will keep it as a testimony——'

'Yes,' interrupted Solomon Isaacs, 'that's it. As a testimony—as a testimony !'

'——As a testimony—though I required none—of the goodness and nobleness of the girl I intend to make my wife, if she will have me !'

'Eh?' cried Solomon Isaacs, with a blank look of amazement.

'I shall go to her ; once, and shall tell her that you have done a cruel and unwarrantable thing ; and I shall beg her pardon and her father's pardon for you.'

'Leon,' cried Solomon Isaacs, in despair, 'are you a fool?'

'Neither fool nor rogu, I hope,' was the answer, somewhat sadly spoken.

'Do you forgit what I've done for you?' said Solomon Isaacs, almost sobbing with grief and vexation. 'Do you forgit the eddycation I give you so that you might be a gentleman?'

'No, father, I do not forget it—I never can forget it. I shall ever be grateful to you for having given me an education which helps perhaps to teach me my duty now.'

'What!' screamed Solomon Isaacs. 'Is it because I sent you to the Free School, and gave you an eddycation, instead of sending you into the streets to 'awk for a living, that you're a-going to throw me over now—that you're a-going to act contrary to your father's wishes?'

'It may be so; I cannot tell. I have your blood in me, and something of your nature; if I had grown up ignorant, I might perhaps have acted as you wish. But I am grateful that I can see things in a better light.'

Solomon Isaacs dashed his fist upon the table and cried, in a voice trembling with passion,

'Damn eddycation!'

'Bless education!' cried Leon warmly. 'Thank God, it is now within the reach of every poor boy in the land! Good-morning, father. A kiss for you, mother! I'm off to see Rachel!'

He dashed out of the room. Solomon Isaacs ran after his son, with some dim notion in his mind of laying violent hands upon him; but by the time he reached the street-door Leon was at the bottom of the street. Returning to the sitting-room, Solomon Isaacs fumed about for some time, and condescended to give his wife a highly inflamed account of his visit to Moses Levy.

'I went there for 'is good, Milly,' he said, at the conclusion of his fanciful narration, 'with money in my pocket, and he abused me like a pickpocket. "Mo Levy," I said to 'im, as I wiped my shoes on 'is mat—I did, Milly; I wiped the dirt off my shoes afore I left 'is 'ouse; I wouldn't take a bit of it away with me. "Mo Levy," I said, "never you take the liberty of opening your lips to me agin." I 'ad to come away quick, or I should 'ave done 'im a mischief; I didn't want to soil my 'ands with touching of him. "Arter what you've said to me this night," I said, "and arter what you've said agin Mrs. Isaacs, I wouldn't bemean myself by walking on the same side of the street with you." Them was my last words to 'im, my last words.'

'What did he say agin me?' moaned Mrs. Isaacs, her heart palpitating with distress. 'What *could* Mo Levy 'ave to say agin me?'

'It'd blister my tongue to tell you,' replied Solomon Isaacs; 'I wouldn't be so low as to repeat it! There was nothing bad enough for you.'

'O Ikey!

Solomon Isaacs gave a violent jump. He required something more tangible than mere fancies to vent his rage upon, and his wife had supplied it.

'Do you want to drive me distracted with your "O Ikey"?' he snarled. 'Confound your "O Ikey!" What do you mean by throwing dirt in my face? If ever you "O Ikey!" me agin, I won't live in the same house with you! Mind that!'

Then he also dashed out of the room—odly enough, with an uncon-

scious imitation of Leon's manner a few minutes previously—somewhat comforted by the distress into which he had thrown his wife.

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## CHAPTER XIV.

MRS. ISAACS DREAMS THAT HER HUSBAND HAS SOLD HIMSELF TO THE——.

MRS. ISAACS did not see her lord and master again until the evening. In the meantime she received a short note from Leon, in which he said he had important business to attend to, and would not be home until very late, certainly not until past midnight. Solomon Isaacs upon his return asked his wife after Leon, and she gave him the message. 'Very well,' said he; 'then we'll go to the theatre to night, and show 'im that we can do without 'im.' If that was really his aim, it was not likely to be successful, to judge from his behaviour. The hour that intervened until it was time to go to the theatre he agreeably filled up by reopening the subject of his visit to Moses Levy, and giving his comments thereon. Mrs. Isaacs did nothing but sit and wring her hands in silence. Her heart was heavy with grief at these dreadful proceedings—at Leon's absence from home, at the breach between herself and the friends she loved best in the world, at the severance of all the ties which made life sweet to her. All her strength was gone, and she felt as though she would like to die. Her hot tears fell upon the silk dress she had put on for the theatre that night. Was it for this they had grown rich? Was money to poison her days, and bring discord into her life? Was it not only to rob her of her old friends, but of her child's and husband's love? Since she and her husband had lived in their grand house, scarcely one affectionate word had passed between them. He was a changed man; his mind was entirely occupied with the cares of money. The more he had, the more he wanted, the more he grasped at. It seemed to her at times that he was going out of his mind. He was speculating heavily, often wildly, on the Stock Exchange, and almost every word he uttered had reference to the rising and falling of stock and shares. 'Why shouldn't I be as rich as the Rothschilds?' he said to her more than once; 'I know as much as they do.' But he was deficient in heroic qualities; he was not equal to either fortune. When the market went against him, he suffered agonies, talking in his sleep, and getting up at all hours of the night; when the securities he held were rising in value, he paced the room in transports of delight, and so comported himself that Mrs. Isaacs was afraid of him. His manner terrified her; she could neither suffer with him in his losses, nor rejoice with him in his gains. When he was an old-clo' man, she sympathised with him in his dealings; she did so no longer. If her experiences during the past few months were a foretaste of what was to come, all her happiness in life was gone. Humbly born, she was happy and contented to move with those of her own degree. When she was among poor the gleams of sunshine in her life were neither few nor far between, and many simple pleasures were ready to her hand, to enjoy in simple ways. How different everything was now! Parted from her friends, deprived of love, her days were days of misery. How she wished she were back in Spi-

talfields, dressed in her cotton gown, working and cooking, and exchanging the friendly word and smile with old acquaintances whom she had known from childhood! How she envied the poor people there, and the life they led! 'I must have done something very wicked when I was a girl,' she thought, 'for such a misfortune as this to come upon me.'

This was the substance of her musings as she sat waiting for her husband, who was dressing for the theatre. They went in state, in their own carriage, with their own coachman on the box, and their own footman beside him to open and shut the door for them.

'Don't look so glum, Milly,' Solomon Isaacs whispered to her as they entered the theatre; 'look lively, or everybody'll be staring at you.'

She tried to look lively, and failed miserably. She was dismayed by the fuss and ceremony of their entrance; she was not allowed to sit in her bonnet, and the attendants worried her into complete bewilderment with their officious attentions. Such a thing as enjoyment under these circumstances was out of the question. The people did stare at her—stared at her when she spoke, stared at her husband when he made comments on the company (it must be confessed they both spoke in very loud voices), cast scornful glances at them, and shrugged their shoulders, as much as to say, 'How on earth have these vulgar creatures found their way in here?' Supremely unconscious of the disdain with which he was regarded, and interpreting the notice he attracted into a species of adulation of the diamonds in his shirt and on his fingers, Solomon Isaacs lolled back in his chair, put up his feet, to the disgust of the lady before him, and patronised the performers and the audience in a lordly way.

Ignorant as she was, Mrs. Isaacs understood what was going on around them, and was ready to cry with grief and vexation. The comedy that was being played caused peals of laughter to proceed from all parts of the theatre, but, from the rise to the fall of the curtain, not a smile crossed Mrs. Isaacs' lips. How miserable she was! How comfortable she used to be when she sat in the pit or the gallery, wagging her head, and holding her sides with laughter! In those times she was not too proud to take a packet of sandwiches with her, to stuff her pockets with oranges, and to eat them with enjoyment in the very face of the British public. Ah! those were the happy nights! It was a real pleasure to go to a theatre then—anticipating the treat for a week before, and talking of it for weeks afterwards. Then she would clap her hands till they were red, and call for the performers by their familiar names; now she dared not move a finger.

'Ices and refreshments!' said a spruce attendant, in a dulcet voice, between the acts; 'will the lady take an ice, sir?'

'Yes, yes,' said Solomon Isaacs, in a loud tone; he would show the people about him that he had money to spend. 'Yes, yes. Take an ice, Milly.'

She took one gingerly, and spilt some of it over her dress as she listened to the attendants crying out in the pit, 'Oranges! Lemonade! Bottled ale or stout!' That is where she would like to be sitting, not in the stalls, surrounded by persons who put up their eye-glasses at her. Mr. Isaacs also took an ice, and devoured every particle of it. He did not relish paying a shilling each for them, but he comforted himself with

the reflection that he was doing the fashionable thing in a fashionable way.

On the drive home, not a word was spoken. Of the footman who opened the door for them Solomon Isaacs asked if his son had come in, and being answered in the negative, walked straight up stairs to bed, without looking at his wife. She, poor soul, went to the grand drawing-room, which, in accordance with her husband's instructions, had been lighted up for Leon's behoof, and sat down and thought over the experiences she had passed through since her departure from Spitalfields. During her sad musings, an odd reminiscence intruded itself upon her, connected with her first visit to a theatre in the days of her childhood. On that memorable occasion she had seen a melodrama, the principal character in which had sold himself to the devil. The incidents which led to the unholy barter, with the figures of the two personages whom it chiefly concerned, had formed themselves into an abiding remembrance, conveying hitherto no terror to Mrs. Isaacs' mind, but presenting itself in a somewhat agreeable light, as a pleasant memory of childhood. But in the recalling of the reminiscence at this period of her life, its aspect was entirely changed. The man in the melodrama had sold his soul for money—had betrayed an innocent girl, and brought her to shame—and, in the end, had paid the forfeit of his bond by a descent into the regions of everlasting fire.

The room in which Mrs. Isaacs sat and brooded over her unhappy lot was gaudily furnished and decorated. In point of fact, there was a great deal of gilt about it, yellow being the colour approximating most nearly to Solomon Isaacs' conception of the highest style of art. In the centre of the mantelpiece, flanked with gilt ornaments, stood a large gilt clock, with a gilt representative of old Father Time pointing a gilt forefinger to the gilt figures on the dial, with a gesture which indicated, 'Time flies, but I (gilt) go on for ever.' Above the dial, hovering within a species of cupola, was the figure of a flying angel, somewhat out of harmony with the prevailing tone, inasmuch as its robes and wings were fashioned of shining silver. But every other object in the room obtrusively proclaimed Solomon Isaacs' leading idea. The legs and backs of the chairs were gilt, the knobs and cornices of the chiffonier were gilt, the chandelier was gilt, and the lustres were wrapped in yellow gauze; the gas (London gas) burnt with a yellow flame. With this uniform glare in her eyes, and with silence all around her, Mrs. Isaacs sobbed and dozed.

The knobs and cornices of the chiffonier gradually resolve themselves into faces, stony and immovable at first, but presently imbued with life. Their features move and twitch into innumerable forms of expression; the faces multiply with amazing rapidity; and every one of the thousands of eyes are directed towards Mrs. Isaacs. Whichever way she turns, the eyes follow her. She looks up to the ceiling, and grotesque forms peer upon her from within the folds of the yellow gauze; she looks down upon the carpet, and grotesque images creep about her feet. And now a painful idea impresses itself upon her. It is that her gaze possesses the magic gift of transmuting everything into gold—everything with the exception of the figure of the angel of shining silver which floats above the image of old Father Time. On the wall hang two pic-



tures, representing scenes of rural happiness ; and as Mrs. Isaacs turns towards them, the flowers assume a golden hue, the fields become golden fields, the water golden water. The walls and ceiling of the apartment change to gold, and the transformation continues until the room and everything it contains glitter with the precious metal. This fatal gift inexpressibly distresses her, and she experiences a feeling of relief when the angel of shining silver floats from the cupola, and stands in radiant whiteness before her. It does not surprise her that, in its flight, it has assumed the proportions of a human form.

'This woman's husband,' says the angel, 'where is he?'

With one voice, which does not rise above a whisper, the grotesque figures in the room reply,

'Asleep, and dreaming.'

The angel floats through the golden walls, and instantaneously reappears, bearing in his arms the form of Solomon Isaacs, asleep.

The angel places the man on the ground, where he lies surrounded by a circle of weird and eager faces. Following the indication of their fingers, Mrs. Isaacs observes that the space occupied by her husband has assumed the shape of a pit, filled with innumerable coins of gold. Rolling in his golden grave, the sleeping man clutches at the treasure, and, holding his hands above his head, allows the precious pieces to fall through his fingers in a glittering shower.

'Hold your hands,' says the angel, 'hold your hands and answer me. Is this gold which fills your soul with joy more precious to you than aught else in the world?'

'More precious than all,' replies the sleeping man, holding his empty hands above his head.

'More precious than a good name?'

'It brings with it a good name.'

'More precious than happiness?'

'It is happiness.'

'More precious than love?'

'It is love.'

'More precious than sweet memories?'

A disdainful smile hovers about the lips of the sleeping man as he strives to release his hands from the spiritual thralldom which holds them fast.

'Not yet,' says the angel. 'You have a son.'



I have.'

'Over whose heart you would throw the glittering spell which guides your ways.'

'Leon is wise.'

'You had, in years gone by, another child, who died when you were poor.'

'I had another child. Who is that I hear crying?'

'Your wife. You sorrowed when that child was taken from you.'

'Well?'

'Why, then, did you smile when I asked if gold was better than sweet memories?'

There is a moment's pause before the sleeping man replies:

'That was long ago. I live in to-day. All my life I have worked for to-day.'

'It is not possible,' says the angel, turning from the sleeper, 'that this man can understand the true meaning of his words. Human, he must possess humanity. There must be within him some hidden spring whose released waters would sweep from his soul his monstrous creed.'

As he speaks, the air becomes fragrant with the perfume of flowers, and the ground about his feet is strewn with roses and lilies. Stooping, he gathers the loveliest of these, and fills the hands of the sleeping man with flowers. His touch transforms them and robs them of their beauty; they slip through his fingers to the ground, with a dull metallic sound.

Then it is that Mrs. Isaacs sees lying among the flowers at the angel's feet the babe that was taken from her in the early days of her married life. With a yearning motion she stretches forth her arms to clasp it to her bosom, and sobs to find that it is beyond her reach. With infinite compassion the angel raises the body of the dead child, and places it in the sleeper's uplifted hands. Pallid and sweet it lies—for a moment only; its form withers into yellow dust, which falls in a shower upon the golden grave.

'I have no power over him,' says the angel sadly. 'What fancies are stirring within this man's brain that render him dead to life's most sacred teachings?'

A startling change takes place in the scene, and, for a moment only, Mrs. Isaacs beholds the fantasy of Solomon Isaacs' dream—a vision within a vision. It presents itself in the shape of a tableau from the melodrama she witnessed on the occasion of her first visit to a theatre, when she was a girl. Every detail is reproduced with faithful exactness, the only point of difference being that, in the face of the principal character who is about to enter into an unholy compact with the Evil One, Mrs. Isaacs recognises the face of her husband.

'Don't do it! don't do it!' she screams, as this vision within a vision is fading from her sight, and, falling on her knees, she clasps the angel's robes. 'Save him! He doesn't know the meaning of it. He wasn't always so. Don't let him do it! When we was first married——'

'Why, mother!' the angel replies, in the voice of her son Leon 'What's the matter with you? have you got the nightmare?'

She opens her eyes. Leon stands before her, looking down upon her in wonder. The angel in shining silver is in its proper place, within the cupola, hanging over the figure of old Father Time. There is no

change in the pictures on the wall, nor is there a grinning face to be seen. Everything in the room is as it was before she fell asleep.

Grateful as she is to discover she has been dreaming, Mrs. Isaacs cannot for a little while recover from her agitation.

'O Leon,' she whispers, as he assists her to rise, 'I dreamt that your father was selling himself to the devil!'

'I wouldn't tell him,' says Leon, in a cheerful tone. 'You've eaten something that has disagreed with you.'

'I took a ice at the theaytre to-night, Leon,' says Mrs. Isaacs, panting.

'It must have been that, then,' says Leon, with a smile. 'Extremes meet. Ice is the last thing you'd expect to find in the old gentleman's quarters. Come, mother, it's time to get to bed. Look at the clock. It's nearly one in the morning.'

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## CHAPTER XV.

### RACHEL WILL NOT GIVE WAY.

WHEN, after the expression of their differing views on education, Leon left his father's house, he made his way at once to Spitalfields, for the purpose of seeing Rachel. He was indignant and hurt at his father's conduct, and was eagerly anxious to remove from Rachel's mind any idea that he was a party to the treacherous offer Solomon Isaacs had made to the girl. The perusal of her letter had set his generous young soul on fire; as he walked rapidly towards Moses Levy's apartments, he dwelt fondly on the image of the girl he truly loved, and every reminiscence associated with her was charged with new tenderness. In the midst of the surging life through which he moved, with its throbbing ambitions, its wild hopes and desires, its sadness, its exultation, its crooked scheming and plotting, its mean pride and small aspiration, he was a living embodiment of the sentiment in the light of which all the wealth of the world fades into insignificance. It is a gladdening thought that the crowded streets are sometimes sweetened thus by honest feeling. When a fresh young face flashes brightly past me—as Leon's face might have done on this occasion—it is like a cool refreshing wind sweeping through the streets on a hot feverish day. What shall I sigh for? What shall I hunger for? Much money—the finest houses—richly embroidered clothes? These are not the treasures that will sweeten my days. The true wealth of life and of humanity lies in love, and in kind thought that shows itself in action. Let me receive these, and give me these to bestow, and add to them the blessing of faith in God, and I am richer than a myriad Aladdin's caves could make me.

As Leon sped onwards his steps grew more animated. He was approaching the familiar byways of his childhood, and his heart beat the quicker. Soon he was in Spitalfields. He could scarcely sufficiently control his impatience to exchange fair words and looks with old friends who ran from their houses to greet him. 'There's Leon Isaacs!' they cried. 'How well he looks!' He got away from them as quickly as he could, and ran into the dear old house, and up the dear old stairs which led to Moses Levy's rooms. 'He's just come from abroad,' the

neighbours said to one another, 'and the first thing he does is to go to see Rachel Levy.' He did not lose in their estimation, for it was no secret by this time that old Solomon Isaacs did not look with favourable eyes upon the engagement.

Leon paused in the passage for a moment or two, and listened; he heard Rachel moving about the room. Then he knocked, and almost before her gentle voice reached his ears bidding him enter, he opened the door. With an eager exclamation he ran towards her, and she, for a moment betrayed by love and joy, flew into his arms. But when he kissed her she quickly released herself, and stood apart from him. She had uttered no word; only a little cry of heart-gladness had escaped her; and now, recalled to herself, she pressed one hand to her heart and raised the other with an imploring motion. He understood her, and came no nearer to her.

He could find no words to speak; nor could she for a little while. But woman's wit, at such a critical time, is keener than a man's—a kind provision of Nature, as she is compelled more often to be on the defensive. So Rachel, weak as she was, showed a greater strength than Leon, and was the first to speak. The words she uttered were very simple, and she spoke them timidly and hesitatingly. She said she was sorry her father was not at home to see Leon.

'But I did not come to see your father,' said Leon; 'I came to see you. I arrived from the country late last night, and I thought I should have seen you at my father's house to welcome me home.'

'You received my letter, Leon?'

'Yes; and I have brought you the answer.'

Involuntarily she held out her hand for it. He seized her hand, and did not relinquish it, although she struggled—just a little.

'You can understand the answer I have brought you, Rachel. I am here myself.'

Not all her woman's wit and cunning could keep the happy light from her face at this proof of her lover's truth and faithfulness. He saw the gladness of her heart in her eyes, and he would have taken her in his arms. She yielded for a moment, then heroically repulsed him.

'No, Leon,' she said, 'it cannot be. It must not be. Father and I have talked it over, and we have decided on what is right.'

'Are you and your father to be the only judges?' he asked impetuously. 'Am I to have no voice in it!'

'Do not speak loudly, Leon; people will hear and think we are quarrelling. And I—I am not strong! No—do not touch me! I can see my duty clearer if you keep away from me.'

'Your duty is to come to me, Rachel, as you have promised. You are my wife, and I claim you.'

She was on the point of yielding again as he called her his wife, but by a great effort she restrained herself.

'No,' she said firmly, 'I can see that your father is right. You must not marry a poor girl like me. Do you think,' she added, with spirit, 'that I am going to have it flung in my teeth that I hold you to your promise now you are rich, and in the face of your father's refusal?'

'And do you think,' he retorted, 'that I am going to have it flung in my teeth that, because my father happens to have filled his pockets with money, I am false to my promise and my word?'

'The world will not blame you, Leon ; such things are not uncommon.'  
 'Hang the world ! It did not teach me to love you, and it shall not teach me to be false to you. You have given me back my promise——'

'Yes,' she said sadly, 'I have given you back your promise.'

'But I don't give you back yours. That's a thing you have forgotten. Rachel, you do not love me as I believed you did.'

'You must not say that, Leon. You must not make things harder for me than they are. If you knew how I have suffered, you would pity me.'

'I do pity you, and I ask you to be just to me. You must marry me, Rachel—you must !'

'I cannot, Leon, without your father's consent.'

'Must my father's money part us, Rachel ?'

'Yes, Leon. It is not the first time that money has parted two faithful hearts.'

She could not help speaking the words, for she knew that he was true to her. The knowledge took away from her much of the bitterness with which her life had been filled lately.

'If it part us,' said Leon, 'it will be your fault, not mine. You have behaved nobly to me, and you will make it appear that I have behaved basely to you. You will let it be said that the moment my father became rich, I turned my back on the girl who accepted me as her lover when I was poor.'

These arguments, and many others as cunning, he used in his endeavour to convince Rachel that she was wrong in her resolve ; but the pride of the girl had been deeply wounded, and he could not prevail upon her to go back from her word. At length he said,

'Listen to me, Rachel. I refuse to release you from your engagement. You are pledged to me. You understand that ?'

'Yes,' she replied, 'I understand it. But you are not pledged to me.'

'I am, and you cannot prevent it. You, and no other woman, shall be my wife.'

'And you, and no other man, shall be my husband ;' adding, with womanly inconsistency, 'But all is over between us.'

'That is not so. Give my love to your father, Rachel, You will not kiss me, I suppose ?'

'No, Leon.'

'I love you all the more for it. You will shake hands, I suppose ?'

'Oh, yes.'

'You see,' he said, as he held her hand in his, 'You cannot prevent me from kissing your hand. Good-bye, for a little while.'

And when he left her, with looks of love, she could not help giving him a tender smile.

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## CHAPTER XVI.

### SOLOMON ISAACS PLOTS AND SCHEMES WITHOUT SUCCESS.

IN an interview with his father, Leon stated clearly his intentions with respect to Rachel, and not all Solomon Isaacs' fuming and stamping about induced him to swerve. For his mother's sake, he

consented to live at home, although his inclination was to take lodgings in Spitalfields, quite close to Moses Levy's rooms. Then Solomon Isaacs began to scheme. He invited to his house a class of persons who had risen, as he had risen, from nothing, and who were unable to push themselves into more elegant society. Strangely enough, these persons, in their hearts, bore no great good-will to each other, partly for the reason that they were all acquainted with antecedents which they were foolishly desirous should be buried in oblivion. But company was necessary to their existence; therefore they visited each other in their carriages, and gave parties, and played cards, and wrangled as in the olden days, and endeavoured to outshine each other in their diamonds. Occasionally some struggling worker in the arts, to whom perhaps they had lent small sums of money, found himself in their midst. If he had a sly laugh at his entertainers it was not from ill-nature, but because his sense of humour was excited; he more often laughed with than at them, and, despite the touches of vulgarity which appeared on the surface of their nature, their hospitality was so generous and liberal that he found it impossible not to like them. They gave him the choicest cigars, the finest wines, and dishes of rare cookery, not to be obtained in any but Jewish homes; they entertained him with stories spiced with wit; they fêted and flattered him; and he would have been a churl indeed, had he gone away with ill-natured thoughts of his hosts.

To those of the well-to-do who had daughters to marry, Solomon Isaacs whispered slyly that his son was free to choose, and was looking out for a wife. Then commenced a hunt matrimonial, Leon being the stag. He had a hard time of it, and was often put out of patience—although he could not help feeling amused at the game that was being played. He was not sufficient of a hero to fling his father's money from him, and refuse to use it; but he was hero enough to be faithful in his heart to Rachel.

Difficult as was the task Solomon Isaacs had set himself to accomplish, he did not despair of success. He trusted to time to assist him, and to the effect of the increased wealth he was endeavouring with all his cunning to accumulate. 'You will 'ave it all, Leon,' he said, 'every penny, if you don't go agin me!' He was deeply involved in Stock Exchange speculations, bulling and bearing, lying and scheming, now losing, now winning, now suffering agonies, now swelling with pride and satisfaction. His grand home was not a happy one, and he sought for distraction in the whirl of that great gambling mart, where every mean trick the human mind can invent is pressed into the service of the race for wealth. More than once he was on the verge of ruin; but luck never entirely deserted him, and by many a bold manœuvre he recovered, and found himself richer than the day before. In a certain way he became famous, and one Friday evening his wife rushed into the room with a paper fluttering in her hand.

'You're in the paper!' she screamed. 'You're in the paper!'

He turned as white as any ghost, and sank into a chair.

Mrs. Isaacs was too excited herself to notice his agitation. In a shrill voice she read a paragraph from a Jewish paper, to the effect that 'our esteemed and talented co-religionist, Mr. Solomon Isaacs, has purchased a country seat near a fashionable watering-place, whither, in the summer

months, he and his family will retire, to enjoy the deserved fruits of his enterprise and good fortune.'

Before she had finished reading, he recovered his composure.

'Very proper, very proper,' he said complacently. 'Esteemed and talented! Is them the words, Milly?'

'Yes.'

'I'll go into the City, and buy two copies of that paper,' he said. 'It's a sensible paper. It ought to be encouraged.'

The idea flashed into his mind that it would not be a bad thing to cut out the paragraph and have it framed.

'What do they mean about a country seat,' inquired Mrs. Isaacs, 'and a fashionable watering-place?'

'I don't know,' he replied. 'They may say anything they like, so long as they don't say nothing nasty.'

'Margate's the place for me,' observed Mrs. Isaacs.

'We'll have a month there,' said Solomon Isaacs, smiling graciously at her, 'and we'll do it fashionable, Milly, we'll do it fashionable.'

At about that time he had instilled hope into Mrs. Isaacs' breast by the subterfuge that he had 'made it up' with his old friend Moses Levy.

'You 'ave made me so 'appy,' said the worthy woman, with a beaming face. 'May I go and see 'im and Rachel?'

'Not yet—not yet,' said Solomon Isaacs. 'Wait a bit; everything'll come right.'

'But they'll come to see us, then,' urged Mrs. Isaacs.

'Presently—presently,' was his reply. 'You leave me to manage, Milly.'

His duplicity met with its reward.

On the Tuesday following, his wife, with tears in her eyes, mentioned that their old friend had passed the house, with his old-clo' bag on his shoulders.

'His voice went right through me,' she said pathetically. 'I felt as I would like to throw my arms round 'is neck. I ran into the street and cried, "Mr. Levy! Mr. Levy!" When he 'eerd my voice, I thought he would 'ave dropped, he shook so. He ain't looking at all well, Ikey; I think he must 'ave been laid up. "Mr. Levy," I cried; "won't you come in?" "Does your 'usband want me?" he asked, all of a tremble; "did he send you out for me?" "No, Mr. Levy," I said; "Ikey ain't at 'ome. Come in, and see the 'ouse, and have a glass of wine." He looked at me so strange that I didn't know what to make of 'im. "No," he said, "I won't come in upon your invitation. I wish you good morning, Mrs. Isaacs." And he was going away, actually going away without another word, when I puts my hand on 'is arm, and said, "Don't be unfriendly, Mr. Levy. It ain't because we've got rich that you should treat us as enemies." Upon that he said, "God knows I don't want to do that, Mrs. Isaacs; it's none of my doings." "'Ow's Rachel?" I asked. His face got as white as a sheet, and he put my 'and away from 'is arm. "It won't do you or me any good to talk any longer," he said; "I wish you good morning, Mrs. Isaacs." Then he walked away, so low and shaky that he 'adn't spirit enough to cry "Old clo'!" and I stood like a fool looking after 'im. You might 'ave knocked me down with a feather, I was that took aback.'

Solomon Isaacs glared at his wife with fury in his countenance.

'What made you speak to 'im?' he screamed. 'You don't know what you've done! If you go agin me, all the fat'll be in the fire! Mind what I say. If you speak to Mo Levy agin without my leave I'll—I'll run away—I'll sell up everything, and run away!'

'I won't, I won't,' sobbed Mrs. Isaacs. 'But what's the matter with 'im? What's he been a-doing of? You said you 'ad made it up with 'im.'

'And I told you at the same time not to interfere,' said Solomon Isaacs; 'if you want to live peaceable, you do as I tell you.'

He put a stop to further conversation in his usual way—by bouncing out of the room and the house, and slamming every door after him.

During all this time, the warfare between himself and his son on the one vital point at issue showed no signs of abatement. Unpleasant scenes, of course, were inevitable. Such as on a night when the three were sitting in the stage-box of the Vaudeville Theatre, laughing at a comedy. In the midst of their enjoyment, Leon caught sight of old Moses Levy and Rachel, who were sitting in the front row of the pit. It was evident to him that they knew he and his parents were in the private box; there was a sad consciousness on Rachel's face, and she, who used to enjoy a good play so thoroughly, had not a smile now on her lips. Leon's mother, on the contrary, beguiled out of her unhappiness by the cunning of the play, laughed so loudly that she attracted attention. 'This is the way,' thought Leon, gazing on Rachel's wistful face, 'that I am made to pour poison into her cup.' His heart went out to the girl, and, without a word to his parents, he left the box and made his way to the pit, where, being unable to reach the spot where Rachel and her father sat, he waited at the back until the play was over. There he lingered until Rachel came up to him.

She did not start, or change colour.

'Here's Leon,' she said to her father.

Moses Levy shook hands gravely with the young man, and did not demur to Leon's walking by the side of Rachel along the Strand. It was a clear night, and there was time for them to walk to Spitalfields. Rachel shook hands also with Leon, but did not accept the offer of his arm. Moses Levy approved of his daughter's decision with regard to Leon, knowing well it brought her unhappiness. She had hidden nothing from the old man, and had spoken of Leon's conduct in terms of affectionate admiration; but both father and daughter were agreed that the engagement, so far as Rachel was concerned, must be considered at an end until Solomon Isaacs openly consented to the union.

Once again on this night, as Leon walked by her side, did he endeavour to shake her resolution. He met with no success; Rachel was firm.

The following day was a busy one in Solomon Isaacs' house. He gave a grand party in the evening, at which it was his intention to play a trump card. A young lady was coming to captivate Leon, and Solomon Isaacs was full of hope that his son would be caught by her attractions. In the morning he dilated upon the splendour of the forthcoming entertainment, and, rubbing his hands gleefully, told Leon that he would be the prince of the party. To his consternation Leon commenced to open the old wound.





‘Do you know where I went last night, when I left the box, father?’

‘No, Leon.’

‘I went to the pit, where Rachel and Moses Levy were, and waited for them.’

‘Well?’ said Solomon Isaacs uneasily.

‘I walked home with them.’

‘It was a—a insult to your father, Leon,’ said Solomon Isaacs meekly.

He was frightened of his son, and knew that he would place himself at a disadvantage by passionate remonstrance.

'It was a mark of respect to them,' said Leon, 'a mark of respect and love. You can guess what subject we talked upon. But Rachel wouldn't give in.'

'She knows her dooty better than you do.'

'She excels me in this as in everything else. Yet I also am resolved, and have come to a decision. This is November—it is eleven months since we were engaged, and I hoped to be happily married before this time. Once more I ask you to allow me to go to Rachel and tell her you consent to our marriage.'

'No, Leon, no,' replied Solomon Isaacs. 'You don't know what's good for yourself. You must look 'igh—you must marry a rich girl. Now there's Becky Moss. She's got twenty thousand pound, and three times that when 'er mother dies. And 'er mother's old, Leon, old! and ketches 'er breath so as you think she's never goin' to git it back agin! She can't last long. Becky Moss is a fine girl, a fine girl!—something to show for your money, Leon!'

'Yes, there's plenty of her, but she's not made for me.'

And Leon mentally set the two girls before him, Rachel Levy and Becky Moss, and the substantial figure of Becky faded away, while Rachel's sweet sad face remained present to his mind's eye. Solomon Isaacs saw no such vision.

'Not made for you! I tell you she is. Arks 'er, and see if I ain't right. What more do you want, Leon? Becky's got twenty thousand pound, and 'll 'ave sixty more—d'ye 'ear? And she's quite a lady. She knows how to behave in the best society, Leon. You should see 'er walk along the room when she's at a party—with 'er 'ead up 'igh, as if she was used to it all 'er life! You should see 'ow she dresses—in the height of fashion, Leon, with puffs and bows behind bigger than I ever see, and with a train six yards long if it's a inch! And she's eddicated, my boy, eddicated—talks languages, and plays the pianey as loud as the best on 'em! I 'eerd her the other night at a party. She looked tip-top—a girl to be proud of. She 'ad on a silk dress as'd stand alone! She 'ad twice as much 'air on 'er 'ead as any of the other girls, and there was diamonds in it, Leon, real stones, not paste! She must 'ave 'ad five hundred pound worth of jewellery on 'er. I reckoned it all up, and i'td fetch that at the coffee-shop in Duke's Place. You're never a-going to throw away a chance like that, Leon?'

'No,' replied Leon, 'I'll not throw it away. It's too heavy. But I'll not marry Miss Rebecca, if that's what you mean.'

At this Solomon Isaacs lost his presence of mind.

'If you say that agin, I'll cut you out of my will! Mind—I mean what I say. You sha'n't 'ave a shilling of my money.'

'Saddled with your conditions,' said Leon, with spirit, 'I would sooner be without. Good day, sir. When I feel that I am not ashamed of my father, I will come and see you again. Not till then.'

When Solomon Isaacs recovered his temper he was not greatly alarmed by his son's words. It was not the first quarrel they had had upon the theme, nor the first time Leon had threatened to leave the house for good. That he had not done so was an assurance that a calmer mood would lead to a wiser decision.

Therefore when Solomon Isaacs' guests were assembled in the evening he was not doubtful that Leon would make his appearance. He was proud of his boy, who looked every inch the gentleman, and whose education and manners enabled him to hold his own in good society. 'And Leon knows on which side his bread's buttered,' thought Solomon Isaacs.

But he was doomed to disappointment. Leon did not appear. Becky Moss and her mother were there, and made anxious inquiries after the young fellow.

'He'll be 'ere after supper,' said Solomon Isaacs. 'Keep a few darnces for 'im, Miss Moss.'

Becky was resplendent, having made up her mind that Leon was the man for her. Dress, feathers, and diamonds were there, and a good-looking girl in the bargain. It was the best chance that had fallen in the young lady's way, and she had come to the party prepared for victory.

The appearance of the supper table elicited expressions of unanimous approbation. There were salmon and other fish and meats in wonderful profusion; wet and dry almond-puddings and cocoa-nut tarts; amazing jellies, and raised pies, and hot house fruits; and everything that was out of season. Solomon Isaacs related choice stories concerning the feast, as to how much the wine cost him a dozen, and how much he had paid for that fruit in the market. One of the guests, carried away by the enthusiasm at the liberality of the spread, cried to the host, with his mouth full,

'By my life, Mr. Izard, the salmon is good!'

Whereupon Solomon Isaacs, in his loud and delicate way, related proudly how the captain of the steamer had brought the salmon over from Rotterdam expressly for him, and how Mr. Sloper, the great cook, had offered him five shillings a pound for it.

'I suppose,' said Solomon Isaacs, 'he 'ad a wedding breakfast or a supper to provide. "Five shillings a pound, Mr. Izard," he said. "No, Mr. Sloper," said I. "I likes my profit, but, by my life, my company comes first."'

'Bravo, bravo,' ran round the table, although a few of the more refined shuddered at the vulgarity. 'You were born to be a gentleman, Mr. Izard.'

Upon this point opinions differed after supper, in consequence of the absence of Leon. Mrs. Moss had her adherents, and she declared that never in all her life had such an affront been put upon her—declining, when asked, to specify the nature of the affront. Her indignation resolved itself into an emphatic declaration that Solomon Isaacs was an upstart, and that to sit at his table was 'a lowering of oneself.' Becky Moss also had something to say, and as a girl of spirit she said it in plain terms to Mr. and Mrs. Isaacs. This unpleasant state of affairs was made still more unpleasant by disturbances at the card-tables, those who lost at loo ranging themselves on the side of Becky Moss and her mother, while those who won were in too good a temper to take sides with either party. It is a disagreeable thing to record that Solomon Isaacs, himself by no means amiably inclined, met Mrs. Moss's onslaught with vigour, and a battle of words occurred which it would be profitless here to set down. It ended in a hasty departure of all the

guests, with scarcely one cordial good-night to the host who had splendidly feasted them.

Only Solomon Isaacs and his wife were left in the drawing-room. In the turmoil a few chairs had been overturned, and a few packs of cards had been spilled on the floor. Solomon Isaacs stood in the middle of the room, flushed and excited, and Mrs. Isaacs sat in a chair, rocking herself to and fro in deep distress.

'The ungrateful beasts!' exclaimed Solomon Isaacs. 'They're a mean lot! Not one on 'em shall ever set foot in the 'ouse agin!' He was checked by the hysterical sobbing of his wife. 'Be quiet!' he cried. 'Be quiet—can't you? What do *you* mean by piling on the aggrawation?'

But grief and distress had so worked upon Mrs. Isaacs' feelings that they were beyond her control, and she continued to rock herself to and fro.

'Oh,' she sobbed, 'I wish we was poor agin! I wish we was poor agin!'

Solomon Isaacs could scarcely believe his ears, and for a moment astonishment made him dumb.

'Oh,' continued Mrs. Isaacs, wringing her hands, 'I wish things was the same as when you used to go out every morning with your bag! We was 'appy then. Oh, I wish we was poor!'

'What!' screamed Solomon Isaacs. 'Are you out of your mind? Do you want to degrade me? Do you want to make me ashamed to look myself in the face?'

He could not stop her, however, and in the end he stamped up-stairs alone to his bedroom, leaving Mrs. Isaacs moaning, and praying with all her heart and soul that her husband might be stripped of his riches, and be compelled to work for his living, as in the olden days.

\*                     \*                     \*                     \*                     \*

Had Solomon Isaacs known how earnestly his wife prayed for his downfall, there is no telling what he might have done in his anger. Much has been written and said about the efficacy of prayer, and here was an argument in its favour; the charm that was to work Solomon Isaacs' ruin began on the very day following his grand party. The two descriptions of stock in which he was most deeply interested were Turkish and Peruvian bonds. His greed had led him to those fatal pits, in which so many innocent lives have been made wretched, so many bright hopes engulfed. The present chronicler has no desire to dilate upon the villainy of the respectable men who, to the destruction of the unwary, pull the strings of the greatest Gambling Hell the world has ever seen. It is in some poor way a satisfaction to know that occasionally a cunning one is made to bite the dust. This happened to Solomon Isaacs.

Maddened by his private troubles, of which he alone was the creator, Solomon Isaacs, heedless of the warning held out by the sudden fall of Peruvian stock, bought and bought, and pledged his fortune and his credit in a rotten cause. Lower and lower fell the stock, wilder and wilder grew his infatuation, until he awoke one morning to find himself more famous than ever. His castle had toppled over. The respectable black rooks of the Stock Exchange swooped upon him with a re-

sistless rush, and he, who hoped to make them suffer to his honour and credit, found himself torn and bleeding—a laughing-stock to those whose superior cunning and larger experience enabled them to weather the storm which left him a ruined man and a beggar.

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## CHAPTER XVII.

### THE CROSS OF HUMANITY.

MENTION has been made in these pages of one Barney, who obtained an insufficient living by selling watercresses and periwinkles, and eked it out by attending to the Sabbath fires of the Jewish poor in Spitalfields. Since Rachel Levy met him on the happy night of her engagement with Leon, a year has passed, and Christmas has come round once again to gladden the hearts of the poor with its brief respite from the weary toil of life.

‘It’s bitter cold, miss,’ says Barney to Rachel, as he warms his fingers at the fire he is tending. ‘A fire is a real comfort such a night as this.’

Rachel nods assent, and presently notices that Barney is lingering in the room, evidently with something on his mind which he finds a difficulty in bringing to his lips.

‘Times are dreadful hard, miss,’ he says.

‘They seem so, Barney,’ says Rachel; ‘all the poor round about are complaining.’

‘That’s so, miss; but some are poor and others are poorer.’

‘Is there anything you wish particularly to say to me, Barney?’

‘Thank you, miss. Yes, there *is* something. Last night when I got home—it was late; I was trying to sell out my basket——’

‘Did you succeed?’

‘No, miss; things are getting dreadful bad; people’s got no money to spend on luxuries. When I got home, miss, what do you think I saw on my doorstep?’

‘I can’t guess.’

‘A woman, miss, with a babby in her arms. How old do you think the babby was, miss?’

‘Tell me, Barney.’

‘Not six weeks, I should say. A thin little creature it was, with a face that didn’t seem bigger than a penny-piece. It was pouring torrents hard, and there they was, the pair of ’em, a-laying on my doorstep, soaked through, the pair of ’em.’

‘O Barney!’

‘It’s gospel truth, miss. I stoops down, and shakes the woman. “Hallo!” I says. “Hallo!” Now what do you think the woman says to that?’

‘What?’

‘She says, says the woman, “Don’t touch me! Don’t turn me away! For God’s sake, let me lay here and die!”’

Rachel starts to her feet with a look of compassion.

‘I was thinking, miss,’ continues Barney, ‘that perhaps you’d advance me a shilling to get something nourishing for the poor creature.’

‘Where is she, then?’

‘In my garret, miss. I carried her up-stairs and put her on my bed. She don’t seem able to eat the bread-and-butter I offer her; and there she is. You see, miss, I’ve never been able to lay up for a rainy day, and I’m that selfish that every penny I get I spend on myself.’

Before he has finished this his longest speech, Rachel has taken from the cupboard a piece of cake and two slices of fried fish, which she wraps in paper.

‘Perhaps you wouldn’t mind coming to see her to-morrow, miss, if she ain’t better. Then you might tell me what I ought to do.’

‘Do you know her, Barney?’

‘Never set eyes on her till last night. And can’t get anything out of her. She’s a kind of unconscious.’

‘I will come to-morrow, Barney; I can’t go to-night, because my father is not well. Here is something she may be able to eat, and here’s a shilling.’

‘Thank you, miss. I may come and fetch you to-morrow, then, if she ain’t better?’

‘Yes, Barney.’

‘Good-night, miss.’

‘Good-night.’

On the following evening Barney knocked at Rachel Levy’s door. The girl and her father were at home.

‘You have something fresh to tell me, Barney,’ said Rachel, gleaning her knowledge from an expression of curiosity on his face. ‘Am I to come with you now?’

‘If you please, miss.’

Rachel brought out her bonnet and shawl.

‘How’s ‘the poor woman?’

‘As bad as can be. The doctor’s been to see her, and ‘ll come again to-night. I *have* something new to tell you. I asked her this afternoon if she didn’t have any friends. What name do you think comes to her lips in a whisper?’

‘I cannot say.’

‘Yours, miss.’

‘Mine!’

‘Yes. “Friends?” she whispers; she ain’t got breath enough to speak loud. “Friends? There was a Jewess as give me money and bread last Christmas—Rachel Levy.” She says your name more than once after that, miss.’

‘I remember—I remember,’ said Rachel, with a sigh. ‘Father, I will come back as soon as I can. If I am wanted, I am at Barney’s lodgings.’

‘Very well, my dear,’ said Moses Levy, and followed Rachel to the door with wistful eyes. He did not like to lose sight of her, and was for ever watching the signs in her face, which told him too frequently that she was thinking of the days that were gone. His only amusement now was a game of cribbage with Rachel or a game of patience by himself, and this at the best of times was but a sad enjoyment. The salt had gone out of his life.

Game after game of patience he played, with varying success, paying indeed but slight attention to the cards. Vague rumours of Solomon

Isaac's downfall had reached his ears during the past fortnight, but they were so conflicting that he scarcely knew what to believe. During that time he had not seen Leon, and therefore had no opportunity of arriving at the truth. As he shuffled and laid out the cards, he endeavoured to thread his way through a labyrinth of possibilities, and what result the news, if true, would have upon Rachel's fortunes. She had not spoken to him upon the subject, nor he to her; Solomon Isaac's name, by tacit consent, had not been uttered by one to the other for months.

He heard shuffling footsteps on the stairs; he listened with a strange fluttering at his heart, recognising a familiar sound. It ceased in the passage, and there was a long pause. Moses Levy gazed at the cards spread out on the table, and made no movement. He trembled so that when a knock came at the door his voice scarcely rose above a whisper. The door was slowly opened, and Solomon Isaacs stood on the threshold.

He was dressed in shabby clothes, he wore a shabby hat, he had his old-clo' bag over his arm. No rings were on his fingers, no massive chain hung across his waistcoat, no diamond pin was in his scarf. His beard was growing ragged once more, and his face was as the face of one whose purse was empty.

'May I come in, Mo?' he asked humbly.

'Yes,' replied Moses Levy, white and shaking, 'if you come in peace.'

'That's what I've come for—that's what I arks for! Mo,' said Solomon Isaacs, holding forth his hand, 'will you shake 'ands with a old friend?'

'Does Leon know you are here?' asked Moses Levy.

'Yes; I told 'im I was coming. Won't you shake 'ands? Don't 'it a man when he's down!'

Moses Levy gave Solomon Isaacs his hand.

'Be seated,' he said.

Solomon Isaacs instantly began to gather the cards together.

'A game of crib, Mo! For the sake of old times! For Rachel and Leon's sake.'

Tears gathered in Moses Levy's eyes.

'So be it,' he said; 'let bygones be bygones, for our children's sake. You are welcome.'

Leon, making his appearance a quarter of an hour afterwards, found the old men playing cribbage. Not with the heartiness of old; there was still an awkward restraint upon them.

Moses Levy welcomed the young man with cordiality.

'It is just a year to night, sir,' said Leon, 'that I asked Rachel to be my wife. You gave your consent then. Is it necessary for me to ask for it again?'

'What does your father say, Leon?'

They both turned to Solomon Isaacs.

'Leon couldn't make a better match,' he said, with a little huskiness in his throat.

'Go and bring Rachel home, Leon,' said Moses Levy; and told the young man where he would find her.

Rachel was kneeling by the bedside of the dying woman, whose last

words had just been uttered. Through the garret window the moon's rays streamed athwart a beam which stretched from floor to ceiling. The shadow of the solemn symbol fell upon the figures in the room with Divine meaning ; and, bathed in the sacred light of Humanity's Cross, the Christian died and the Jewess wept.

"Hush !" said Rachel, as Leon softly entered.

THE END.

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THE ST. LAWRENCE.

O THOU grand St. Lawrence River ! flowing onward to the sea ;  
 Fraught with pleasant recollections are thy sunny banks to me.  
 Happy hours I've passed beside thee, where thy bright blue waters flow ;  
 With the vaulted heavens reflected in thy glassy waves below.  
 Where, from broad Ontario's waters, thou dost issue, 'mongst the Isles ;  
 Foaming proudly past the woodlands, over which the glad sun smiles.  
 Past the banks, where pine trees nodding, gently woo the summer breeze ;  
 Where timid deer and saucy squirrel seek their food amid the trees.  
 Now, past pleasant meadows gliding, where the peaceful cattle graze ;  
 Where the bark canoes above thee dance in noontide's fervid rays.  
 Now receiving Ott'wa's waters, as the groom receives his bride.  
 Reinforced thou speedest onward to the heaving, far-off tide.  
 Now, with deeper, stronger current, flowing silent, deep and dark ;  
 Past Ville Marie thy proud waters bear the ocean-going barque.  
 'Neath the long "Suspension" whirling envious of its giant's strength ;  
 Water-lapping its huge pillars, on thou goest ; and at length—  
 Angry, that these should impede thee, since thou canst not 'whelm them o'er—  
 Fierce, uprising thy foaming billows, with a sullen, thunder roar.  
 Then with slow and solemn motion, swelling grandly, deep and wide ;  
 Thou receiv'st another\* river to thy now full swollen tide.  
 Flowing ever, stronger, broader, till with grand triumphant sweep,  
 Past Quebec thy full-flowing current rolls to meet the boundless deep.  
 Thus we sketch thee, grand St. Lawrence ! and, as we thy waters scan ;  
 Does the thought ne'er rise within us : How like to the life of man ?  
 Sometimes gliding, calmly, smoothly, oftimes checked by hostile force ;  
 As thro' lonely vales and shadows he pursues his endless course.  
 But in spite of all obstructions, firmly, bravely, passing on ;  
 Till they all give way before him, till all clouds and storms are gone.  
 Growing stronger, as he journeys, till, from earthly tempests free,  
 Life is lost within the boundless Ocean of Eternity.

Oshawa.

CONSTANTINE.

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\* St. Maurice.



## ROXY.

BY EDWARD EGGLESTON.

## CHAPTER VIII.

## THE REVIVAL.

THERE was a revival in the town. Do you know what that means? In a country village, where most of the time there is a stagnation even in gossip, where a wedding of any sort is a capital event, where a funeral is universal interest, and where even a birth is matter of common talk, it is—all moral aspects of the case aside—a great thing to have a hurricane of excitement sweep over the still waters of the little pool. Every one of the fifteen hundred people in the little town knew that there was a revival “going on.” Every one of them carried in his head each day a list of those who had “been to the mourner’s bench” the night before, and of those who were converted; and everybody knew who had shouted or “taken on” in any way at the meetings. Forlorn groups of young men who looked as though the day of judgment were surely come, stood upon the street corners and discussed the fact that Bill Works had “gone forward” the evening before. Some thought he wouldn’t “hold out long.” But the morning after old Tom Walters “got religion,” the town was convulsed with excitement. He was a notorious drunkard, and when he was converted there did seem something supernaturally awful about it. To see Tom sober was like seeing a dead man alive. Few were living now who could remember when Walters had been entirely sober before. There was many a man ready to assure you that he’d “seen a good many of these roaring excitements in his time,” and that they “all died down afore hay-harvest,” and “old Tom Walters would be drunker’n ever, time the corn crop was laid by.” And yet, and yet, all this spoken in a voice a little tremulous did have an air of grave-yard whistling.

There were the scoffers, however, who laughed, and who banded together to laugh. The best man among them was Ben Thomas, who laughed in the preacher’s face, when he was going through the congregation exhorting. The preacher, a slender Boanerges, had rebuked him from the pulpit, and this had given Ben a still greater prominence among his fellows. But when two of Ben’s cronies, after a fiery and prophet-like denunciation from the preacher, became frightened, and came cowed and bellowing to the “mourner’s bench,” even Ben’s voice grew a little tremulous as he saw himself the forlorn hope of the opposition. But all the thunders of the preacher could not bring him down. He was too much flattered by his unique position. It was better to be the devil than to be nobody in particular, and Ben would have faced perdition itself for the sake of gratifying his love of bravado.

All this storm was raised by the new Methodist preacher, a man who

had been a mechanic until religion seized upon his enthusiastic spirit. Since that time he had been a blazing torch of religious excitement sweeping like a prairie fire over every region to which the conference had assigned him. In the autumn, after the August election, he had been sent to Luzerne. In November, General Harrison and his log-cabin were elected to the presidency. Now, the ebb tide of political or financial excitement often ends in becoming a flood tide of religious excitement. It is a resolution of force, not easily accounted for, but very easily seen. So that Mr. Dale's revival took on proportions surprising even to his faith and enterprise.

Mr. Whittaker was a new Englander, and to him this revival was something appalling. Not that he did not believe in revivals; but he believed in revivals like Dr. Payson's and Jonathan Edwards's—of the quiet, awful, and persuasive kind, which would not have been possible among the inflammable people of Ohio in the last generation. Mr. Whittaker, believing that some good must be done in spite of the "wild-fire," thought it no more than right that he should attend the Methodist meetings. He could not do this in any spirit of patronage as he might have done in New England, for here the Methodists were more than half the town. Still he could not but feel that it would be a condescension for a college-bred man like himself to lend his countenance to these people whose minister had laid down his hatter's bow to become a preacher on an education consisting chiefly of a reading of Wesley's Sermons and Clarke's Commentary. He went one evening and did his best to get into sympathy with the meeting, but the loud praying, the constant interruptions of responsive "Amens" and other ejaculatory cries, the kneeling mourners weeping and sobbing, fifty at a time, in the space around the pulpit, the public prayer offered by women, the pathetic melodies and choruses, the occasional shouting,—these and a hundred other things offended his prejudices and grated on his sense of propriety. He wondered how Roxy could seem oblivious to the din about her as she moved among the penitents on the women's side of the house, to comfort whom was her special vocation. He saw how everybody loved her, how the gladness of her face seemed to mollify the terribleness of Dale's fiery preaching. It happened to be the very night of old Tom Walters's "start," and Whittaker saw that after the old man had wept and cried, lying prone upon the floor during the whole evening, he seemed not a little cheered by the words which sister Roxy spoke to him at the close of the meeting; not by the words, perhaps, but by the radiant face and hopeful tone.

But Whittaker did not go again. How could he? To him this religious intoxication was profanation, and he wrote a strong letter to the Home Missionary Society setting forth the "wild and semi-barbarous character" of many of the religious services at the West, and urging the importance of sending men to plant "an intelligent and thoughtful Christianity" in its place. This was because he was an exotic. The religion he despised was indigenous. A better and more thoughtful Christianity has grown as the people have grown thoughtful. But it has developed on the ground. It is not chiefly New England thoughtfulness, but the home growth of Western intelligence that has done it.

But though Whittaker washed his hands of this ranting revivalism, he wished that he were free to dislike it wholly. Tom Walters, he re-

flected, would no doubt slip back into the mire as soon as the excitement was over, but in all this ingathering there must be some good grain. And so he found himself in that state which is least comfortable of all—his sympathy dividing the ground with his antipathy. And such is the solidarity of people in a village that an excitement of this sort is sure to affect everybody sooner or later. Whittaker soon saw in his own congregation an unusual solemnity. He was unwilling to admit that the Methodist revival had influenced him, but he found himself appealing more earnestly than ever to his few hearers to become religious. He found himself expecting something. What to do he did not know. At last he appointed an "Inquiry Meeting" at the close of his Sunday evening service. Just one person remained as an "inquirer." To Mr. Whittaker's amazement this was Twonnet. There were many others a week later, but that the first should be the volatile Twonnet, whose gay banter and chaffer had made him afraid to speak to her seriously, quite upset him. After the inquiry meeting was over and he had seated himself alone in the little parlour at Mr. Lefaire's, where a melancholy ticking was kept up by an old Swiss clock screwed to the wall with its weights and pendulum hanging exposed below, he looked into the blazing fire on the hearth and wondered how it was that Twonnet, who, at supper that very evening, had been as gay as ever, should have suddenly remained to an inquiry meeting. He tried to think what there was unusual in his sermon that might have impressed her.

Just then the brass knob of the door was turned hesitantly, the old-fashioned latch, big at one end and little at the other, was raised with a snap, and the door was opened a little way by Twonnet, who immediately began to close it irresolutely.

"Come in, Twonnet," said the minister, gravely.

Thus re-assured, Twonnet entered, took up the broom mechanically, and swept the ashes on the hearth into the fire-place, set the broom down and stood halting by the fire.

"Sit down, Twonnet," said Whittaker, gently, as though he were addressing a little child. "How long have you been thinking seriously of becoming a Christian?"

"Ever since I can remember."

"Yes, yes, but lately."

"All the time." Then, after a pause, "I would like to be as good as Roxy but I can't. I can't be serious long at a time, I'll be laughing and teasing somebody to-morrow, I suppose. That's the reason I haven't tried before. I can't be much of a Christian anyhow."

"But divine grace can help you," said Whittaker, using the form of words to which he had always been accustomed.

"But divine grace won't make me somebody else, will it? It won't make me like to look inside as Roxy does, and to keep diaries and all that. It won't make me want to be a martyr as she does, I'm sure. I'll never be good all over. It doesn't seem to make other people all alike, and I suppose I'll be the same giddy-headed Twonnet as long as I live, and father will have to keep shaking his head and saying, '*Tais-toi, Toinette,*' in that awful way, forever. If I ever get to heaven, I'll laugh one minute and get mad the next," and at this she laughed in her sudden mercurial fashion.

The minister was silent. He was afraid to say anything that might

discourage her. There was not a trace of cant or mimicry in her piety. But, on the other hand, it seemed to him that there was a strange lack of the seriousness which he had always been taught was the first step of a Christian life. The cold Saxon New Englander was trying to apply Puritan rules to one of a different race.

"But I thought," continued Twonnet, gravely, "that, if I couldn't be as good as I wanted to, I would just try to be as good as I could." And here she began to shed tears. "I thought that was the common-sense way. I've got a temper—all of us Swiss have; but then we don't stay mad, and that's a good thing." Here she laughed again. "Any way, I'm going to do my best."

Mr. Whittaker thought it safe to approve of this last resolution, though the girl was a puzzle to him. This certainly was not an experience according to the common standard. He could not dissect it, and label its parts with the approved scientific names.

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## CHAPTER IX.

### THE MEMBER FOR LUZERNE.

DURING this revival regret was often expressed that Mark Bonamy was absent. If he were at home he might be converted, and his conversion would tell upon the other young men of the town. And then he might come to be a preacher. What a preacher he would make! He would doubtless come to be a famous presiding elder, like John Strange or Allen Wiley. He might some day get to be a great bishop, like Elijah Hedding. But he was away attending the session of the legislature. None regretted this more than his mother, a devout Methodist who prayed day and night that the son who "had wandered into paths of worldly pleasure and ambition" might be "led to ground the arms of his rebellion, and enlist under the banner of the cross."

As for Mark, his ambition seemed in a fair way to be gratified. For the first time the State government was in the control of the Whigs. He had happened to change just in time to come in on the rising wave, and all Luzerne recognized him now as destined to become a distinguished citizen. Some days before the time for the legislature to meet, Mark buckled on his leggings, packed his saddle-bags, and mounted his horse. He rode for four days through thick, yellow clay, soft enough to let his horse sink down one or two feet at nearly every step, arriving late in the evening of the fourth day at Indianapolis, a straggling muddy village in a heavily wooded morass. The newly projected capital had been laid off with true Hoosier magnificence and hopefulness. The governor's house—remarkable for a homely bigness and a dirty colour—stood in the middle, surrounded by a circular street which left His Excellency's family no back yard—all sides were front. Around this focus most of the new wooden churches were built, so that the people going to meeting might inspect the governor's wood-pile and count the inmates of his chicken coop, whose death-warrants had not yet been signed. Outside of the "circle" the city was laid off with nice rectangularity, except that four great diagonal avenues running from the centre gave the town on the

map, the appearance of a blazing sun in a cheap picture. Nowadays, when more than a hundred thousand people have filled up this radiant outline with many costly buildings, and when the unsightly "governor's mansion," having ceased to exist, no longer presents its back door to the Episcopal Church, the beautiful Hoosier metropolis has justified the hopes of its projectors. But in Bonamy's time the stumps stood in the streets; the mud was only navigable to a man on a tall horse; the buildings were ugly and unpainted; the people were raw emigrants, dressed in butternut jeans, and for the most part afflicted either with the "agur" or the "yaller janders;" the taverns were new wooden buildings with swinging signs that creaked in the wind, their floors being well coated with a yellow adobe from the boots of the guests. The alkaline biscuits on the table were yellow, like the floors; the fried "middling" looked much the same, the general yellowness had extended to the walls and the bed-clothing, and combined with the butternut jeans and copperas-dyed linsey-woolsey of the clothes, it gave the universe an air of having the jaundice.

It is quite depressing to a man who has been the great man of his town, and who has been duly commissioned to some deliberative body, to find that all his fellow-members consider themselves the central objects of interest. Mark was neglected at first by all except those members who wanted to get state roads or other projects of local interest carried through the house. He was only "the young fellow from Luzerne." Nevertheless, after he had made his maiden speech on the necessity for internal improvements by the general government, he was more highly esteemed. A young man with so telling a style of declamation was not to be slighted. A shrewd old member nodded to his neighbour as Mark sat down at the close of his effort, and said, "Congress some day." For that was the day before the reign of newspapers. Declamation was the key to promotion.

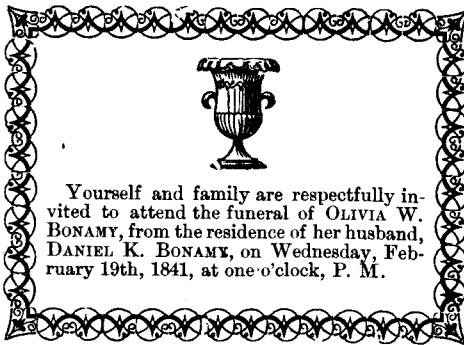
One day when the session was drawing to its close, a messenger came for Bonamy. The man had ridden hard over frozen ground for two days, and now with horse worn out, he came to tell Mark that his mother was dying of one of those bilious fevers which made the west a grave-yard in those days. Mark was a man of strong feeling. He had often disregarded the advice of his mother, but she was the good influence of his life, so that it was with a mixed emotion of grief and remorse that he mounted his horse and turned his back upon the legislature, then in its last week, to make a forced ride of eighty miles in two days over frozen roads of horrible roughness, with only the faintest hope of seeing his mother alive.

But Death does not wait for us. When Mark rode his tired horse up to his father's gate, the serious faces of those who met him at the door told him that he was too late. It only remained to receive her blessing at second-hand from the old woman who had been with her to the last, and who gave her message to Mark in a tone that seemed to say: "Now, you reprobate, you! don't you feel mean that you did not repent as your mother wanted you to? Now you see in a time like this how superior to you we pious people are; aha!" It is the persuasive way of some people—this crowing over a sinner. Mark wouldn't have taken a short step in the direction of Paradise on any account, just then.

His two sisters were full of sorrow, though Amanda, the elder, showed

it in a severe and dignified way, quite becoming in a Bonamy. Even Colonel Bonamy looked softened—just a little.

Mrs. Bonamy was buried after the village custom. The funeral tickets were distributed on the day of her death. The little printing-office, conducted by the editor, publisher, proprietor, and printer of the *Weekly Palladium*, and one small boy, kept a black ornamental border all set up for funeral tickets. The type of the set phrases, such as "Yourself and family are respectfully invited," were never distributed; the name, and date, and hour only were changed as occasion required. As soon as the tickets for Mrs. Bonamy's funeral were ordered, the printer set the form of the funeral ticket on the imposing-stone and proceeded to make the alterations needed to render it appropriate to the present occasion. He pulled it apart, placed the lines needing change in his composing-stick, took out the name of Job Raymond, the last deceased, and replaced it with Mrs. Bonamy's, changed the dates and other particulars, "justified" the lines, and then replaced them in the form and proceeded to "lock it up." In a short time the small inky boy was rolling and the editor was working-off with an old hand-press, little tickets much like this :



You will find many of these tickets laid away between the leaves of old books in Luzerne. When the proper number were printed, the inky, impish-looking lad made a feint of washing his hands, put on his roundabout, and started out to distribute them, with the greater part of his face in appropriate mourning. He did not go to certain select families set down on a pre-arranged list. A small town is democratic; the tickets were left at every house, and you might have seen the village folks discussing the matter over their division fences; for people must discuss something—it is the great preventive to insanity. So now every symptom of Mrs. Bonamy's disease was gone over, and what Mrs. So-and-so said about it three days ago, and what the doctor thought, and when "the change" took place, and who were "sitting up the night she died," and whether she "died happy" or not, and what she said, and whether the corpse looked "natural," and how old she was, and "what time Mark got home," and how he "took it," and how "the old colonel took it," and whether he would stay an infidel or not, and how Amanda "took it," and whether the girl had much heart or not, and whether the old man would marry again, and what he would do about his family, and

whether Mark would get under "conviction" or not, and whether he would make a preacher if he was converted. But everybody was agreed that coming just at this time it was a "mighty solemn call" to Mark, and Jemima Dumbleton expressed herself very positively on this point. She said he needed a solemn call, "Fer that 'ere Mark Bonamy," she went on, "haint got no other god but Mark Bonamy. And worshippin' hisself is mighty like bowin' down to a god o' brass, or to Aaron's calf, so it seems to me."

The funeral took place like all the other village funerals of that day. First the minister preached a sermon of warning and consolation to the living, reviewing and eulogizing the life of the deceased. Then there was a procession, which included, beside the waggon on which the coffin rested, some old family carriages or carry-alls, several buggies, one gig, fifteen people from the country on horseback, and a long line afoot, with the usual number of stragglers and small boys, who ran alongside because it was a procession. These small boys reached the grave-yard in advance of the rest and perched themselves high on the fences, where they could see all that might take place. They were not noisy, though they showed much excitement—this was a spectacle, and any spectacle is a godsend to a village lad. Whether it is a muster, or a funeral, a circus, or a "baptizing," matters not to him,—so that something goes on and he sees it.

The coffin was lowered, the Methodist service was read, the grave was quickly filled and rounded up with the spades of kindly neighbours,—after which the minister said that he "was requested on behalf of the family of the deceased to thank the friends who had shown so much kindness during her illness." Then he pronounced the benediction, and the small boys leaped from the fences and hurried away pell-mell for the town, while the friends slowly dispersed, the wintry winds playing a pathetic requiem in the frozen and vibrant boughs of the clump of weeping willows which keep, even unto this day, a perpetual vigil over the graves of the village dead, while generation follows generation to the lonely sleeping-place.

It was sometime during the next day that Mark Bonamy went to see Roxy Adams, to thank her for her faithful kindness to his mother, and receive some messages that the mother had left in the keeping of Roxy. In his present state of mind Mark was a little afraid of Roxy. But he was ill at ease in his conscience, and he gave himself much credit for submitting to Roxy's exhortations. It showed that he was not so very bad, after all.

Roxy did not take the lofty and patronizing stand he expected. There was something so strange and persuasive in the earnestness with which the eager girl spoke of his mother, something so touching in her enthusiastic appeals to his conscience through his natural affection, that Bonamy, who was full of sensibility, found himself strangely affected by it. He was always susceptible to female influence, but he found that Roxy called out what was best in him. He readily promised her that he would go to meeting that night, and he kept his word.

He expected to be touched by the absence of his mother, who had always been a prominent figure in the meetings. But there was so much change, that he did not feel his mother's absence as he thought to feel it. The old, unpainted and unfenced, brick meeting-house with its

round-top front windows and its fan-light over the door, was the same. Within there were the same stiff benches with awkward backs consisting of two narrow boards far apart, the same unpainted pulpit with posts on either side supporting candles in brass candlesticks, the same rusty box-stove sitting in the middle of the aisle, and the same hanging tin chandeliers with candles in every stage of consumption. The same tall, kindly sexton, a man with one eye, went round as before, taking careful sight on a candle and then, when sure of his aim, suddenly snuffing it, gently parting the wick afterwards to increase the light, then opening the stove door with a clatter and pushing in a piece of wood. It was all as of old, but all so different. The young men with whom Mark had had many a wild spree, sat no longer back near the door in the seat of the scornful but in the "amen corner;" the giddiest girls he had ever waltzed with were at this moment joining with Roxy and the rest in singing that plaintiff melody:

"Our bondage here shall end,  
By and by—by and by."

When one follows in the track of a storm one measures the force by the uprooted trees and the shattered branches. So Mark, seeing all at once the effects of the revival, felt that the town had been subjected to a fearful power, and the sense of this invisible power almost overwhelmed him. Then, too, he was as one who beholds all his friends sitting guests at a feast while he shivers without in cold and darkness. The preacher's words were evidently levelled at him. Dale knew, as all revivalists do, the value of natural sensibility as a sort of priming for religious feeling: he touched with strong emphasis on "praying mothers," and "friends gone before," and on probable separation in the world to come, and Mark felt the full force of the whole tide of magnetic feeling in the audience turned on himself.

He sought diversion in looking about. But this was vain. Those who had not yet "made a start" looked full of grave apprehension. One or two stood like trees unscathed by the blast. Ben Thomas was as full of mockery as ever. He looked at Mark, and nodded, saying:

"He means you, Mark. He loves a shining Mark! Aint you under conviction yet?"

But his horrible scoffing at everything, which to anybody else seemed sacred, only reacted on Mark, and made him ready to put any gap between himself and Ben. Near Ben sat Major Tom Lathers, tall and stringy and solemn. He kept himself for ever "in an interesting state of mind" in order that religious people might encourage him by furthering his political aims. Lathers made every church in the village believe that he "leaned toward" it in preference to the others. He talked to the Methodists about his Methodist wife, "now dead and in heaven;" he told the Baptists about his "good Baptist bringing up," and spoke feelingly to the Presbyterians about his "good old Presbyterian grandmother," who taught him to say his prayers. Thus did this exemplary man contrive to keep in a perpetual bond of sympathy with his fellow-men, regardless of sect or creed. Had there been any Catholics and Jews in the town he would doubtless have discovered a Catholic ancestor somewhere, and a strong leaning towards Judaism on account of his lineal descent from Noah. Provided always that the said Catho-



lics and Jews had at the least filed a declaration of their intention to become citizens of this great republic.

Mark knew Lather's hypocrisy and hated it. But what was his disgust when, catching the major's solemn eye and following its direction, he saw on the women's side of the church, decked out in cheap finery, Nancy Kirtley. She sat next the aisle, and her splendid and self-conscious face was posed on purpose to attract his attention. She had come to town to spend a week at the house of her brother, the drayman, and had prolonged her stay when she heard that Mark had been sent for. She had not felt the revival excitement. Roxy had besought her, the minister had preached at her, the sisters had visited her. All this flattered and pleased her. She liked to be the centre of attention, and she had managed on occasion to squeeze out a tear or two by way of encouraging the good people to keep up their visits. But for her—healthy, full-blooded, well-developed, beautiful animal—there was no world but this. Such people are enough to make one doubt whether immortality be a gift so generally distributed as we sometimes think. On this evening the radiant Nancy sat smiling among the solemn and even tearful people about her. Her shallow nature had no thought now for anything but her appearance and its probable effect on Mark.

Little did Nancy think what a goblin her face was to the young man. In his present state of mind she was the ghost of his former sin and weakness. The very attraction he found in her face startled him. So at last when he went forward to be prayed for, it was not altogether repentance, nor altogether a fear of perdition, even, but partly a desire to get out of the company in which he found himself. Mark was hardly a free agent. He was a man of impulsive temperament. His glossy, black, curly hair and well-rounded, mobile face expressed this. In this matter he floated in on the tide, just as he would have floated out on an evil tide had the current set in the other direction.

That night Twonnet went home with Roxy. For how can girls be friends without sleeping together? Is it that a girl's imagination is most impressed by secrets told in the dark? I am not a girl; the secret of this appetency for nocturnal friendship is beyond me, but I know that when two girls become friends their favourite trysting-place is sure to be the land of Nod. So Twonnet, having attended the Methodist meeting, went home with Roxy. And they discussed the "start" which Mark had made.

"I don't just like it," said the Swiss girl. "You see Mark is grieved by his mother's death; he is sorry in a general sort of a way that he didn't do as she wanted him to. But is he sorry for any particular sins? Now, when a body repents I don't believe in their saying, 'I'm sorry I'm a sinner.' When I can say, 'I am sorry that I get mad so quick and that I trouble other people,' then I repent. Now, if Mark could say, 'I'm sorry I was drunk on such a night, and that I gambled at such a time,' it would all be well enough."

"How do you know he can't?" asked Roxy, somewhat warmly. For Mark was a friend of hers, and now that his conversion was partly the result of her endeavour, she felt a sort of proprietary interest in his Christian life.

"I tell you what, Twonnet," she added with enthusiasm, "it's a grand thing to see a young man who has the glittering prizes of this world in

his reach, bring all his splendid gifts and lay them as a sacrifice on the altar of the Lord, as Mark did to-night."

"You give Mark more credit than he deserves," persisted the uncharitable Twonnet, with a toss of her curls. "He didn't do anything very deliberately to-night. He felt bad at his mother's death and sorry that he had treated her badly. Wait till he actually gives up something before you praise him."

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## CHAPTER X.

### THE EXHORTER.

BUT if friends over-estimate the change in Mark it is quite certain that the critics were equally mistaken. For Mark converted was quite a different Mark. Even the scoffers had to admit so much. A man who finds his excitement in prayer-meetings and love-feasts is not the same with a man who finds his diversion in cards and whisky and all-night dancing. He was not the same Mark; and yet, and yet, religion is only the co-efficient, and the co-efficient derives its value from that of the quantity, known or unknown, into which it is multiplied. Mark was different but quite the same.

Wicked or pious, he must lead. In politics he had shown himself self-confident, ambitious and fond of publicity. In religious affairs he was—let us use the other names for similar traits when they are modified by a noble sentiment—bold, zealous and eager for success.

He began to speak in meeting at once, for the Methodists of that day were not slow in giving a new convert opportunity to "testify." Indeed, every man and woman who became a Methodist was exhorted, persuaded, coaxed, admonished, if need be, until he felt himself all but compelled to "witness for Christ." If there was any hesitancy or natural diffidence in the way of a new beginner's "taking up the cross," brethren did not fail to exhort him in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs according to the scripture. They would sing at him such words as these:

"I'm not ashamed to own my Lord,  
Or to defend his cause," etc.

Or,

"Are there no foes for me to face?  
Must I not stem the flood?  
Is this vile world a friend to grace  
To help me on to God?"

It was a sharp discipline to which the convert was thus subjected. No very clear distinction was made between moral courage and mere effrontery, between natural diffidence and real cowardice. But this discipline made every one bear his share of responsibility. Methodism captured the West by mobilizing its whole force. In time of revival at least there were no reserves,—the whole *landwehr* was in action. Everybody must speak in meeting, or pray, or exhort, or "talk to mourners," or solicit the hesitating in the congregation personally. And so it came about that the clear, flexible voice of Mark Bonamy was heard in the

meetings almost immediately. His addresses, if not eloquent, were at least striking and effective. The visible tokens of the influence of his addresses were pleasant to him,—there are few men to whom this sort of power would not be gratifying. Mark was active, he enjoyed the excitement, he liked to feel himself at last on the side of the right; he threw himself more and more into the work of exhorting, he went out of town frequently to address meetings in the country, and as he did not hesitate to brave storm or flood in these expeditions, he soon acquired a reputation for zeal which was quite agreeable to him, for it could not be expected that his natural vanity should have all disappeared under the influence of his piety. For that matter, our motives are never quite so good as we think, and never quite so bad as our enemies suppose. Our best is inwoven with evil, and our worst, let us hope, has some strands of good. Only God can unravel the complexity.

Mark, for his part, did not attempt it. He was of too complacent a temper to go behind the popular verdict when that was so favourable as in the present case. He often confessed his depravity, his sinfulness, his unworthiness; but this old heresy that a man is all bad is the devil's own cloak under which one is always prone to hide specific sins.

Of course Mark's religiousness occasioned much gossip in the small political circles of the country. The sheriff, claiming to be intimate with Bonamy, was often inquired of, about it.

"Well, you see," Lathers replied when the solution was demanded by a crony, "I don't think it's a sharp move. It makes friends and the like for Mark, and gives him the preachers and class-leaders and exhausters and what-ye-may-call-'ems. But you see he can't ride both horses with their heads turned different ways, and the like. And it's the fellers that don't go to class-meetin' and the like that carry elections. How's Mark goin' it with them? Can't drink, can't dance—pshaw! it aint the best card Mark had, and I don't see for my life what made him throw it. He aint too smart at 'lectioneerin' and the like nowadays. Ef't had'n' been for me that dancin' so much with Nance Kirtley would 'a' tripped him last run; I laid myself out to save him from that scrape and lost votes and the like a-doin' it. And he don't appreciate it. But he don't come a-foolin' round me with his religion and goin's-on, and the like, I tell you now."

Here the astute man took a good bite from a plug of tobacco. Then he expectorated awhile with a deadly, melancholy, meditative aim at the rusty grate.

"Liker'n not, now, I may do Mark injustice," he went on with a suspicious twinkle. "It may be one of them Methodist girls and the like he's after. But then he don't show no signs. That aint like him. He's a plump fool when they's anything of that kind a-goin'. I can't make it out. I don't believe he kin nother! It's like the feller't had measles, and mumps, and janders, and cholery infantu-um all in one heap. 'I can't make it out,' says the doctor, 'but I'll give you a little of everything I've got in the pill-bags, and something 'll hit the disease, may be.' I heard that the Kirtley girl had went forrerd and the like in one of the meetin's out on the crick. I know what tree she's a-barkin' up. It's like the man said about his dog. 'He's treed a bear,' says he; 'he barks too big fer a 'coon.' Nothing but big game would make Nancy Kirtley put on the pious and the like."

If the sheriff erred in his estimate of Mark, he was more nearly right

when it came to Nancy. To marry Mark Bonamy was more to her than heaven itself; for the bliss of heaven or any other joy long deferred made no impression on her shallow nature. When Mark became religious she followed him. And her large-eyed beauty became yet more dazzling when she tried to appear religious. It made one hope that, after all, there might be a soul within. So long, indeed, as she said nothing she was a picture of meditative wisdom, a very Minerva. But when she spoke, it was, after all, only Minerva's bird. Such was the enchantment of the great still eyes in her passively beautiful face, that after many shocking disillusionments brought about by the folly of her tongue, one was sure to relapse again into a belief in her inspiration as soon as she became silent. I doubt if good John Kaspar Lavater himself could expound to us this likeness of absolute vacuity to deep thoughtfulness. Why do owls and asses seem so wise?

Nancy's apparent conversion was considered a great triumph. Wherever Mark went he was successful, and nearly everybody praised him. Mrs. Hanks, Roxy's well-to-do aunt, held forth to Jemima upon the admirable ability of the young man, and his great goodness and self-sacrifice in "laying all his advantages of talent, and wealth, and prospects at the foot of the cross."

"I tell you what I think, Henriette," replied Jemima, with her customary freedom: "I think that's all fol-de-rol and twaddle-de-dee." Here she set her iron down with emphasis and raised her reddened face from her work, wiping the perspiration away with her apron. "I think it's all nonsense fer the brethren and sisters to talk that way, jest like as ef Mark had conferred a awful favour on his Creater in lendin' him his encouragement. Do you think it's sech a great thing to be Colonel Bonamy's son and a member of the Injeanny legislater, that God must feel mightily obleeged to Mark Bonamy fer bein' so kind as to let him save his immortal soul? Now, I don't," and here she began to shove her iron again. "You all 'll spile Mark by settin' him up on a spinnacle of the temple," she added, as she paused a moment to stretch out a shirt-sleeve, preparatory to ironing it.

"Jemima," said Mrs. Hanks, "it's wicked to talk that way. You are always making fun of the gospel. I'm sure Mark's very humble. He calls himself the chief of sinners."

"I s'pose he does. That's nice to set himself up alongside of Paul and say: 'See, Paul and me was both great sinners.' That makes you think he's a-goin' to be like Paul in preachin'. But s'pose one of the brethren—brother Dale, now—was to say: 'Brother Bonamy, you're the biggest sinner en town. You're wuss'n ole Gatlin that went to penitenshry, an' you're wuss'n Bob Gramps that was hung.' D'you think he'd say, 'Amen, that's a fact?' But ef bein' the chief of sinners means anything, that's what it means."

"Jemima, I tell you, you're wicked. It's right to kill the fatted calf for the returning prodigal."

"Oh yes, I know," and Jemima wiped her face again. "But I wouldn't kill all the calves on the place and then begin on the ye'rlin's so as to make him think it was a nice thing to be a prodigal. I'd be afraid the scamp would go back and try it over again."

And here Jemima broke out with her favourite verse:

"Oh hender me not, fer I will serve the Lord,  
And I'll praise Him when I die."

Mark did find the attention which his piety brought him very pleasant, and indeed his new peace with himself made him happy. His cup would have been full of sweetness if it had not been for the one bitter drop. Nancy would follow him. Wherever he held meetings she availed herself of the abounding hospitality of the brethren to pursue him. She boasted a little, too, of her acquaintance with Brother Bonamy before his conversion. She received much attention on account of her friendship for him. But Mark's worst trouble was that he could not emancipate himself from her. She attracted him. Struggle as he might with the temptation, her exceeding fairness was a continual snare to his thoughts. It humbled him, or at least annoyed him, to remember that while all the world thought him a saint, he could not but feel a forbidden pleasure in looking on one, to attach himself to whom would be certain overthrow to all plans for goodness or usefulness. Did there also dawn upon the mind of Mark, unaccustomed as it was to self-analysis, the thought that this passion for Nancy had nothing to do with what was best in him? Did he ever reflect that it had no tinge of sentiment about it? Certain it is that he struggled with it, after a fashion; but his attempts to extinguish it, as is often the case, served to fan it into something like a flame; for such passions are not to be fought,—when one fights one thinks, and thought is oil to the flame. They are to be extinguished by the withdrawal of fuel; to be eliminated by substitution of serious purposes. Mark prayed against his passion; reflected wisely on the folly of it; did everything but what he ought to have done. He perpetually hid from himself that his conversations with Nancy on the subject of religion were sources of nothing but evil to himself and to her. Was she not a convert of his own labours? Should he not do what he could to strengthen her purpose to do right?

About this time Dr. Ruter's missionaries in Texas had attracted much attention, and Mark thought of joining them. He would thus undertake a hard thing, and Mark was in the humour of doing something Herculean. He spurned the idea that he was to settle himself to the ordinary and unpoetic duties of life, or that, if he should become a preacher he could be content with doing only what commonplace circuit-riders did. In a general sort of way, without wishing for specific martyrdom, he would have liked to brave wild beasts or persecutions. Most of us would be willing to accept martyrdom in the abstract,—to have the glory and self-complacency of having imitated Paul, without having our heads specifically beaten with specific stones in the hands of specific heathen, or our backs lacerated with Philippian whips on any definitely specified day.

Bonamy had caught the genuine Methodist spirit, however, and being full of enterprise and daring he was ready for some brave endeavour. Perhaps, too, he found a certain relief in the thought that a mission of some kind would carry him away from the besetment of Nancy, who had lately persuaded him to give her his pocket-testament as an assistance to her religious life.

At any rate, it was soon noised that Bonamy was going to do something. The rumour was very vague; nobody knew just what the enterprise of the young Methodist was to be. Texas, and even Mexico, was mentioned; Choctaw Indians, the Dakota mission and what not, were presently woven into the village gossip.

Colonel Bonamy debated in himself, how he should defeat this scheme. As a lawyer he was accustomed to manage men. He had but two ways: the one to play what he called "bluff,"—to sail down on his opponent and appal him by a sudden display of his whole armament; the other was a sort of intellectual ambushade. With Mark, who had always been under authority, he chose the first. It is not pleasing to parental vanity to have to take roundabout courses.

"Mark," said the old colonel, as the young man entered his office, "sit down there," and he pointed to a chair.

This was a sign of coming reproof. Mark had been so much flattered by the Whigs on the one hand and his religious associates on the other, that he did not quite like this school-boy position. He seated himself in the chair indicated. The old gentleman did not begin speech at once. He knew that when "bluff" was to be played a preliminary pause and a great show of calmness on his part would tend to demoralize the enemy. So he completed the sentence he was writing, gathered up his papers and laid them away. Then he turned his chair square around toward his son, took off his glasses, stroked the rough, grizzled beard of three days' growth on his chin, and fastened his eyes on Mark.

"What is the use of being an infernal fool?" said the old man. "I let you take your own course in politics. I didn't say anything against your being a little unsteady; I was a young man myself once and sowed some wild oats. I knew you would settle after a while. But I never was such a confounded fool as you! To let a set of shouting old women and snooping preachers set you off your head till you throw away all your chances in life, is to be the plaguedest fool alive. Now, I tell you, by godamity, Mark Bonamy, that if you go to Texas you may go to the devil, too, for all of me. I'll cut you out of every red cent. I don't waste my money on a jackass, sir. That's all."

The old man had by this time wrought himself into a real passion. But he had mistaken Mark's temper. He was no more a man to yield to threats than his father. Many a man with less heart for martyrdom than Mark can burn at the stake when his obstinacy is aroused.

"Keep your money, I don't want it," he said contemptuously, as he strode out of his father's office, mentally comparing himself to Simon Peter rejecting the offer of Simon Magus.

He was of a temper quite earnest enough to have made more real sacrifices than the giving up of a reversionary interest in an estate between him and the possession of which there stood the vigorous life of his father. But the apparent sacrifice was considerable, and it was much extolled. Roxy in particular was lost in admiration of what seemed to her unchecked imagination a sublime self-sacrifice. She rejoiced humbly in the part she had taken in bringing Mark to a religious life, while she estimated the simplicity and loftiness of his motives by the nobleness of her own. And, indeed, Mark's missionary purpose was in the main a noble one.

## CHAPTER XI.

### DIVINING CUPS.

INTENSE excitements cannot endure. It is a "merciful provision." Human nature strained too long in any direction must find repose in



TWONNET AND ROXY TELLING FORTUNES.

relaxation or change in reaction. As the white heat of the political excitement of "the campaign of '40" had cooled off, so now the revival excitement slowly but surely subsided. There were brethren unversed in the philosophy of human nature who did not know that after the summer heat of religious excitement a hibernation is needful and healthy, and who set themselves to prevent the cooling, or the "backsliding" as they termed it. But the ebb tide was too strong for them, they were caught in it themselves, tired nature overstrained in one direction sank into torpor, in them as well as in others. Doubtless this period of reaction was worth quite as much to the church as the period of revival. The winnowing went on rapidly now; the good folks were greatly alarmed to see how much of what they had raked together was mere chaff; but ever as the wind drove away the chaff, the solid grain became visible.

Among those who proved steadfast was the young lawyer. He did not go out to exhort so much in meetings as before, but then it was corn-planting time and meetings were no longer common in the country. He gave attention to his business, but it was still understood that he meditated some dreadful mission to some outlandish place, Oregon or Texas or Guinea—gossips were divided about the exact locality—it was away off in that direction somewhere. Mark talked less about it now, and was not quite so sure of his own mind in the matter as he had been, except while talking to Roxy. He grew more and more fond of talking to Roxy. In conversation with her it was the better Mark who spoke. The lower, the passionate, the vacillating Mark was quite put out of sight. Roxy called out his best, and quite put him in conceit with himself. All that was highest in her transferred itself somehow to him, and he was inclined to give himself credit for originating the impulses with which she inspired him. He liked to look at himself shining in the light of her reflected enthusiasm. She had set up an ideal Mark Bonamy, and the real Mark was so pleased to look at this flattering picture in the mind of the pure-hearted girl, that he came to believe the image of himself which he saw there to be an accurate likeness.

Of course interviews so frequent and so pleasant must grow to something more. It doesn't matter what a young man and a young woman talk about, even sympathetic conversations about missionary labours in Texas or in Greenland are apt to become tender. One enthusiasm translates itself so easily into another! This worship of his real and imaginary goodness, and this stimulus of what was best in him was so agreeable to Bonamy that he began to doubt whether after all it was best to undertake a mission to the Texans single-handed and alone. Good old sisters whose matchmaking proclivities had not died but had only been sanctified, took occasion to throw out hints on the subject, which greatly encouraged Mark to believe that Roxy was divinely intended and moulded to be his helpmate in that great, vast, vague enterprise which should be worthy of the large abilities he had consecrated.

Roxy on her part was a highly imaginative girl. Here was a large-shouldered, magnificent, Apollo-like fellow, who thought himself something wonderful, and whom his friends thought wonderful. It was easy to take him at the popular estimate, and then to think she had discovered even more than others saw in him. For was it not to her that he re-



vealed his great unsettled plans for suffering and dying for the cross of Christ? And as he came more and more, the pure-spirited girl began to long that she might somehow share his toils and sufferings. The ambition to do some heroic thing had always burned in her heart, and in her it was a pure flame with no taint of selfishness or egotism.

Mark went into Adam's shop one day to have his boots mended.

"So you are going to Texas, are you?" broke out the shoemaker, with half-suppressed vehemence.

"Yes."

"Fool's errand,—fool's errand," muttered the old man as he turned the boots over to look at the soles. Then he looked furtively at Bonamy and was disappointed to find in his face no sign of perturbation. "Fool's errand, I say," sharper than before.

Mark tossed back his black hair, and said with a twinkle:

"So you think, no doubt."

"Think? *think*?" Here the shoemaker choked for utterance. "I tell you if you were my son I'd——" then he went on turning the boots over and left the sentence unfinished. Perhaps because he could not think what he would do to such a strapping son as Mark; perhaps because the sentence seemed more frightful in this mysterious state of suspended animation than it could have done with any conceivable penalty at the end.

"You'd spank me and not give me any supper, may be," said Mark, who was determined to be good-natured with Roxy's father.

The old man's face did not relax.

"That shoe needs half-soling," he said, ferociously. "What makes you run your boot down at the heel?"

"To make business lively for the shoemakers."

"And what'll you do when you get to Texas where there are no shoemakers? I wish I could patch cracked heads as easy as cracked shoes."

Adams was not averse to Mark's flattering attentions to Roxy, to which he had attached a significance greater than Mark had intended or Roxy suspected. Missionary fever would soon blow over, perhaps, and then Mark was sure to "be somebody."

Besides, the shoemaker was himself meditating a marriage with Miss Moore. Her sign hung next to his own on Main Street, and read "Miss Moore, Millinery and Mantua-maker." Adams may have guessed from the verbal misconstruction of the sign, that the mantua-maker was as much in the market as the millinery; but at least he had taken pity on her loneliness and Miss Moore had "felt great sympathy for" his loneliness, and so they were both ready to decrease their loneliness by making a joint stock of it. Mr. Adams, thinking of marriage himself, could not feel unkind toward a similar weakness in younger people.

There was, however, one person who did not like this growing attachment between Mark Bonamy and Roxy Adams. Twonnet had built other castles for her friend. She was not sentimental, but shrewd, practical, matter-of-fact—in short she was Swiss. She did not believe in Mark's steadfastness. Besides, her hero was Whittaker, whose serious excellence of character was a source of perpetual admiration in her. She was fully conscious of her own general unfitness to aspire to be the wife of such a man; she had an apprehension that she abode most of the time under the weight of the minister's displeasure, and she plainly

saw that in his most kindly moods he treated her as one of those who were doomed to a sort of perpetual and amiable childhood. It was by no great stretch of magnanimity, therefore, that Twonnet set herself to find a way to promote an attachment between Whittaker and Roxy. Next to her own love affair a girl is interested in somebody else's love affair.

But Twonnet saw no way of pushing her design, for Whittaker carefully abstained from going to Adams's house. Twonnet beguiled Roxy into spending evenings at her father's. Whittaker, on such occasions, took the dispensations of Providence kindly, basking in the sunlight of Roxy's inspiring presence for a few hours, and lying awake in troubled indecision the entire night thereafter. It was with an increase of hope that Twonnet saw the mutual delight of the two in each other's society, and she was more than ever convinced that she was the humble instrumentality set apart by Providence to bring about a fore-ordained marriage. She managed on one pretext or another to leave them alone at times in the old-fashioned parlour, with no witness but the Swiss clock on the wall, the tic-tac of whose long, slow pendulum made the precious moments of communion with Roxy seem longer and more precious to the soul of the preacher. But nothing came of these long-drawn seconds of conversation on indifferent topics—nothing ever came but sleepless nights and new conflicts for Whittaker. For how should he marry on his slender salary and with his education yet unpaid for? After each of these interviews contrived by Twonnet, the good-hearted maneuverer looked in vain to see him resume his calls at the house of Mr. Adams. But he did not. She could not guess why.

One night Twonnet spent with Roxy. Mark dropped in, in his incidental way, during the evening, but he did not get on well. The shrewd Twonnet got him to tell of his electioneering experiences, and contrived to make him show the wrong side of his nature all the evening. Roxy was unhappy at this, and so was Mark, but Twonnet felt a mischievous delight in thus turning Mark aside from talking about Roxy's pet enthusiasms, and in showing them the discords which incipient lovers do not care to see.

The girls sat at the breakfast-table a little late the next morning, — late in relation to village habits, for it was nearly seven o'clock. Twonnet proposed to tell fortunes with coffee-grounds, after the manner of girls. Roxy hesitated a little; she was scrupulous about trifles, but at Twonnet's entreaty she reversed her cup to try the fortune of her friend.

"I don't see anything, Twonnet, in these grounds," she said, inspecting the inside of her cup, "except—except—yes—I see an animal. I can't tell whether it's a dog or a mule. It has a dog's tail and mule's ears. What does that mean?"

"Pshaw! you arn't worth a cent, Roxy, to tell fortunes," and with that Twonnet looked over her shoulder. "Dog's tail! why that's a sword, don't you see. I am to have a gentleman come to see me who is a military man."

"But will he carry his sword up in the air that way as if he were going to cut your head off if you should refuse him?" asked Roxy, "and what about these ears?"

"Ears! that is beastly, Roxy. Those are side-whiskers. Now, see me tell your fortune."

With this, Twonnet capsized her cup in the saucer and let it remain inverted for some seconds, then righting it again she beheld the sediment of her coffee streaked up and down the side of her cup in a most unintelligible way. But Twonnet's rendering was fore-determined.

"I see," she began, and then she paused a long time, for in truth it was hard to see anything. "I see ——"

"Well, what?" said Roxy, "a dog's tail or side-whiskers?"

"I see a young man, rather tall, with flowing hair and—and broad shoulders." Twonnet now looked steadily in the cup, and spoke with the rapt air of a Pythoness. Had she looked up she would have seen the colour increasing in Roxy's cheeks. "But his back is turned, and so I see that you will reject him. There are crooked lines crossing his figure by which I perceive it would have been a great source of trouble to you had you accepted him. There would have been discord and evil."

Here Roxy grew pale, but Twonnet still looked eagerly in the cup.

"I see," she continued, "a tall, serious man. There is a book in front of him. He is a minister. The lines about him are smooth and indicate happiness. His face is toward me and I perceive—that——"

But here Roxy impatiently wrested the cup from her hand and said, "Shut up, you gabbling story-teller!" Then looking in the cup curiously, she said, "There's nothing of all that there. Just a few streaks of coffee grounds."

"May be you spoiled it," said the gypsy Twonnet. "You cannot read your own destiny. I read it for you."

"And I read yours," said Roxy; "an animal with a dog's tail and cow's horns. But don't let's talk any more nonsense, Twonnet, it's a sin."

"More harm comes of religious talk sometimes than of fooling," retorted Twonnet.

"What do you mean?" demanded Roxy, with anger and alarm.

But Twonnet did not answer except by a significant look from her black eyes. The girls had changed places for a time. It was Twonnet who had taken the lead.

*(To be continued.)*

## HOW FIVE LITTLE MIDGETS SPENT CHRISTMAS EVE.

A STORY FOR CHILDREN.

BY GEO. STEWART, JR.

ONCE upon a time, there lived far, far from here, at a place called the Cedars, a little family of five persons. There was Alice, she was the youngest, and a perfect little mite, but always full of mischief and play. Gertie came next, and she was much the same, but the third one, Edith, was a decided romp, and her clear ringing laugh was heard all over the house from five in the morning, when she got up, to half past six in the evening, when her heavy little eyes went to sleep. Annie was the fourth, and she was a mild-mannered little puss, her auntie's pet, and, I

am sorry to add, a sly boots. Georgie came last. He was the eldest of the family and the only boy in it. What shall I say of him? He was *always* in some sort of mischief or other. He had more troubles than most boys, and had an unfortunate habit of tumbling into new ones as soon as he got comfortably out of the old ones. He was his uncle's boy, and not a bad boy either. Georgie was smart and active, perhaps too active for his frame and brain. But he was a regular boy, with this difference from most boys, perhaps, for he would much rather stay in the house than go out of it. You will smile at me when I tell you he was fond of dolls and preferred a black kitten to a shaggy dog any day. But if Georgie loved dolls and cats and little sets of baby furniture and patch work, he was by no means girlish. Far from it, for he was a manly little fellow despite his feminine tastes.

Well, these five little people lived together in a great, square, old-fashioned house, with beautiful gardens attached, and ample grounds all round it. In these grounds were swings for the little folks' summer pleasures, and when winter came and it was not too cold for them to be out, they used to coast down the steep hills in front of the house on their pretty sleds and fleet toboggans. What fun they had, too, these five little rogues, and what shouts came from their little throats as they shot down the hills, and went helter skelter over the crusted snow, with many a tumble and laugh. And they never hurt themselves in the least, but up and away again for another trial, and another bounce, and another laugh. Dear me, I think I see them now as I used to look out of my front window watching them, in their warm frocks and Ulsters, and Georgie in his Ulster and woollen leggings, with rosy cheeks and bright sparkling eyes full of excitement and joy.

But I am going to tell you of an adventure which happened to these five little people, to show you how wrong it is to be too inquisitive. It was winter time, and if you want to see "The Cedars" at its prettiest, you must pay a visit there when the fleecy snow is on the ground, and the trees are clad in crystal foliage, and the panes are made beautiful by the etching frost king. You must go there in the bracing winter season. And if you go at Christmas time, you will never want to leave it. If you taste the good cheer there once, you will hardly ever be content with a Christmas anywhere else.

It was the night before Christmas, and Alice, Gertie, Edith, Annie, and Georgie were in high glee. All day long they teased and coaxed their auntie to tell them something about Santa Claus, and to let them sit up all night so that they might see the good old man coming down the wide chimney on his reindeer with his pack of presents. Many a sly allusion was made to the great room across the hall where the Christmas tree stood in all its glory and beauty. But Annie said no. The friend of all good children never came when he was watched, and the great room was securely locked and the key-hole stuffed with paper. The little folks were more eager than ever, and every gust of wind that whistled down the chimney roused them to the very tiptoe of excitement.

"Auntie," said little Alice, "there he is now."

"Oh *do* let us sit up," said Edith.

"What's the hurt?" said Georgie.

"Can't we, auntie?" said Annie.

"Mayn't we?" asked Gertie.

But auntie was firm, and the five little faces were long again, and very grave till another gust whistled and roared, and little Alice called out again,

"Oh auntie, its coming now. I see his tail." And Edith was *sure* she saw the head of a doll, while sly-boots Annie declared she saw Santa Claus himself, and wanted to point out the veritable stick on which he stood resting his foot, when he winked at her. As for Georgie, he was too much engaged in looking out for the reindeer to pay much attention to the driver. Nothing less than that would satisfy him!

At last bedtime came, and five demure little people went off to bed, to dream of the joys and pleasures of the morrow. The whole five kissed the ones they loved the best, and with Lizzie they trooped along the hall-way, and after trying to peep through the clinch of the door in the big room, they mounted the stairs and were put to bed.

It was one of the maddest, merriest Christmas eves you ever heard of. The sleigh-bells tinkled past the house every few minutes. The great bell of the old chapel across the road rang out its peals. There were merry greetings and shouts out of doors, there were kindly sentiments exchanged within. The snow was coming down in large, handsome flakes, and the air was alive with Christmas greetings. The sharp sound of the hammer told of busy preparation for the morrow's festivities. Bertie and Charlie and Walter were trimming the library room with spruce and evergreens, and sprigs of myrtle and the misletoe, and five little curly heads slept upstairs unconscious of it all.

At midnight all was done, and uncle and auntie and the rest of the family had retired. The house was very still, and the old eight-day clock in the hall was the only object awake. "Tick-tock," said the venerable time piece, "tick-tock," "tick-tock."

"Goodness, what's that?" said Edith, as she tumbled out of bed and came down thump on the floor. "Oh my," said Alice, rubbing the sand out of her eyes with both fists, "is it Christmas yet?" And Georgie and Annie and Gertie exclaimed in a breath, "let's go down and peep in the big room."

"Oh no," said Alice, "auntie said we mustn't, and p'raps Santa Claus wouldn't give us anything if we did."

But the majority decided to go, and little Alice marched along, I am sorry to say, with the rest. Five long white flannel night-gowns trudged through the upper hall, noiselessly slipped down the staircase and walked along the lower hall-way till the door of the mysterious room was reached. Here the five night-gowns stood still. They were all drawn up like a company of soldiers with Georgie at their head. The door creaked a little as one of the prettiest spirits you ever saw slipped out of the forbidden room. She was dressed in a pure white dress trimmed with a border of silver and little blue flowers. She had silver slippers on, and a silver crown rested on her forehead. In her right hand she held a plain white staff tipped with gold, while in her left she bore a shield. She had two white wings, parted with diamonds on her back. She smiled sweetly on the little people before her, and asked them what they wanted there at that time in the morning. Now Alice, you may be sure, was very much frightened at all this, and she could not speak for some time. Chatterbox Edith, usually so noisy, hadn't a word to

CHRISTMAS & NEW YEAR'S CARDS



MERRY

X'MAS

- A -



AND A HAPPY NEW YEAR

THE WISE MEN WATCHING THE STAR IN THE EAST

NEW YEAR'S FESTIVITIES  
A SCOTCH REEL

COMPLETE INVESTMENT OF TURKEY

A LATE TALENT MUCH PRESSED FOR TIME

THE ASSAULTING PARTY

DEFEAT ALONG THE WHOLE LINE

BUNROCK, NEW YEAR'S DECLINING AN INVITATION TO A BALL

I'M GLAD YOU'RE HERE

HEIGHT OF THE SEASON  
BALLS & PARTIES

COD FISH & OYSTERS

OLD WHISKIES & SOME CHOICE SPIRITS

COMING FROM CHURCH  
LITTLE ARMS' GIVING

AN ANNUAL MEETING

say. Gertie looked as if she was going to cry, and Annie looked very grave and wise. Georgie plucked up a little courage, and managed to ask the sprite if they could see the room for a few moments.

To their delight the sprite touched the door with her staff, bade them enter, and the little party filed in. The moment the party passed the threshold a loud noise was heard, and the door closed with a savage bang. The five little people were terribly frightened at this you may be sure, but they wisely said nothing. Their fear, however, vanished as they began to look about them. They had never seen the room look so pretty before. Pieces of green, with here and there a red blossom, or a tiny white bud, ran all round the apartment. An arch, tastily arranged, was mounted directly over the fire-place, and in the centre a very pretty motto, bearing the words "A merry Christmas," was placed. But it was something in the middle of the room which aroused their curiosity and nearly drove them wild with delight. It was nothing less than a large Christmas tree, literally loaded down with beautiful offerings. There were presents for them all. No less than five dolls hung gracefully by the hair from the tree's emerald branches. There was one, a tall brunette, for Alice, a golden-haired blonde for Edith, a waxen beauty for Annie, a elaborately dressed wax baby for Gertie, and, would you believe it, a porcelain dolly for Georgie! The children made a rush for the tree and would fain have grasped their dolls, and started back to their rooms, but the silver sprite waived them back and said they must touch nothing, they could only look, for it was not yet time. "You mustn't speak, only look, and handle nothing," said the sprite. "Look, see what they are doing."

The five dolls jumped down from the tree and began to play and run round the room. "Let us eat all the candy," said Alice's doll, as she glanced slyly at her little mistress.

"Yes," said Georgie's doll, "our owners have no right here at this time, and we will eat all their candy and figs and nuts and raisins right before their eyes. This will do them good next year."

"Oh my," said Gertie's doll, "my mistress is going to cry. I must hurry up and eat her share before she alarms the household."

And then the five dolls sat down on the five little chairs which hung on the tree, and began to eat, and eat, until their little faces grew redder and redder, and the more they ate the longer they grew, and when they had finished they were nearly as tall as the children themselves, who stood shivering and shaking on the other side of the room, watching the movements of their dolls.

"Let us play Snap Dragon," shouted the dolls in concert, and away they scampered around the room, their little high-heeled boots making quite a racket on the uncarpeted floor. The sprite gave a whistle, and ten other dolls came galloping in on little wooden ponies. They dismounted, the ponies went off to their stables, and the new comers were warmly welcomed. They sat down on a buffalo robe in the corner and glared at the children, who were speechless with astonishment at the strange performance they had witnessed. In a few minutes a curious sound was heard. The tree seemed to open in the centre, and a large dragon with horns on the top of his head leaped out. The tree closed up at once, and no one could see the place out of which the dragon had come. He was a fierce-looking fellow with great glaring eyes of fire and

claws of iron. His body was covered with horny scales, and he seemed to glide along on his tail. From his shoulders hung a long scarlet cloak, and his terrible tongue was of a deep red colour and fork-shaped. The children gazed in wonder at this; but the dolls only laughed and clapped their hands.

"Here is the dragon," they cried, "here is the dragon," and they fell to clapping their hands again. The sprite touched the dragon on the left horn with the staff and immediately a silver dish began to grow out of his claws, and in a very few minutes, indeed; the dragon stood in the middle of the room, with his great dish held before him, out of which terrible flames sported and danced. He laughed at this, and his laugh was more like the roar of a lion. He pranced around and called in each doll and invited her to a feast of raisins out of his fiery dish. He laughed louder than ever when a doll burned her fingers, and he grumbled very much when he lost his raisins.

The sprite whispered some words in the dragon's ear, and he seemed quite pleased at what he heard. The children heard him say "all right," and they did not know just what to make out of it. They soon found out, for the dragon in a loud voice said :

"There are people here at this Snap Dragon festival who have no right to be present. As they are here they must share the peril as well as the pleasure. Let all the lights be put out, and the game will be played according to our ancient custom. Out, out, with the lights !"

Then there was complete darkness, and little Alice, who always wanted to go to sleep when she could no longer see the light, grew very sleepy, and even Georgie admitted that he was just a little bit sleepy, but the dolls laughed, and were ungenerous enough to say that Alice and Georgie were afraid to stay with them, and wanted to break out of the arrangement. The sprite ended the discussion, however, by promptly saying that none could leave the room until the games were over, and no excuses would be taken. In order to make sure she passed her wand over the eyes of the five little children, and do their utmost they could not close them again.

The lights being extinguished, the flame in the dish, which had grown very shallow indeed, was now a brilliant blue colour, and the contrast between it and the red eyes of the dragon was very curious, not to say alarming. The chairs were all put away and the fun commenced. It was certainly weird and ghastly fun, but the dolls called it fun, and the sprite said it was fun; as for the dragon, he pronounced it "excellent fun," so I must be content and say the fun commenced. What a time they had, those merry dolls! The dragon raced around, first to one then to another, and as he ran, the dolls sang in a peculiar minor key, the ancient ballad, which you know runs thus :

"Here he comes with flaming bowl,  
Don't he mean to take his toll,  
    Snip, Snap, Dragon !

"Take care you don't take too much,  
Be not greedy in your clutch,  
    Snip, Snap, Dragon !



“ With his blue and lapping tongue,  
 Many of you will be stung,  
 Snip, Snap, Dragon !

“ For he snaps at all that comes  
 Snatching at his feast of plums,  
 Snip, Snap, Dragon !

“ But Old Christmas makes him come,  
 Though he looks so fee, fa, fum !  
 Snip, Snap, Dragon !

“ Don't'ee fear him, but be bold—  
 Out he goes, his flames are cold,  
 Snip, Snap, Dragon ! ”

And as they sang they made a snatch at the boiling plums, and Alice's doll burned her fingers very much, and Edith's doll fared equally as bad, but Annie's doll captured a lot of raisins, and the old dragon was very angry with her and scowled, and would have torn his hair, I am sure, but he hadn't any. They kept the game up till they were all so tired that they wished they were up in the tree again, waiting for Christmas morning. And then the dragon, who seemed never to get tired of anything, ran or rather glided over to the five trembling night-gowns who were looking at him with eyes as big as saucers. He made them snap at the plums till Gertie's fingers were full of blisters, and Annie's hand was covered with the same. As for dainty Alice, she managed one plum and three burns very well. Of course Georgie fooled the dragon so often that he made his dragonship quite savage, and when Edith's turn came, he put the dish so close to her face that she singed her eyebrows till she cried with pain, and told him “ she wouldn't have any of his old plums, and she would tell her auntie in the morning, if he didn't go away.” And the dragon laughed and said, “ snip, snap, what did you come here for, snip, snap,” and he hopped before her, first on one side and then on the other, and little Edith was very downcast over it all, and began to think she was spending a very disagreeable Christmas Eve.

But at last the brandy in the dish began to grow cold, and the dragon was becoming weaker and weaker, and suddenly with a loud snap he and his dish vanished into the tree again, and pretty blue and pink, and yellow, and green and white lights shone out round the room, and the ten little dolls mounted their ponies, and kissing their hands to the other dolls, and doing the same to the little children, off they galloped through the air on their steeds to their homes in the sky. And the five dolls came over to Alice and Edith, and Gertie and Annie and Georgie, and shook hands with them, and took them over to the tree and showed them the pretty lanterns that Santa Claus had brought all the way from Japan, and gave to each a handsome fan which was got, they said, during the summer from China. And Alice clapped her hands when she saw a charming little set of dishes which came from Paris, and she held up her night-gown and asked to have them put into it. Georgie felt the pair of skates that hung from one of the top boughs, all over, to

see if they were real, and he sat down twice on the "Red Rover," to see if it would bear him. Annie was much taken with a baby cradle which was only ten inches long and four inches wide, and it had little mattresses, and tiny pillows, which made her wonder if babies ever *were* as small as that. A rocking-chair painted blue was marked "Gertie," and Edith was overjoyed to find a little set of bed-room furniture which the sprite told her was for her. And the five little people inspected their own presents and each other's, and finally everybody else's, and they thought that this Christmas tree was the prettiest they had ever seen in their lives.

The old clock ticked in the hall, and the morning was breaking. The snow had stopped falling, and a bright light was shining. The sprite sounded her whistle and the room was empty, and the dolls hung by their hair on the tree as if nothing had happened. "Tick-tock, tick-tock," said the clock. "Dear me, I'm rather late in getting away," said Santa Claus, as he hastily darted up the chimney, and swung himself over the roof to the ground. "Tick-tock," continued the clock, and its honest old face seemed to smile as the rosy dawn appeared. "Tick-tock," it said, and it *looked* just as if it wanted to say "Merry Christmas to you all."

It was six o'clock, and there was some excitement you may be sure in the room where the five irrepressibles slept. Edith was the first out of bed.

"Dear, dear, what is the matter with me, I wonder," she said, "I feel so tired."

"Where have I been all night," said Georgie, stretching himself.

"I thought I saw Santa Claus," said Alice, "he has snapping eyes, and hot plums, hasn't he?"

"I know what I am to get," said Annie, "it's a doll, for I saw it in the big room. I was down there all night."

"And there is a rocking chair for me," said Gertie. "It is growing on a tree down stairs."

"Dear me," said the children at once, and all putting on their shoes at the same time, "let us run down and see what Santa Claus has brought us."

And the little troop hurried along, not in white night-gowns this time, but with nice new frocks and shoes and stockings on. And when they saw the great generous tree, they ran to it with a shout, and each little fairy beheld the realization of a dream which had come to each on that happy Christmas Eve. Good old Santa Claus had not forgotten a thing. But ugly Snap Dragon was no where to be seen. Where was he? I guess he was in Scandinavia, where he belongs.

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## THE NORTH.

O, WELCOME are our shrill north breezes,  
 That nip as they pass men by,  
 Crisping the snow as it freezes,  
 Brightening the stars in the sky ;  
 Spangling the air with a glittering rain  
 Of diamond dust, so fine and clear.  
 The silvery motes, with might and main.  
 Seem dancing to some far-off refrain,  
 That rings through the sharp-cut atmosphere.

Songs from the misty cloudland,  
 Strains from the icy halls  
 Of the Boreal realms—some proud land  
 Whence the gleaming shower falls,  
 Shook down from ice-mountains lone,  
 In the dreariest haunts of the frozen zone,  
 By the shouts and the laughter of jovial sires,  
 Who make the welkin ring  
 With the old-time zest,  
 With the old-time jest,  
 As they lustily laugh,  
 While they jollily quaff  
 From brimming golden chalices,  
 To their merry old hearts' desires,  
 The red-ripe wine that the old blood fires,  
 In the northernmost depths of the far-north palaces,  
 Where Winter stern reigns king.

Where crystallized rivers slope to the sea,  
 Like ocean-ghosts standing silently  
 On the verge of some voiceless eternity ;  
 Flashing back light like molten glass,  
 Or mountains of steel in grand repose.  
 O, it were death, white death, to be  
 Alone in their silent company—  
 Death from the plinth of the glittering mass  
 To the flush of their crowns of rose ;  
 Death 'mid the fretwork of mist and spray  
 Daintily fringed, aerially tossed,  
 Arrested as it fell,  
 By a word, a wand, or an elfin hand,  
 Or the freak of a Wizard's spell,  
 Whose spirits have breathed

On the air and wreathed  
 Their Miracle of Frost,  
 Suspended there  
 Like a dream in air,  
 Above the basalt strand.

Sharp and crystal-clear  
 As his breath falls here,  
 When the white wolf winter speeds in haste  
 With howl and leap o'er the frozen waste ;  
 Keen as his keenest breezes blow ;  
 'Tis the merriest taste,  
 Maidenly chaste,  
 Of those regions of ice and snow,  
 Where the calm airs fierce  
 To the marrow pierce,  
 Where the storm is a demon, fury-rife,  
 Rending the delicate web of life  
 With a frenzy we may not know :  
 Our wintry air  
 Were but summer there,  
 In the bleak land of berg and floe.  
 In the land of the glacier that gleams  
 Like the battle-axe swung in the dreams  
 Of some conqueror-Jarl, as the steel  
 Makes some terrible Sea-King reel,  
 Or smites a long-dreaded Viking low,  
 When Fate directs the unerring blow  
 In St. Olaf's realms of berg and floe.

Then welcome to the shrill north breezes,  
 That nip, as they pass, in play ;  
 The laughing winter-sprite that teases  
 Youth, childhood, and old men gray ;  
 Welcome to the storm that pleases,  
 Whose mission is not to slay ;  
 For they deepen the bloom of the roses  
 That tingle the cheeks of the fair,  
 Warm the heart where love's secret reposes,  
 And strangle the One Care.  
 The snow's noiseless falling,  
 The wind's loudest brawling—  
 These bring life, not death,  
 In their vigorous breath,  
 And nature's true wealth,  
 A largess of Health,  
 In the flash of their sparkling air.

## COLONEL MERRITT'S CUP.

## AN OLD LADY'S CHRISTMAS STORY.

NICODEMUS MERRITT had been a grocer. Don't imagine for a minute that I mention his former occupation through any disrespect, or to make little of such a worthy man. I merely mention it to show how, by industry, perseverance, and a careful partner—for Mrs. Merritt was a model house-wife, and in the days before Merritt retired, when they kept the little corner grocery, all the customers used to cite Patience Merritt as an example to their other halves, or, as was with some of them the case, their better *two-thirds*)—a man may rise, in this blessed country (which we don't want any more emigration to, as there is now more people in than there is good times for), from the lowest station to the highest. But Nicodemus Merritt, Esquire, as was written on his envelopes, although they spelt it "Esq.," was no longer a grocer. He retired—as is fashionable to say, though "give up the shop" sounds kind of more familiar like to me)—about fifteen or sixteen years ago—I was never much on remembering dates—on a snug little fortune, and joined the Colonial Volunteers, that was just started then, for Nicodemus was not an old man (he had barely turned five and forty at that time), and he bubbled all over with military ardour. Some evil-minded old ladies as lived in the neighbourhood insinuated as much that Mrs. Merritt was at the bottom of his joining the "sogers," as they disrespectfully called the Colonial Patriots, because now, as how he had given up the shop, the "dear man," as they called Merritt, though he used to sell his sugar a copper—for we had no cents then—less than any other grocer, must join something, and go somewhere in the evenings, to keep out of the reach of his wife's tongue. But I do not believe it, for Patience Merritt had a character and was a model woman, when on the contrary the parties as said this about her had no characters to lose, and spoke that way of everybody they knew or heard tell of, dead or alive.

But if I keep on writing about what was said by the Scandal Committee—and well they deserved the name, for they were always poking about, interfering with other people's business and never minding their own, and, like these people, having none to mind—I will never be able to tell you about the handsome piece of plate that Colonel—(I don't see what they say "Kurnel" for, and spell it with lots of O's and L's, which, if I hadn't been stood down on last winter at one of these spelling bees, as went out of fashion like the blue glass—which I tried all this summer without any virtue for my corns—a pretty mess I'd have made of it, having the critics poking fun at my phonetic spelling)—Merritt got the Christmas after he resigned command of the Colonial Volunteers.

There! just like me. I forgot to tell you before that Mr. Merritt was the Colonel of the Patriots, and used to ride on horse-back ahead of the volunteers and just behind the band, with a long drawn sword, and surrounded by all the little boys who stopped from school annunts

to their parents to follow the band whenever the Volunteers turned out, which was about twelve times a year; and the little boys and the members of the Loafers' Union—(an unincorporated society, whose roll of membership has greatly increased of late—this is a little pleasantness of mine, don't mind it!)—used to follow the regiment just as fondly and devotedly as if it was a circus procession or a Governor's funeral.

Mr. Merritt was rapidly promoted from the time he first joined the Patriots, as I insist upon calling them—and you would call them patriots too, if you heard how beautifully and how *loud* they used to cheer the Queen, with their hats on their guns, on review days—for he was greatly liked, as he used to take his whole company, when he was captain, down to the hotel and give them a cold lunch or a cold supper, when they would drink each other's healths until they would find, when they got home, their beautiful new uniforms, which were made in London by a real military tailor, all stained with beer and all dirty from rubbing against so many fences on their way home, and sometimes—I say it with sorrow—soiled from rubbing against the sidewalks, too. So, by *this* means—or by *these* means—(I never studied as much grammar as I should when I went to the girls' school, kept, better than thirty years ago, by the two Miss Barneses, who charged one pound a quarter, for we had no public schools then, and the girls used to learn to sew and work samplers, which, since as how they have got the public schools and the sewing-machines now-a-days, nobody pays any attention to)—he was, inside of four years, made Colonel—the men used to elect their own officers then, but now-a-days they are, I believe, or at least I was told so, appointed by a commission from Ottawa, consequently cold suppers don't have as much effect in making a colonel as they used to have.

Nicodemus Merritt was Colonel Merritt for three years when, to the surprise of everybody, he quite unexpectedly resigned. Among the reasons given for his resignation, I heard as how he said to the Patriots, when he announced to them his intention of resigning, that it was owing to his age, as he was on the down grade of life—though he was barely past fifty, which is considered the prime of life—(though there is precious few men now-a-days that are not past their prime at fifty. What can you expect when the most of them come home *primed* every night of their life, to the annoyance of their wives and the destruction of their door-latch!)—and that he found himself unequal to the task of managing his horse and charging at their head. Now, I can hardly believe the Colonel said *this*—or *that*,—for Flash, that was the name of his charger, was as quiet, modest, industrious and well-disposed a horse as ever I saw, and I used to see him often, especially on Sunday, when he used to draw the Colonel and Mrs. Merritt to church, in their open carriage, lined with blue silk; he would go along so meek and humble you'd think he was going to attend service himself; and then on parade days they would bring Flash out afore the Colonel's door nicely toggered up, with a piece of white velvet, as large as a clean towel, with gold crowns worked in the corners of it, under the saddle, and a pair of big pistols, that were dreadful to look at, though they were never loaded, covered with a whole bear skin in front of the saddle; and they used to hang brass chains and steel reins about that poor beast, as if he was the

wild Araby steed as Mrs. Norton (poor woman! to die so soon after her marriage, makes one feel quite sad like) writes so beautifully about. And then to see the Colonel, as he would come aclattering down the steps with his brass spurs, and his brass sword, and his cocked hat, with white and red feathers in the top and a gold band down the side, looking for all the world like the picture of the Duke of Wellington, in the Province building; and he would climb up on Flash's back, with nobody aholding the reins, and Flash would not move a step until the Colonel had gathered up all the chains and got his feet safely into the stirrup—what with his spurs and his trappings was no easy or quick thing to do—then the Colonel would kiss his hand to Mrs. Merritt, who would be watching out of the front window, and say, "Get along, Flash!" and Flash would go along the street becomingly, with the Colonel's long sword bouncing against his ribs at every step. Bless your heart! that horse was no ways proud and conceited like other horses as carry military men; none of your prancing, and jumping, and snorting on two legs for him! He was too well-conducted a horse for that; he would take his place behind the band and among the little ragamuffins just like a Christian. The bare-footed urchins were not afraid of Flash,—they must have understood him better than his master—for they would often chase after him and seize him by the tail, and, against his most emphatic protest, escort the Colonel when he was inspecting the line of troops. So I hardly think that the difficulty of managing such a "warrior steed" could be the reason for the Colonel resigning.

The Scandal Committee referred to before as saying that Mrs. Merritt was the cause of his joining the Patriots, now turned round and said that Mrs. Merritt was at the bottom of his leaving them. One old lady, a member of that Committee, said that Mrs. Merritt's servant girl—they only kept one, as they had no children, and a sly, deceitful, brazen hussy she was too, and, although I would be very sorry to take away any girl's character (especially when there is none to spare), it's my opinion that she was no better than she should be—said to her as how one evening she was alistingening at the key-hole—I wouldn't put it apast her—when the Colonel came home from the Volunteers' dinner "a little on his dignity like," and how Mrs. Merritt said to him "That it was bad enough wasting his money treating and feasting a whole company of hungry flatfoots"—(I hardly think that Patience Merritt would call the defenders of her country "flatfoots," but I give it to you as I got it)—"but that *she* would not allow him to make ducks and drakes of his fortune by feeding a whole regiment." And that she continued further and said, "That it was about time an old man like him would cease making a fool and laughing stock of himself, playing soldier for the amusement of the public," and that she put her foot down hard at the end and said that if he didn't leave the Colonials at once she'd know the reason why. This is what the old lady said that Mrs. Merritt's servant girl said that Mrs. Merritt said. I have got matters a little kind of mixed here; these quotation marks and stops do bother one so, you know, but if you only stop a little and think over it, you'll get all right again. Of course I don't believe that Mrs. Merritt said any such thing. I just mention it to show how far these parties would go to belie the character of a respectable woman, and all because Mrs. Merritt shut her door against them, and quite properly too, after what they said of the Colonel, which I am not going to repeat.

here, as a better man than Merritt does not live, and that I always said and always will say as long as I've a tongue to meet these — ladies, indeed ! who go about stealing their neighbours' characters as if they were common property.

I laid out to finish this story in half-a-dozen pages, but if I continue to go on in this way I will, I am afraid, write a book before I come to the Colonel's cup ; but musn't all writers defend their characters when attacked ? and I don't see anything I have written that I could have left out unless I left out the whole of it, and perhaps you would have been better pleased with it if it had never been written. I thought it a very easy matter before I commenced, to write like the clever ladies and gentlemen who write nice novels and short newspaper stories just about nothing at all ; but I have my doubts now about being able to write like them, although I ought, as I have a novel every week regular from the library for Sunday ; and our minister, who is a very good sort of a man in his way, but his way ain't mine, asked me if I was not aware that the Church (he is very high Church, and has a weakness for candles and crosses) required us to devote the Sabbath to prayer,—“ And good works, minister,” said I ; “ and this work which I am now reading is a very good one, by Mrs. Oliphant, a woman as who——”

\* \* \* \* \*

It was the evening three days before Christmas. Mrs. Merritt sat alone in her sitting-room, a comfortably-furnished room in the front part of the house, boasting of a Kidderminster carpet and a Franklyn stove. The carpet was of a most tormenting pattern, which caught the eye of a visitor on entering the room, and compelled it to follow a yellow streak which twisted in and out, twined here and there, ending at last in a perplexing tangle, and leaving the gazer in a bewildered state. The Franklyn was polished so that it reflected the light, and the fire was spitting and sputtering away as if the coals were fighting to get out.

Mrs. Merritt was in the arm chair, which was under the gas, and at a convenient distance from the Franklyn. Mrs. Merritt was robed in black silk, with a provoking little house-tippet thrown over her shoulders, while her hair was brushed well back from her ears, which were small and white, and much admired. Her feet, in morocco slippers trimmed with fur, were on a stuffed cricket, with a bird of paradise worked upon the cover, though how it was discovered to be a bird of paradise will for ever remain a mystery.

Mrs. Merritt was not knitting nor sewing, nor, in fact, doing any kind of house-work. When Merritt had kept the grocery store (and the grocery store returned the compliment), she had worked all the time, but now, *tempora mutantur*, the times had changed, and she had changed with them. She considered it vulgar to work, so she was reading,—reading a book on etiquette. Her favourite works were, *The Habits of Good Society*, *Etiquette for Ladies*, and *The Gentlewoman's Companion*, by that elegant, *bon ton*, high-flown writer, S. H. Oddy, Esq. Mrs. Merritt, believing that a little polish would not be thrown away upon her lord and master, tried very hard to induce the Colonel to read these works ; but although the Colonel generally put himself out to oblige his good lady, he refused point blank to read such “ rot ”—that's the unsavoury name he gave these beautiful works—so he received their contents in large and frequent instalments from the lips of his better half.



Hurried and heavy steps were heard on the stairs, and the Colonel burst open the door and entered in a state of perspiring excitement, looking as red as the coat he wore in his warlike days.

"By Job, my dear!" the Colonel gulped out, and he placed his dirty boot firmly on the head of the blue spotted leopard that glared at him from the hearth-rug. Mrs. Merritt raised her eyes and glared at him too. He had so far forgotten himself as to actually come upstairs with snow on his boots, no doubt leaving many foot-prints on the white linen that covered the Brussels on the stairs. By so doing he had broken, as he well knew, the first order in the order-book, one of the standing regulations of the Home Office.

"How often, Nicodemus, have I requested you," said the lady, not a little displeased, "to refrain from using that expression, 'By Job?' And have I not informed you frequently that excitement and hurry are prominent marks of ill-breeding?"

"But, my dear, I have such good news," explained the Colonel, dropping into the nearest chair.

"I am sure it does not make the news any better to break into the room with your hair on an end like a Comanche Indian."

"By Job—!" here a look—a wicked look—from Mrs. M. stopped him. The Colonel always swore by Job. It was a harmless, inoffensive sort of a swear, and became the Colonel. The Scandal Committee said that if anyone was entitled to the expression Merritt was the man, as he wanted Job's patience to stand his own Patience—meaning his wife. After a pause the Colonel calmed down, and continued—

"What would you say, Patience, if the Volunteers would make a presentation to me at Christmas?"

"I would say it is the least they might do, and no thanks to them either, after all the money and dinners you have lavished upon them."

"My love," continued the husband, "they intend to give me a handsome silver cup, which the officers and men have generously subscribed for, and which I consider quite handsome on their part."

With woman's perverseness, for the sake of being perverse, the wife replied, "I could have put a silver tea-service to better use, but I suppose we shall *have* to take it. It will look well on the side-board with a glass shade over it."

"I have a copy of the address that will accompany it in my pocket," said Merritt, scorning to notice his wife's cool way of taking the momentous disclosure; "they sent it to me, so that I might be ready with my reply."

The knowledge that she was surely mentioned in that address flashed on Patience Merritt the moment the word was uttered—leave a woman alone to feel a compliment coming long before it is expressed. With an interest that quite charmed and surprised the Colonel, she said—

"Read the address, Nicodemus dear, so I will know all about it. I do like addresses," and she settled herself in the arm-chair to hear it comfortably.

Merritt searched every pocket before he produced the address, although he knew exactly which pocket it was in; but he wished to make it appear, even to his wife, that it was quite an ordinary affair, and that he was in the habit of carrying addresses and receiving silver cups every day in his life. After having wiped his spectacles twice, turned the

light up and then down, changed the position of his chair, and lost all the time possible, he regretfully and slowly read the following address, which he already knew by heart :—

“To Nicodemus Merritt, Esq., late Colonel of the Colonial Volunteers”

“RESPECTED SIR,—

“We, the officers, non-commissioned officers, and men of the Colonial Volunteers, feel that we would be neglecting a duty—a sacred duty—unless we would convey to you our admiration and acknowledgement of the free, kind, and impartial manner in which you acted during the years we had the honour and good fortune of being commanded by you. The great abilities you displayed as an officer, your gentlemanly bearing as a man, and your kind consideration as a friend, have left a mark in our hearts that change cannot alter nor time obliterate.

“We, therefore, hope that you will accept and treasure the accompanying mark of our esteem—not on account of its intrinsic value, but as a remembrance of the happy days of yore, when it was our ambition to follow whither you dared to lead. We trust that this trifling souvenir, this memento of the past, will always remain in your family, and descend to generations yet unborn.

“With best wishes for your health and happiness, and the future long life of your most amiable lady ; and trusting that, through the blessings of kind and indulgent Providence that watches over the meanest of its creatures, you may be long spared to each other and the world, we remain, and have much pleasure in signing ourselves,

“YOUR COMPANIONS IN DANGER.”

Mrs. Merritt looked unutterable things when “generations yet unborn” was mentioned, but brightened up again at “your most amiable lady,” so when the Colonel finished, with a sigh that it was not longer, she said,—

“It’s all very nice, but I don’t exactly like that turn to the last of it, about ‘the meanest of God’s creatures.’ It sounds a little sarcastic, but then I suppose it’s well-meaning enough.” After a meditative pause, “Oh, who will we get to answer it ? If I was a little more confident about the grammatical construction of my language, I’d undertake the task myself.”

“Why, you see,” said Merritt, stammering and blushing, “I was thinking since I heard of the affair, about some suitable expressions to use, and I——”

“Nicodemus Merritt, don’t be a fool ! I won’t listen to such a thing !” and although by the way he was snapped up the Colonel might have known that his hopes of being allowed to answer that address were vain, yet so deep in his heart were his hopes that he still persisted.

“Mrs. Merritt, you don’t know me ! Mrs. Merritt, you don’t know your husband, marm !”

“There, that’ll do ; we’ll have no speeches, please ! Unhappily I *do* know you, but I don’t want the whole world to know what a conceited ignoramus you are. *You* write the reply indeed ! Just you leave that

business in my hands, if you please. Mr. Merritt, I will attend to the reply."

Merritt's visions of luxuriating in polysyllables faded as she spoke. His cherished and studied expressions of "Your flattering encomiums," "your unexpected and munificent kindness," "my humble exertions and unworthy labours," were, alas, never to be mis-spelled, erased, and re-written by him. Like a dutiful husband he knew better than to argue the point, and so brought matters amicably around by saying,—

"I believe that Lawyer Springtie wrote the address, so I'll get him, if you like, to write the reply. It's quite customary to do so, and he is a good hand at such work. Besides we can invite him to the presentation; he will help to keep up the conversation."

"Ah, Nicodemus," said his lady, pleased that he had surrendered so readily, "you have more cleverness than I ever gave you credit for! But mind, though, don't let Springtie have the answering all his own way. Show me the reply before you approve of it, and I'll suggest any improvements needed."

For the next three days there was great commotion in the Merritt mansion. The address was sent to Lawyer Springtie for him to write the reply. Mr. Springtie prepared a reply, and sent a copy of it to the Colonel, who, approving of it, at once took it to his "amiable lady." She disapproved of it, on the ground that as her name appeared prominently in the address it should also figure prominently in the reply. The reply went back to the lawyer's office, with a note of the improvements needed. Next day it came back, and the "most amiable lady" figured largely in it. Merritt was in raptures with it, and confidently showed it to Mrs. M. as a miracle of art. That classical woman was not to be easily pleased,—her taste was far more critical. She sent it straight back to Springtie, her name was not prominent or often enough. Mr. Springtie returned the reply unaltered, with a note stating that if Mr. Merritt wished to make a laughing stock out of the affair, he declined having anything to do with it.

Mrs. Merritt said Springtie was "a brute." The Colonel did not know what to say, so he contented himself by remarking that he was surprised at Springtie. Mrs. Merritt got a young gentleman who was studying for the bar, to make a number of amended copies of Springtie's reply, containing many additions of her own suggesting.

A question of etiquette now arose, which threatened Mrs. Merritt's peace of mind, and disturbed the general harmony of the household. Mrs. Merritt was at a loss to know whether she should stand or sit during the reading of the address. Not even her matchless books on society could help or advise her on this vexed point. One hour of the day she had determined in her own mind to stand; the next, she was sure it would look better for her to be seated.

As only gentlemen would be present at the presentation ceremony, Merritt received orders to invite three or four talkative parties of the male persuasion, whose duty it should be to keep up the conversation. Mrs. Merritt determined to receive the company in the front parlour, and to have a cold supper and drinkables to wind up the presentation, in the large dining-room, which was separated by folding-doors from the parlour.

At last Christmas Day came. The family-dinner passed off in silence. The Colonel mechanically wielded his knife and fork. If you had questioned him he would have been unable to state whether it was goose or turkey he had been eating. As for Mrs. M., she touched nothing. She divided her attention between *The Habits of Good Society*—to see if she should stand up or sit down,—and superintending the preparations for the evening; and she gave Betty quite a blowing-up, which she well deserved, for neglecting to place the cruet over the darn in the best cloth, and also for omitting to put a little mat over the greasy stain.

As you no doubt remember, dear reader, it came on to rain that Christmas Day, and it did rain. The water came down as if it were a scrubbing-day up above. At eight o'clock that evening, Mrs. M., attired in her best silk and "sparkling with jewels," as they say of that dark-complexioned Queen of Sheba, was seated on the sofa in the room of ceremony, intently poring over *Etiquette for Ladies*, to see if it would assist her on the disputed point. The Colonel, in full evening costume, with a collar that took him sharp under the chin, and a cravat tied so tight that the blood that had run to his head turned purple with vexation when it found it could not, its retreat being cut off, get back again, was seated by the fire, rehearsing his reply, and consulting a dictionary for the pronunciation of the polysyllables which Mrs. Merritt and the law-student had sprinkled over it. Betty was in the hall, toggered out in one of her mistresses' cast-off dresses, altered for the occasion, with a white apron on, ready at a moment's notice to open the door.

The door-bell rang. Mr. Merritt pitched his dictionary into the drawer, and placed the reply on the mantel-piece. Mrs. M. rose disappointed from her book, and placed it upon the table. Betty, who had answered the bell, put her head in the door, and yelled,—

"Mr. Scoombs!"

Mr. Scoombs entered. Mr. Scoombs was the outside reporter for *The Reflector*. If a little boy rolled off his sled while coasting, it became Mr. Scoombs' melancholy duty to chronicle it under the heading of "*Terrible Sleighing Catastrophe*." Mr. Scoombs had been invited, so that the ceremony would be reported in a column and a half of *The Reflector*. You could tell at once that Mr. Scoombs was connected with the daily press, by his clothes—they smelt strongly of brandy, stale cheese, and condensed cigar-smoke. The Colonel shook hands with Scoombs, and introduced him to Mrs. Merritt. That well-bred lady smiled, put out the tips of three fingers, and said she was delighted to make the acquaintance of such a distinguished gentleman. Scoombs made a suitable reply—in fact, said it was wet, and dropped into Merritt's arm-chair—literary gentlemen always take things easy.

The bell rang again, the trio straightened up, Betty popped her whole body in this time, and screamed—

"Mr. Belloch!"

Mr. Belloch, with an umbrella in one hand and an outer garment in the other, followed so close after Betty that when that gentle girl turned to go out she got a wet overcoat piled over one arm, and a dripping umbrella tucked under the other, while their late proprietor said, "Sweet damsel, place these downstairs by the fire, so that they may be dry by

the hour of my departure." The toss Betty gave her head, the slam Betty gave the door, and the stamp Betty gave along the hall, led all present, except Belloch, to think that she would indeed make it hot for the wet articles. As for Belloch himself, he shook hands warmly with the trio, for the trio knew Belloch, and made the original remark to each that it was a very inclement night out.

Mr. Belloch—who was by no means an ordinary man, for everything Mr. Belloch said, and everything Mr. Belloch did, stamped him as being an exception to the common run of mortals—immediately dropped into a chair and an argument, and proved to his small but admiring audience that if the first Napoleon had been hanged in early life, a fate which, in the opinion of Mr. Belloch, he richly deserved, his descendant and namesake Napoleon III. would be a boot-black in Philadelphia, or in some other shining position besides that of having been Emperor of the French; and showed them conclusively that, in such a case, Europe would be in a different state to-day—or rather in many different states to-day.

As Belloch was speaking forcibly and at length on this deep subject, steps were heard in the porch, and some body or bodies evinced a desire to run away with the bell-pull. Betty immediately ran to the relief of the bell. She opened the street-door, then the door of the reception-room, popped in her head, and yelled defiantly at Belloch,—

"Colonel Hardy, and officers of the 'Lonial Volunteers!"

"God bless my soul!" muttered Belloch, "that interesting maiden has a voice like a steam whistle!"

Colonel Hardy, Merritt's successor, shook hands with the ex-colonel, said it was wet out, and bowed to the rest of the company; while the major, the adjutant, and all the captains and lieutenants came in sheepishly, whispered that it was a "juicy" night, and glided quietly into out-of-the-way corners of the room. The party seemed transformed into Quakers. That common and disagreeable silence, which frequently follows a general conversation, fell upon the company. Messrs. Belloch and Scoombs were not equal to the occasion. Betty came promptly to the rescue. She bounced into the room, jerked out, "A letter from Mr. Springtie, sir!" slapped the note into the Colonel's hand, glared savagely at Belloch, and was out again like a shot. Mr. Merritt read the note aloud,—

"I regret that sudden and unexpected business prevents me from attending the presentation this evening."

This interruption was fortunate. At present commenced retailing select passages from poor Springtie's private history.

After a few preliminary hems and haws, and an attempt, a wretched attempt, at a few introductory remarks, Colonel Hardy produced the address and read it. At the close of the reading the adjutant dived out into the hall, and returned with the cup. I might mention here that during the reading of the address Mrs. Merritt sat on the sofa. Everybody commenced admiring the Colonel's Christmas box. The cup, which looked like anything but a cup, was a very beautiful silver ornament, about eighteen inches high, on a handsome and highly polished ebony stand. The following inscription was engraved upon a shield upon one side of it:—

"PRESENTED TO  
COLONEL MERRITT,  
ON THE OCCASION OF HIS RESIGNING THE COMMAND  
OF THE  
COLONIAL VOLUNTEERS,  
BY THE OFFICERS AND MEN OF THAT REGIMENT,  
DECEMBER 25TH, 1869."

Mr. Merritt then read his reply, which, on account of its extreme length, cannot be given here. Suffice it to say that it was a very flowery production, and that the "most amiable lady" predominated in it. Everybody was pleased with it—at least they said so—and at the close of the reading Mrs. Merritt retired, and the worthy colonel invited his brother colonel and the other officers and guests, to step into the next room and partake of his poor fare.

The valiant volunteers charged the table with a will; and when, after a well-sustained attack for upwards of half-an-hour, they had succeeded in clearing the tables of the eatables, then the drinkables put in an appearance. First, the champagne, with their long necks outstretched, looking among the company for the most promising subjects to attack. The champagne was ably assisted by other labourers from the same vineyard. The gallant veterans drank the health of the host and hostess, and Mr. Merritt, with tears streaming down his face, responded, but whether the tears were from excess of emotion, or from a bottle of fizz which the adjutant let fly over him, it is impossible, with any degree of accuracy, to state. They then drank one another's healths, and the health of everybody in the house, not forgetting Betty. When the home supply was exhausted they went abroad, and they drank the health of every man of prominence and every institution of note in the outside world, the adjutant returning thanks for Bismarck, and Mr. Belloch responding to the toast of "The Suez Canal."

Determined to make Christmas as merry as possible, and the health drinking having exhilarated their spirits, all present commenced speaking at the one time. The Adjutant and Merritt, at the head of the table, lectured each other on the Russian and Turkish military systems. The Adjutant, with wine glasses for squadrons of men, and soda bottles for troops of cavalry, illustrated the Russian system of attack. The ex-colonel, with a champagne bottle doing duty for the terrible mitrail-leuse, interrupted the Adjutant's strategetic manœuvres, and put horse, foot, and artillery in ignominious rout. At the other end of the table, Mr. Belloch was bringing all his eloquence to bear on Colonel Hardy in proving that Noah's Ark must have been copper-fastened. The Colonel, being in an agreeing mood, sided with him, and the pair of worthies, unsuspected by the rest of the company, who would have been only too happy to have joined them, quietly proposed and solemnly drank Noah's health.

The younger officers, after pledging all their lady friends, the supply at last giving out, now called upon the Adjutant for a song. That military hero, who bore his late crushing defeat with the best possible grace,

favoured the company by rendering "Little Footsteps." During the progress of the song, Mr. Scoombs, who had given his undivided attention to the brandy bottle the whole night long, and who had drank all the toasts, sadly and silently, as if all the parties proposed had died deeply in his debt, seemed greatly affected, and was observed to use his handkerchief freely. At the conclusion of the song, rising with dignity and supporting himself with difficulty, he said, in a voice that was slightly hoarse and indistinct from raw brandy and deep emotion—

"Mr. Gentleman and Chairmen, I am personally unacquainted with the gentleman who has just favoured the company—I do not know even if he rejoices in the name of Smith or glories in that of Robinson, but I shall always remember him as a warm personal friend. (Hear, hear! from the company.) That song, those tender little verses, tender as the leg of a chicken, gentlemen (and here he held a drum stick up), cause me to feel a deeper interest in my fellowman an' woman—make me weep for him—hic! unanimity"—and here he wiped his eyes with a napkin, thinking, in his grief, it was a pocket handkerchief he had in his hand, while one of the young lieutenants lisped out with a hiccup, "Why these bwing twears?" Mr. Scoombs, as soon as order was partially restored, continued, "I have heard 'Little Footsteps' at all times an' in all places, an' in all styles—by brass ban's, on concert screamers, pianos, tin whistles, even by a would-be Paginini, a young man in the next boarding house, who is practising on the fiddle, who has blasted the joy of the neighbourhood, and who will bring my grey hairs in sorrow to the grave, but it never af'ec'ed me as it did this evening when sung by the gen'emán opposite, who is paying marked 'tention to the bran'y-bottle. (Great rapping, and rattle, and crash of glasses.) My ole friend Merritt will par'on me for trying to bring sorrow to such a place as this, but where is the man who does not feel as I do?—echo answers where! I am sure you will all join with me in drinking the health of 'Little Footsteps.'"

The health of "Little Footsteps" was drunk in solemn silence, the Adjutant whistling the "Dead March." Mr. Scoombs was so overcome by his late speech and his emotions that, in his endeavour to regain his seat, he quietly and unexpectedly glided under the table. This caused great confusion, as all the company immediately dived after him and tried to drag him out at the four sides at the one time. They succeeded, after many had fallen in the attempt, in bringing him to the perpendicular and standing him in a corner, where he kept muttering to himself, "Little shoes and stockings, little soles and heels," looking the picture of helplessness and sorrow. All the visitors now looked at their watches, and the semi-sober guests were surprised to find that it was after twelve, while the others, who had pulled out their watches out of pure sympathy, were bewildered by the unexpected number of hands, pointing in all directions, which appeared upon the faces of their watches. Everyone proposed to depart. Mr. Scoombs carefully piloted his way up to the host and said, with a smile that could not be out of place on the face of a chief mourner,—

"I hope you are not 'fended with me for 'posing the health of littlefoot steps?"

Mr. Merritt, whose face, blushing like the rose, was one perpetual smile, assured him that he was delighted, whereupon Scoombs clapped

him on the back, shook him heartily by the hand, and said, "Such feelings do honour to your sentiments, old boy!"

If, when gentlemen are in that peculiar state they arrive at after a public dinner, one of the party does anything out of the common, the others are sure generally to follow the example. It is needless to state that all the other gentlemen slapped Merritt on the back and shook him warmly by the hand. They then paired off, Mr. Scoombs and Belloch leading, the others following suit, all in a whole, happy and half hilarious state. Betty, who was nodding in the hall, gladly let them out; and, unheeding the slush, the majority proceeded to slide down the balustrade or coast down the steps. The night air seemed to have a revivifying effect upon them, as they could be heard for some time as they marched up the street, Mr. Scoombs singing "Little Footsteps," Mr. Belloch unsuccessfully struggling with "The Death of Nelson," the Adjutant informing the streets that he was "A Jolly Good Fella," and the other officers complaining of non-drawing qualities of Merritt's cigars, which they tried to light without biting the ends off, and disturbing the slumbers of the night watchman, who was snoring in a porch hard by, by yelling out their intention of not going home until morning.

Betty had hard work that eventful night to get the Colonel to his room. When she had him half way up the stairs he stopped, turned around, grasped the balustrade, and refused to proceed a step higher. Then, addressing the steps he had just ascended, he said,—

"Gentlemen, this is the proudest and happiest moment of my life——"

Betty interrupted what would have been, no doubt, a brilliant speech, by saying, as she clung on to the extended arm,—

"Good gracious! come along and don't make such a fool of yourself, sir. If Mrs. Merritt was to hear you now."

The Colonel straightened himself up at the mention of his wife's name, then grimly smiled, and sang out rather loudly,

"Betty you're a fool! Hold your tongue, Betty. What do I care for, Mrs. Merritt? I'm master in my own house, and I'll let you and Patience know——"

What else the gallant Colonel was going to say was never said, for hearing the door of Mrs. Merritt's room open savagely, he stopped suddenly and went up stairs very quietly.

\* \* \* \* \*

Merritt, now stouter and jollier than ever, often narrates to his male friends—when his wife is not present—the history of the "little time" they had over the cup. He always commences the history by pointing to the cup and exclaiming,

"By Job, sir! Do you see that cup, sir? You would hardly believe, sir, that that little piece of plate cost over a thousand dollars. Fact, sir, by Job!"

And this is how he reckons up the cost. To say nothing of the agony of mind that preceded the cup, the deplorable drunk that accompanied it, and the curtain lecture (of which Merritt never speaks) which followed it, which neither words nor figures can represent, there was,



To cash paid for—

Captain's outfit and uniform for the Colonial Volunteers, say .....	\$ 100 00
Annual Supper to the Company, 50 men, at \$1 00 per head, four years.....	200 00
Prizes given at Company's firing, \$25 each year, for four years.....	100 00
Outfit and uniform, from London, for the Colonel of the Colonial Volunteers.....	150 00
Military housings for horse, including holsters and field glass .....	75 00
Hodge Podge to Regiment, 400 at 50c., on occasion of taking command.....	200 00
Do. do. on occasion of resigning.....	200 00
Cold Supper, including wine and cigars to officers of Regiment on occasion of presentation of cup.....	70 00
Drafting address, Springtie,.....	20 00
Amended copies made by law students by Mrs. Merritt's order.....	20 00
	\$1135 00

Mrs. J. C.

### A GHOSTLY WARNING.

I CALL it a ghostly warning because, though it came not in the night-watches, in far-away tones, from the thin lips of a filmy apparition, it did come to me in the name of a dear friend long since gone to the Unknown Land.

In the spring of 1875, I visited Montreal, and, wishing to be entirely free for the business which necessitated my presence there, instead of going to the house of a relative, engaged board in a convenient locality under the same roof with an acquaintance. Excepting this lady, one friend and a cousin, no one to whom I was known was, during the first week, aware that I was in the city. This cousin, a very favourite one, then chanced to be in Canada for a few weeks, having left his wife and family temporarily alone in their home at Paris. As G——'s evenings hung rather heavily on his hands while away from his family, to which he was always devoted, he was good enough to enliven by his welcome presence many of mine, which otherwise would have been as dull as evenings in a boarding-house full of strangers must always be.

One morning, perhaps the third or fourth after my arrival, came the warning, delivered in a very straightforward, prosaic, unghostly way by the letter-carrier. One always examines the outside of a letter to see who it is from, probably for the same reason that leads one to listen to what other people say about one's friends before hearing what these have to say for themselves. I looked at this letter curiously. It was post-marked in the city at five o'clock of the previous afternoon, yet it

was directed in a hand I had never expected to see again save when I looked again with tearful eyes over a bundle of yellow old letters tied up carefully in a corner of my desk at home. It was curious, I thought, that this rather peculiar chirography should be duplicated. Then I observed, with a start, that the middle name in the direction was not that which belongs to me, but one which I had adopted for two or three years of my childhood, preferring it to the family name which my parents gave me. I had outgrown this whim and returned to my baptismal name, but the friend referred to always took a sort of pleasure in reminding me of this and several other childish fancies which we had held in common. No one now living, so far as I was aware, so much as knew that I had ever signed the name I now saw before me.

So my curiosity was well awake before I opened the envelope. Owing to a circumstance which will be related further on, the letter is not now in my possession, but it ran very nearly, if not quite, as follows :

“DEAREST E——,—It is sometimes permitted to us who have already stepped into the light to give words of comfort or of warning to those who still wander in darkness. My word to you now is one of warning.

“One who is very dear to you is about to trust his life to the treacherous deep. If he does so he will be lost. Upon you rests the responsibility. Prevent him from recrossing the ocean if you value his life.

“I am now, as of yore, ever lovingly yours,

“ANNIE M. H——.

“By the hand of A. B. Sears, Spiritual Medium.”

I don't think I am naturally superstitious, but it would be difficult to describe the effect of this letter upon my mind. It was not merely the nature of the communication, but its entire unexpectedness, that made it impressive. I read and re-read it carefully. The handwriting, if not precisely the same as that of my friend, certainly resembled it very strongly, and, though I had with me none of the actual writing to compare with it, I felt reasonably sure that my memory on this point was trustworthy. After thinking carefully over my list of acquaintances, I felt certain that there was no one of them who would be willing to play a practical joke of such a nature, and I knew of no one in the city who had ever heard of Annie's name. Then, too, there was the middle name of childish fancy which I had never signed since the days when Annie was my sole correspondent.

I put the letter in my bureau drawer and turned the key upon it. Putting this in my pocket, I went out, as usual, for the day, resolved not to let the matter trouble me. The business of the busy day totally drove it out of my mind, until, as I entered the house at dusk, the memory came back to me with a slight shock, such as an unwelcome memory frequently produces. This was repeated and intensified when, upon entering my room, I found the letter lying on the top of the bureau. I tried the drawers: all were locked. I felt in my pocket: there was the key. I laughed at myself, and said, “I must have locked the stable-door, leaving the horse outside. I'll see that it's in now, any way.” So I put the letter into the drawer, and, turning the key, placed it in my pocket before going down to dinner.

Soon after dinner my cousin came in, and we passed the evening in

the pleasant parlour of my only acquaintance in the house, whom I will call Mrs. Murray. During these hours I did not think of the letter, having determined that I would not think of it ; but when I went into my room for the night, after turning up the gas and stirring the fire, I went to the bureau to lay off my bracelets. There, stuck in the frame of the looking-glass, was the letter. The drawers were all locked : not a thing in them had been disturbed. A brooch, a little money, a finger-ring, some laces, and many little things that might have tempted a thief or a pilfering housemaid, were all just as I had left them in the same drawer where the letter had been. There could be no mistake about the matter this time. I had locked that letter in the drawer just before dinner, and had not since entered the room. Yet there the thing was staring me in the face, with the old, well-remembered handwriting and the long disused middle name, defying me to doubt the reality of its presence in a place where I had not put it.

Holding it in my hand and sitting in a low chair by the fire, I thought over the subject of the letter.

It has never seemed to me to be unreasonable to believe that if there is a life beyond the present, the spirits of those who have reached it before us may sometimes possess the inclination and the power to communicate with us. But I was not at all inclined to accept this communication as coming from the Spirit Land simply because it purported to do so. I had seen only one or two professed " mediums," and these by accident, but they had given me no desire to see more of their sort. It was a strong argument against the genuineness of this communication that it professed to come through the hands of a " medium." Still, I would grant to myself, for the moment, that this letter undoubtedly was from my dear old friend. What, in that case, could—what ought—I to do ? Of course, the person referred to as in danger could only be my cousin G——, for, as far as I knew, no one else who was dear to me was then thinking of crossing the Atlantic or any other ocean. But it was nonsense to say that if he were lost the responsibility of his loss would rest upon me. If any particular vessel had been mentioned in which it was said it would be dangerous to sail, or if any special week or month had been named, I would, to have satisfied my conscience, have faced my cousin's certain ridicule, and used my best powers of persuasion to induce him to take passage on another vessel or at a different time. But there was no such mention. He did not even know by what steamer he should leave, as all depended upon his business arrangements. As it was, how could I do or say anything to prevent his going where both his domestic and his business interests called him ?

Thinking about it as a real communication from a present but unseen friend, I at last said aloud, as to one within hearing, " No, Annie, I can do nothing, and I will burn this letter, so that it shall not trouble me any more."

" A distinct whisper, apparently just by my ear, answered, " You'll be sorry if you do." Startled, I looked all about the room—behind the sofa, under the bed, back of the window curtains—though I knew as well before as I did afterward that there was no one in the room. The occupants of the rooms next to mine had been snoring for the last hour, and the halls had long been perfectly quiet.

Heedless of the whispered warning, I persisted in my purpose. The

grate-fire was nearly out, but there were live coals enough to light the paper, and I watched it while it was consumed to ashes.

The next morning I went out, as usual, spending the day in tedious details of business that would not arrange itself satisfactorily, and happily forgetting the burned letter until it was recalled, as I entered the house late in the afternoon, by the sight of the mail-carrier's latest budget waiting its several claimants on the shelf of the hat-rack. Three letters were for me, and one of them was directed in the strange-familiar hand, and mailed in the city that morning. In the evening my cousin was to take Mrs. Murray and me to the Academy of Music; so I put the letter, unopened, into my pocket, and resolutely forgot it until I had locked myself into my room for the night. Then I opened it. The contents were the same as before, only that this time the missive opened with a tender reproach for my unbelief, and the address of the "medium" was placed below his name.

Again I sat down and thought it all over, coming to the same conclusion as before. Even supposing, I reasoned, that this is a genuine communication from Annie, she is mistaken in imagining that I can do anything to save G——'s life upon such vague information as this. If she knows so much of the future as she here professes to do, she must know much more than has here been told; and if she could write what she has written, she can write more. If that "medium" thinks I'm going to him to make inquiries, he's mistaken. The communication either is or is not from Annie. If it is, she must remember that I have always detested hints and oracular utterances, and know that I shall wait till she gives me proof of her power to foretell future events. If it is not from herself, the whole thing is a despicable trick, unworthy of a thought. But who, I reasoned again, could have either the information necessary to enable him even so far to personate Annie, or the motive to induce him to do it? Certainly, no one that I knew.

So I went to bed with the resolve that, as I could know nothing, I would think nothing more about it—a resolution easier to make than to adhere to.

The next morning my first thought was how I should dispose of the communication. Plainly, it was of no use to lock it up, and as little to burn it. I would carry it with me. If I lost it, that would surely be the last of this copy, and perhaps the discouraged writer would not try it again. So, crossing a street hurriedly, I drew out my pocket-handkerchief, and with an emotion of relief felt that the uncanny little missive had fallen upon the mud-covered pavement amid thick-coming hoofs and wheels. But I had congratulated myself too quickly. A gentleman who crossed the street just after me saw it fall, and in the mistaken kindness of his heart followed half a block to restore the document. I'm afraid he thought my acknowledgments very ungracious, yet I tried my best to dissemble. Two more efforts to rid myself of the letter met with no better success. There was nothing for it but to fetch the mud-discoloured epistle back with me, and that evening, as my cousin had other engagements and Mrs. Murray had gone out, I had nothing to hinder me from reflection on its contents.

I would not allow myself to think that I believed in the genuineness of the communication, yet the more I thought about it the more unaccountable it became. Still, I was strongly fixed in the opinion that

even if the communication were what it purported to be, there was no step that I could or ought to take in regard to it. For a few moments I thought of handing the letter to my cousin to read, and so shifting whatever responsibility there might be over to his broad shoulders. But that, I reflected, would be but a cowardly thing to do. Even if he should now laugh at the warning—as doubtless he would do—yet, if on his homeward voyage an accident should happen to the steamer on which he was, the memory of the despised warning would then be sure to awaken, as people always think of the things they should not; and perhaps, by disturbing the coolness of his judgment, and arousing the notion of fatality which slumbers in us all, the prophecy might help to its own fulfilment. That was a responsibility I would not take.

The letter continued a dreadful plague to me. I burnt this second one, and the next day's mail brought a third nearly-literal copy. This I tried to hide, but every evening, when I unlocked my door, the letter appeared in some new and conspicuous place—now pinned to the head of my bedstead, then to a window curtain; now on the pillow, now on the sofa, or again stuck in the frame of the looking-glass—once tied to the gas-fixture, and twice to the door-handle. I could not get rid of its ever-reproachful face, silently saying, "I warn, and you will not heed."

As far as I could without exciting suspicion as to my motives in making the inquiries—for I dreaded the sort of notoriety which would surely attach to one who was supposed to have received a supernatural communication—I satisfied myself that the landlady and servants had, and could have had, nothing to do with this letter and its mysterious migrations. It was ascertained that there had once been a duplicate key to my bureau, but not, as far as was known, to the hall-door. The other doors were bolted on both sides.

Now, whether it was altogether owing to the effect on my imagination of this mysterious agility of an inanimate thing, or whether it was that the vexatious and troublesome nature of the business which detained me in town, and the physical and mental weariness it induced, combined with the undeniably poisonous cookery of the fashionable boarding-house, had together seriously affected my nervous system, I do not know, but certain it is that day and night I could not escape from the haunting refrain, "I have warned, but you will not heed, and you will be responsible for a life. For *his* life—the life of the father of the beautiful children you are so fond of, the husband of the woman who is dear to you, the friend whom you love for his own sake. It is for *his* life that *you* will be responsible."

During the daytime my work smothered this refrain, so that I only heard it as a disturbing echo; but when evening came with its relaxations I could not shut it out. At the theatre, the pretty stage where Rignold played Henry V., seemed written over with the flaming words. When I dined with friends, and one said in a laughing way about some trifling thing, "You will be responsible for that," I felt as if I had received judicial condemnation. When my cousin stood on the rug in front of Mrs. Murray's sitting-room fire, telling in eloquent words about Old-World wonders which had burnt themselves into his artist heart, I heard them only as through a din of surging waters, in which I saw his

noble head uselessly struggling, or I heard his voice as through the sobs of wife and children lamenting for husband and father.

I had maturely reflected and decided upon my course, and I would not permit reason to be overridden by imagination so far as to let the latter influence my actions; yet many a night I woke to find myself bitterly weeping and praying the pardon of G——'s wife that I had not at least tried the effect of giving him the warning.

I was glad when my business was at length despatched and I could leave the city; but it was not until several weeks after this that my cousin started for France. The twelve days that elapsed between the sailing of his steamer and that on which its safe arrival was reported in the papers were very long. And when it was all over, how angry I was at myself that I should have paid any heed to such a vague, and, as it now seemed, transparently spuriously sort of warning!

My next thought was to send to a friend the letter of which I still held the third copy, with the request that he would ascertain for me if there were any such person as A. B. Sears professing to be a "Spiritual medium." After some weeks the answer was returned: "Yes, A. B. Sears is the *nom-de-guerre* of Abiathar Parsons, who, under his proper name, boards in the same house where you boarded last spring."<sup>\*</sup>

Abiathar Parsons! Then I remembered. In the days when Annie H—— and I, as recently separated schoolmates, were carrying on an active correspondence by mail, this Parsons was a clerk in the employ of the storekeeper who acted as postmaster in our native village. Upon inquiry, which I caused to be made of the housekeeper at my late lodgings, I found that during my stay in Montreal he had occupied the room next to Mrs. Murray's parlour, and on the same floor with my room, and that his place at table had been nearly opposite my own. Parsons had not borne the best of reputations during his clerkship with the postmaster, and after a stay of a year or so had drifted away, carrying his laziness and cunning to a more appreciative market. In the well-covered, florid-faced man with black-dyed hair I had failed to recognize the lank, sallow, red-haired youth whom I had only seen and hardly noticed behind the counter. Evidently, his memory had been better than mine, and from the position of his room in relation to Mrs. Murray's parlour he might easily have overheard the conversations between my cousin and myself relative to the former's return to Europe. How Mr. Parsons obtained access to my room and bureau-drawers I do not certainly know, but as it seems that he had once occupied the apartment for some weeks, it may not be doing him injustice to suggest that he then supplied himself with duplicate keys, thinking that they might prove useful in some possible contingencies.

Possessing, as he did, a remarkable facility in imitating handwritings—a facility which had more than once turned the eyes of suspicion upon the postmaster's clerk—and remembering that of Annie H——, which must have often passed through his hands, while knowing that she had long since passed away, his cunning presented to Abiathar Parsons—*alias* A. B. Sears—the idea that as he knew me, and probably remembered many little things connected with my family and early life which

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\* The facts in this paper are strictly true, but for obvious reasons both the real and assumed names of the persons here mentioned have been changed.

he could use to advantage in trading upon my credulity (while he remained unrecognised by me), here was an excellent opportunity to get a little money and extend his reputation as one whose predictions of the future must be relied upon, seeing that he knew so much of the past.

If, by any chance, the steamer on which my cousin sailed had met with disaster, and he had failed to reach his home, I should probably have made no investigation, but have simply accepted the communication as having been a genuine but sinfully-unheeded warning from the Spirit Land, and all the rest of my life have been weighed down with a burden of remorse as heavy as any ever borne or by an actual murderer.

The trick of Mr. Parsons-Sears was a very simple one, now it has been told, and I have not found it an easy task to excuse myself to myself for the importance I attached to the supposed warning, and for the real suffering so uselessly endured on account of it. But since that time I have felt much more charity than before for those unfortunate people who in hours of doubt, anxiety and grief have resorted for knowledge or consolation to sources which in their calmer moments they would have looked upon with contempt.

E. C. G.

### THE FIRST CHRISTMAS.

[In "The Legend of the Roses," which is perhaps not so familiar to some of our readers as it ought to be, Mr. S. J. Watson, the gifted author makes some allusions to the festival of Christmas. We give this extract.—ED.]

THALLON.

Hast thou seen Him whom I have named just now,  
 And who, for countless deeds of timely mercy,  
 Is, throughout all the Judean land, adored,  
 And called by fonder name than Cæsar is—  
 "The Healer of the People?"

QUINTUS.

I have beheld him often, and, each time,  
 He looked more gracious than he did before ;  
 The incarnation of the holiest pity,  
 That Virtue in her noblest ecstasies  
 Could picture or aspire to ; and besides,  
 What is to me a baffling mystery,  
 His miracles, which so astound men's eyes,  
 Wherein His will o'erides all natural laws,  
 And sends Experience and Reason both  
 To do dumb war with Wonder, seem to me  
 To be performed to show His love to men,  
 Rather than show His power, which always gives,  
 Unlike all power the world e'er saw before,  
 The foremost place to kindness.

THALLON.

Hast ever heard it talked of in dark whispers,  
That much about the time when He was born,  
The Gods ceased to converse with mortal men,  
Even in those dark and double utterances  
Wherein both Chance and Ignorance conspired  
To fool men's minds and fortunes ?

QUINTUS.

I am not old enough to call to mind  
The time when all the oracles grew dumb,  
And the gods chose to mock their worshippers  
With taunting marble muteness.

THALLON.

I've heard it said at home, amongst the Greeks,  
That at the time the oracles grew dumb,  
A strange thing happened on the sea at night—  
Would'st like to hear the tale ?

QUINTUS.

In mystery there is a fascination  
Which all men yield to ; and, fair Truth, herself,  
Wears not such pleasing visage if she come  
Wanting the robe of strangeness.

## THE FIRST CHRISTMAS.

THALLON.

- “ 'Twas night, a Grecian pilot calmly steering  
By the bright beacons of the stars o'erhead,  
Heard a weird voice along the waves careering,  
Saying, in thunder tones, ‘ Great Pan is Dead.’
- “ He glanced around, no vessel was in showing,  
Nor could he aught in human shape descry ;  
He only saw the billows' white plumes flowing  
In the wake of the cloud-waves of the sky.
- “ He saw no Naiad near, with tresses streaming  
Like web of gold with amethysts enwove ;  
To tell him that, no more, save in priest's dreaming,  
Pan should hold rule o'er meadow, vale, and grove.
- “ And that no more Pan's thousand altars bending  
With weight of garlands, and with wealth of years,  
Should see, from off their dust-strewn crowns ascending,  
Aught than the bitter incense of scant tears :
- “ And that the Gods had earthly grown, and olden,  
In their long contact both with men and time ;  
That unto dross had changed their foreheads golden,  
Worshipped and wreathed in trusted days of prime :



- “ And that Old Truth, grown dim, and few souls leading,  
 Had downward circled, till at length it came  
 To the abyss of Doubt, where death-mists breeding  
 Over the grave of Hope, bedimmed Faith's flame.
- “ The pilot heard no tale like this, when leaning  
 Across his helm, to listen, but he read  
 Some strange, dread import in the mystic meaning  
 Of the four solemn words, ‘ Great Pan is Dead.’
- “ And as they went, like funeral echoes booming,  
 They stirred the pilot's soul with prescient fear ;  
 Was the old passing, was a new age looming,  
 Was the Ideal past, the Real near ?
- “ He left this unto Fate, but told the warning ;  
 O'er every haunt of Nymph and Fawn it spread :  
 And, ere on noon-days breast had swooned the morning,  
 All Greece had heard the wail, ‘ Great Pan is Dead.’ ”

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## Musical.

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[*Erratum.*—In last month's "Musical" the statement that Purcell wrote only in imitation of Handel is wholly incorrect, arising from a misconception of dates. Handel came to England in December of the year 1710, and BEFORE that year, Blow, Wise, Croft, Weldon, and Purcell had all finished their education, and formed that style, which so much like Handel's was in reality the mannerism of the day, in much the same way that Mendelssohnism is at present.]

Probably the new year's prospectus of the magazine has informed many of our readers already that in this department we are intending to publish such original compositions, songs, instrumental pieces, part-songs, &c., as may seem to us suitable and worthy. We believe that it can be done, and cry with Lewis Carroll in the "Snark," "the thing shall be done," and now we are going to appeal to any of our readers who compose, or who know of friends and acquaintances gifted in like manner, to let us have their manuscripts at once, and to communicate at least, with the Musical Editor.

Of late years, it has been a frequent lament, both in England and in the colonies, that the old customs, many of them beautiful and appropriate in themselves, others tolerated on account of ancient usage or associations that cluster round Christmas, the central feast of the Christian year, are rapidly losing ground and disappearing. It is not to be expected, naturally, that customs redolent of superstition and child-like credulity, should stand long before the active wrestlers and scientific spirit of the present age, when the faith which is the centre and cause of such customs is itself attacked, doubted, and in some cases altogether set aside. This prosaic spirit is doing for such customs gradually in this century just what Puritanism in the seventeenth century did suddenly. There are cynics who assert that men and women and children would be much better off in mind and body if the annual gorging of

themselves at Christmas-tide with mince pyes, to keep the old spelling, plum puddings, and the other delicacies or *heavinesses* which reign in the *mundus edibilis* at that season were dispensed with. So there are those who reject the mistletoe as a piece of foolishness, and who never spend an hour on home decoration, which, apart from its gracious results, is surely an admirable social medium, giving rise to much display of taste and ingenuity, bringing out the stupid members of the family, and restraining the impetuosity of the clever ones who find they are not to have everything their own way. In speaking of England's colonies, in this respect, we only mean our own Dominion, for we fancy that India and Australian Christmases are at best but very imperfect attempts at reproduction of those in the "old country." But Canada seems so admirably fitted by reason of her bright and sunny winters, of her many characteristic amusements and national pastimes which do not stand in the way, as some may think, of her peculiar loyalty, for all these merry and healthful customs (if indulged in properly) that we long for a resuscitation, a great and energetic revival in the matter, and hope it will come. If we have not the holly and mistletoe except as we get it expensively from the grocer, we have material not to be surpassed for festooning and draping in the many kinds of pine and fir, hemlock, spruce and cedar, with which we are surrounded, and the berries of the winter-green and the mountain ash are beautiful however used. There is no reason why much of the diverting and innocent mummery characteristic of the West of England at this time should not be welcomed eagerly along with our modern charade; the play of "St. George," usually pronounced "Gaarge" by the tenantry who laud it in certain parts, might come most freshly to the Canadian mind. And as for Christmas Carols—well, this really is our subject although we have been a long time coming to it. The custom of carolling is assuredly one of those which we designated as beautiful and appropriate in itself, being derived from the singing of the angels to the shepherds on the plains of Bethlehem. That it is of great antiquity therefore is certain, and it is interesting to know that originally the word carol meant a song accompanied by dancing, the performers taking hands and singing as they made a ring much in the style of many children's games at present. At this time carols were often profane and always humorous, and not till the fifteenth century did any appear to be at all popular that were of a more serious character. The earliest printed carols were a collection by Wynkyn de Worde, 1521, but all of them were convivial. From the Restoration up to the present, carol-singing has been practised at Christmas in many parts of England, particularly in Cornwall and other western counties, many ancient and quaint tunes wedded to equally curious words being still sung there. Of these "I saw three ships come sailing in," "The first Nowell," and one entitled "To-morrow shall be my dancing day," are particularly interesting. In the last one it is Christ who speaks, and the "dancing day" is evidently meant for the second coming of Christ, as in the last verse from the words "to lead man to the general dance." Jean Paul Richter says that, "the Jews believed that after the coming of the Messiah, hell will be pushed along-side of paradise to make a larger dancing-hall, and God will lead the dance," probably only a coincidence, but one full of interest. Here is the first verse of this curious carol.

"To morrow shall be my dancing day,  
I would my true love did so chance,  
To see the legend of my play,  
To call my true love to the dance.  
Sing Oh! my love! Oh! my love, my love!  
Thus shall I do for my true love."

In the large collection edited by Dr. Stainer and the Rev. Henry Ramsden Bromley, of Oxford, may be found, with a few exceptions, all those tunes and verses worth retaining, forty-two in number. Of these, fourteen are entirely traditional, twenty-four have tunes by modern English composers, and four are miscellaneous. "God rest you, merry gentlemen," "The

seven joys of Mary," "The Cherry Tree carol," and "Dives and Lazarus," are among those called traditional, and are perhaps the most curious. One strange thing to be noticed in these very old carols is the persistent way in which the most cheerful words are set to music of most doleful character. "The Holly and the Ivy," tune, Old French, is a fair example of this; the words of the refrain being,

"Oh! the rising of the Sun,  
The running of the deer,  
The playing of the merry *Organ*,  
Sweet singing in the quire!"

These are sung to an indescribably melancholy air. Many of these old carols have Latin scraps interspersed. "The Boar's Head" carol is a well-known instance.

Of the modern tunes, the much lamented Dr. Dyker contributed five, Dr. Stainer, three; Joseph Barnby, four; Rev. Sir Fred. Ouseley, three; Dr. Steggall, two; while Henry Smart, Arthur Sullivan, Sir John Goss, and the Rev. S. C. Hamerton are all represented. There are several editions of the work, one quite within the reach of everyone, in paper covers, and whether purchased for the home circle or the choir, it is certain to give pleasure, and to those who care to interest themselves in the subject and its bearings, profit.

To musicians in Canada, and to many who, though not known as musicians, take a deep and absorbing interest in music, there can hardly be a greater pleasure than that of receiving, buying, or looking through a heap of music, fresh and ancient, from Novello or Boosey if scores, from Stanley Lucas, Weber & Co., or Hutching's & Romer, if sheet music. New music is far more exciting to such an one than is a new novel to the novel-reader by profession and is eagerly seized upon and devoured. We notice particularly this year the vast number of beautiful and original cantatas. Gade, known chiefly in the country as the author of "*Spring's Message*," contributes "*Comala*," founded on a story of Ossian, showing in its very theme the influence that Mendelssohn has still over his young friend, and the "*Erl King's Daughter*," thoroughly original, weird, and full of fine instrumentation. "*St. Cecilia's Day*," by Van Bree, is a lighter, easier work in a more hackneyed style, but more suitable accordingly for general singing, the final chorus indeed is masterly, and probably the composer is keeping back his technicalities in order to be popular. Schumann's "*Vie d'une Rose*," rendered in English, "*The Pilgrimage of the Rose*," is full of almost unearthly beauty, quaint progressions, and weird harmonies, and is characterized by the same touching melody which so often graces his songs. The English composers are well to the front; Barnby's "*Rebe Rat*," Dr. Macfarren's wonderfully realistic "*Outward Bound*," John Francis Barnett's "*Good Shepherd*," and many others have at last reached us here. In piano music we notice some very clever things from Misses Agnes Zimmerman, Coenen, Spindler, and others, while in songs four new writers appear; but Sullivan, Molloy, and the host of popular song-writers are well represented. In short, there is no dearth of really good music, but almost too much to write about properly, or to choose judiciously.

It is proposed to raise a fund for a bust of Mdlle. Tietjens, to be placed in the vestibule of Her Majesty's theatre. A far better notion is to found a scholarship at the Royal Academy. It is also announced that Mdlle. Tietjens has left £30,000 to her sister, Mrs. Croix, with reversion to her two nieces, one of whom is married.

The first London performance of Dr. Macfarren's oratorio of "*Joseph*," will be on December 17th, by the Brixton Choral Society; the cantata, by M<sup>me</sup>. Sainton Dolly, "*A Legend of St. Dorothea*," is included in the programme.

The début at St. Petersburg of Mdlle. Etelka Gerster, is described as an

extraordinary success. She appeared in "*La Sonnambula*," and was recalled eight times.

Adelina Patti and Sig. Nicoli are negotiating for a six nights' engagement at the Berlin Opera. They demand, however, no less than 10,000 francs a night (£400), a sum the Berlin managers do not feel inclined to pay.

Mdlle. Ilma di Murska has been singing very successfully in Mr. Max Strakosh's Company at San Francisco. She was to appear in New York on the 1st of November.

*Le Ménestrel* announces that four unpublished Masses by Palestrina, and several autograph manuscripts by T. S. Bach, have been discovered in a convent at Gray.

Mdme Christine Nilsson is engaged for three months, the latter end of October to January, at St. Petersburg. She has accepted an engagement for the spring at the Vienna Opera House.

The Royal Albert Hall Choral Society has commenced its season opening on November 22nd with Verdi's "*Requiem*." Mr. Barnby is again the conductor.

At Milan a triumphal arch was erected in honour of Patti on her recent arrival there. *Standing-room* will be ten francs during her engagement at La Scala.

Mr. Horton Allison gave a performance of his Oratorio "Prayer" in the Hall of Trinity College, Dublin, on October 19th, for his Doctor's degree. The work consists of an overture, a recitative for bass voice, a duet for soprano and tenor, a double fugue, and a recitative for tenor; this serves as an introduction to a setting of the Lord's Prayer, as quartet and chorus, contralto solo, soprano solo, double chorus, a canon, two in one for soprano and tenor, and a double fugue.

The prospectus of the Monday and Saturday Popular Concerts has been issued, and is marked by the same high character as those of former years. This the twentieth season, will consist of twenty morning and twenty-one evening performances, the former having commenced on November 17th, and the latter on Monday, November 12th. The principal engagements are those of Mr. Sims Reeves, Mr. Santley, Herr Joachim, Mdme Norman Neruda, Mr. Charles Hallé, Mdlle Maria Prebs, Miss Agnes Zimmerman, Mdlle Anna Mehlig, and Sig. Patti.

It is almost impossible to keep one's self properly informed with respect to the ever increasing number of pianists. In London alone there must be a stupendous number of first-class pianists, both native and foreign. Mr. Sydney Smith gave the first recital of his sixth season on November 9th, at Willis' Rooms. Bach, Handel, Scarlatti, Beethoven, Liszt, Chopin, Thalberg, were represented in the programme.

Mr. Walter Bache also gave a recital on November 5th at St. James' Hall, playing Beethoven's thirty-two variations in C minor, and Sonata in E major, Op. 109.

The Sacred Harmonic Society's forty-sixth season commenced on November 30th. Macfarren's "*John the Baptist*," Rossini's "*Mosè in Egitto*," and Crotch's "*Palestine*," are promised.

The death of a celebrated vocalist, Mdme. Stockhausen, is announced. This lady was exceedingly popular in England at one time, and used to excite English audiences to a high pitch of enthusiasm by her rendering of Swiss airs, in which she was sometimes accompanied by her husband on the harp. These performances were mere relaxations, for the lady was at home in the highest walks of music, and her husband was a most skilled harpist. Her son, M. Jules Stockhausen, an excellent bass singer, has sung with great success in London.

The Naples correspondent of the *Athenæum* writes as follows:—"A story is going the round of the journals of Naples which will interest many of your readers. On Saturday, the Baroness Caterce, daughter of Lablache, visited the theatre of San Carlo, accompanied by her children. After

having admired the magnificent interior, she expressed a wish to see the stage as well, but she had no sooner placed her foot upon it than she burst into tears. The daughter of Lablache was overcome by the recollection of the many and splendid triumphs which her father had won on these boards. The Baroness, who is like her father, is said to have a "stupendous" soprano voice, and were she to make art her profession, she would become, it is predicted, one of the great stars, 'worthy to continue her paternal glory.' Accompanied by a piano-forte she sang a piece from the 'Stabat' of Rossini, with such power, expression, and colour, that she awakened the enthusiasm of those who had the good fortune to hear her. Alas! for the death of the queen of song, Titjiens. Some years have passed since she visited Naples and sang in St. Carlo. The Neapolitans did not, or rather could not, appreciate her genius, and Titjiens was much annoyed by the offensive criticisms of unbred persons who occupied front seats in the pit. Alexandre Dumas was here, too, at the same time, and at the instigation of a mutual friend lashed the imperinences of the *soi disant* critics in a little journal that he edited."

Miss Blanche Tucker, of Chicago, musically known as Rosavella, recently married Signor Marochetti, son of the Director of Telegraphs, in Italy.

We regard with no slight feeling of envy the excellent programme which from time to time the citizens of Chicago, New York, and Boston are enjoying this winter. The Handel and Haydn Society of the latter city give, on Sunday, December 23rd, Bach's Christmas Oratorio, and "Noël," by Saint Saëur, Bach's work having Robert Franz's additional instrumentation. On Christmas day the *Messiah*. Mendelssohn's *St. Paul* is set down for March 6th, and the *Creation* for Easter Sunday, April 21st. Miss Thursby, Miss Cary, Winch, Stoddard, and Whitney, are all engaged for the Christmas performances. On the 14th and 17th of November, Theodore Thomas gave two subscription concerts in Boston, assisted by the Swedish Ladies quartette and a youthful violinist, Leopold Lichtenburg, a pupil of Wioniaowski. The overture to *Cherubim*, Water-Carrier, "La Jeunesse d'Hercule," a symphonic poem, by Saint Salus and a violin concerto by Viotti, were among the pieces given.

Mdme Madeline Schiller intends going back to England this month, and with this view she will give a series of three piano recitals in Boston before her departure, assisted by Miss Cronyn.

By the way, Dwight's *Musical Journal* is asserting most rabidly its Wagnerian proclivities, which show with what headlong impetuosity do the Americans rush into novelties, from pottery to Wagner—sometimes, one would think *because* they are novelties. Speaking of Fryer's Wagner Festival, the article says:—"On Thursday night—Oh! what a fall was there, my countrymen, this high and mighty Ultra-German Opera, this Wagner Festival became Italian, and came down to *Trovatore*, Italian of the *trashiest, most hack-nied barrel-organ type!* . . . . . From *Fidelio* to *Trovatore!* Beethoven's divine masterpiece with half a house, and Verdi's *sensational affair* hailed three times by eager crowds!" Truly if Beethoven's superb work were greeted with so miserable an audience, that would be the fault of the city and country it was presented to, and all must be surprised at Boston incurring such an imputation. Still, to designate *Trovatore* as "trash," is to show a totally incorrect reading of what we may call the present musical situation. We ourselves are deeply interested in the grand career and works of Wagner, and convinced of the truth of many of his dogmas. The time is assuredly coming when sensuous music must be nearly altogether supplemented by intellectual music; still, to compare Verdi with Beethoven, who in "*Fidelio*" was decidedly anticipatory of Wagner, is impossible. Verdi is Verdi, and his music will always be beautiful, even when it no longer represents the existing school. Indeed, we can imagine that ten nights prove to the most advanced thinkers too intensely intellectual, so that one night at least slipped in, of bright, melodious Italian music, would be a relief and not something to be avoided as if it brought a pestilence, and spoken of with vituperation.

New York music seems to be included in Dr. Damrosch's orchestra which has given Liszt's Preludes, Raff's 8th symphony, and other difficult works most creditably. This orchestra, as most of our readers know, consist mostly of the men dismissed by Theodore Thomas some time ago. The latter musician is forming a new orchestra to include Brandt, Hamson, Brenstein, and other famous men. To call it an American orchestra seems absurd, after reading such a lengthy list of German names as Prusser, Listmann, Dietrich, Klugescheid, Gruppe, Rhaesa, Uthof, *Pfeiffenscheider*, and many others.

Music in Canada as usual is a very barren thing. In our own city, we have heard the Quintette Club, Mr. Torrington's Church Concerts and scarcely anything else besides. We may take this opportunity of directing the attention of our readers to the excellent original song published in this number. Many attempts at so-called "natural song" have been made already, resulting in nothing; but "Canada" comes at this merry Xmas tide to wake and warm us into increasing patriotism and loyalty to the Mother Country, from which seems to come all happy Xmas associations and customs. Mrs. Moore is a writer and composer of great ability, and the present publication is attractive in many ways, and is thoroughly musical.

# " CANADA. "

NATIONAL SONG WITH CHORUS.

DEDICATED TO ALL LOYAL CANADIANS.

Music and Words by F. J. HATTON.

(MRS. CHAS. G. MOORE.)

*Allegro Moderato.*

*f*  
*Con Spirito.*

Bva.

*f*

1. Brave men and true let's name the land where free - dom loves to dwell..... Where  
 2. When o'er the sea the war cry rings, And mourned are deeds of woe..... The

truth and hon - or firm - ly stand, Whose chil - dren love her well.  
 true Ca - na-dian's brave heart springs, And longs to meet the foe.

*cres.*

*f*

Can-a - da! Can-a - da! Can-a - da! Fair land so broad and free; Oh!

*f*

*colla voce.*

give me then fair Can - a - da, Aye, she's the land for me!

*cres.*

Soprano. *f* Can-a-da! Can-a-da! Can-a-da! Fair land so broad and free; Oh!

Alto. *f* Can-a-da! Can-a-da! Can-a-da! Fair land so broad and free; Oh!

Tenor. *f* Can-a-da! Can-a-da! Can-a-da! Fair land so broad and free; Oh!

Bass. *f* Can-a-da! Can-a-da! Can-a-da! Fair land so broad and free; Oh!

PIANO. *f* *ff* *f* *ff* *f* *ff*

Sva. Sva. Sva.

*colla voce.*

give me then fair Can - a - da, Aye, she's the land for me.

*cres.*

give me then fair Can - a - da, Aye, she's the land for me.

*cres.*

give me then fair Can - a - da, Aye, she's the land for me.

*cres.*

give me then fair Can - a - da, Aye, she's the land for me.

*cres.* *mf* *f*

Sva.



3. Come peace or war a - mid us then, We'll

*p*

*Bva.*

join the rank and file..... If war must be we're rea-dy, men, Con -

*f* *p*

- tent with peace the while; Con - tent with peace the while.

*cres.* *cres.*

All voices in unison sing 1st verse.

*ff*

Brave men and true let's name the land Where free - dom loves to dwell..... Where

truth and hon- or firm - ly stand, Whose chil - dren love her well.

*cres.*

*f*  
Can-a - da! Can-a-da! Can-a-da! Fair land so broad and free; Oh!

*colla voce.* Repeat Chorus as before

give me then fair Can - a - da, Aye, she's the land for me!

*cres.*

